

The Free Presbyterian Magazine

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

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

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May 2017

Vol 122 • No 5

The Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland

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The Free Presbyterian Magazine

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

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Editorial Board: The Editor, Rev A W MacColl, Mr K H Munro, Rev D W B Somerset.

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

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

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

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: Laide; **Second:** Leverburgh, Maware, Staffin; **Third:** Gisborne; **Fourth:** Glasgow; **Fifth:** Aberdeen, London, Mbuma.

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

June: First Sabbath: Perth, Shieldaig; **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, Stornoway, Vatten, Zenka.

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

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

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

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

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Christ's Ambassadors

We are familiar with the idea of an ambassador: someone going to another country as the representative of his own government – from Great Britain, for instance, to the United States, or vice versa. So, when the British ambassador, say, speaks to the American Government in Washington, he does so with the authority of his Government back in London.

Similarly Christ sends out ambassadors to speak in His name and, when they speak, they do so with His authority. He chooses men and sends them out to preach as His representatives. They are not to propagate their own ideas; they are to do as Jonah was directed when God sent him to Nineveh. He was an ambassador; so the Lord sent him to “preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee”; similarly today’s ambassadors are given divine authority to proclaim the truths that have been revealed in Scripture.

So Luther, in the early years of the Reformation, when commanded by the Emperor at the Diet of Worms to withdraw his writings, declared, “I cannot withdraw, but I am subject to the Scriptures I have quoted; my conscience is captive to the Word of God”.¹ Preachers must always act as ambassadors from Christ; they must be subject to the Scriptures; their consciences must always be captive to the Word of God. They must speak to their fellow creatures on the basis of the principle that Luther so memorably enunciated to the Emperor at that critical point in the Reformation.

The original ambassadors were sent out by Christ before He ascended to heaven. He commanded His disciples: “Go ye . . . and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world” (Mt 28:19,20). They were sent out as eyewitnesses, to bear testimony to what they had seen Christ do and what they had heard Him say in His time on earth. Later ambassadors have not had that privilege of seeing Christ in the flesh but, having seen Christ in Scripture by faith, they are able to bear testimony to Him on the basis of what is there revealed.

¹ Quoted in S M Houghton, *Sketches From Church History*, Banner of Truth, 1980, p 89.

The ambassadors are to bring before their hearers the truths of Scripture about sin and salvation, in particular. When they speak of the evil of sin and the punishment justly due to the sinner, they speak with divine authority, and that is how their hearers are to receive what is said. It may be solemn – and it should be. Those who are still outside the kingdom of God may find it an unwelcome message, for these are people who delight in sin, more or less. But those who preach on the basis of Scripture speak the truth, truth that has Christ’s authority behind it, and therefore their message ought to be received without question. Among many other solemn truths, Christ warned, “Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Lk 13:3). So when the ambassador quotes this warning, it is as if Christ Himself is speaking to all the unconverted in the congregation and bringing before them individually the danger of refusing to repent – they will perish in a lost eternity.

Again, Christ’s ambassadors are to proclaim the message of salvation to sinners under condemnation because of their sin. And, when they do so, they represent Christ, who sent them out. Thus Paul said, “We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God” (2 Cor 5:20). When expounding this verse, Charles Hodge re-expresses Paul’s words thus: “We are the ambassadors of Christ, because it is God that speaks through us”.

Paul points clearly to what lies behind “the word [or message] of reconciliation”: the imputation of sin to Christ (so that He might bear it away) and the imputation, in the other direction, of His righteousness to the sinner. Christ was the substitute for sinners, and His ambassadors are to lay stress on His work as the sin-bearer, which continued until He said at Calvary: “It is finished”. Likewise they must lay stress on His perfect keeping of God’s law in the place of sinners, who cannot possibly satisfy the demands of God’s law. When these ambassadors call on sinners to be reconciled to God, they are doing so with divine authority. It is God Himself, using preachers as His instruments, who is calling on sinners to embrace Christ as the One who made reconciliation with God possible. And that is how their hearers are to receive “the word of reconciliation”, for this message has the same authority “as if God did beseech you by” His ambassadors – it is as if each person in the congregation could hear Christ’s actual voice. Therefore Paul added, “We pray you *in Christ’s stead*, be ye reconciled to God”.

The call to be reconciled, to trust in the One who came into the world to save sinners, is made effective by the Holy Spirit powerfully applying gospel truths to the individual sinner. This work of the Spirit is one of the gifts purchased by Christ, who told His disciples, “All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth” (Mt 28:18). It is through this power that sinners are

made able to turn “from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God” (Acts 26:18).

As the context makes clear, Paul was sent to the Gentiles to bring about these results – but only as an instrument that Christ was pleased to use. Paul had no power of his own to persuade sinners – who were going on in Satan’s kingdom and so in the darkness of sin and ignorance – to turn to God and walk in the light of God’s Word. But Paul had been sent out as an ambassador; he was to proclaim the truths of sin and salvation to those still in darkness and, to the extent that the Holy Spirit was pleased to bless Paul’s preaching, sinners were reconciled to God. Paul was only an instrument – he was perfectly clear that this was so – but God used him to bring multitudes in many places, including Ephesus, Corinth and Rome, into the kingdom of grace, where they shone as lights in the midst of these dark, heathen cities.

In commenting on the last verses of Matthew² David Dickson brings out their teaching in 18 points, from which we select the following:

[14.] “The ministers and rulers of the Church are limited to the commands given to them from Christ; they may not enjoin to the Church anything save the commands of Christ. These, and all these, and only these, must they teach.” In other words, Christ’s ambassadors must proclaim the message He has given to His Church to proclaim. They must not depart from that teaching, and those who reject that teaching are making it clear that they were not called by the Head of the Church to be ambassadors.

[16.] “Faithful ministers have assurance of Christ’s assistance and blessing, in whatsoever part or time of the world they fall into.” The One who sent His ambassadors out into the whole world has promised to be with them always and to bless their message – which is His message – to as many individuals as the Father gave to Him.

[18.] “This whole gospel is solid truth and worthy to be embraced.” In a generation in which so many people have such difficulties with the idea of truth and when “the father of lies” is so busy opposing the truth, Christ’s ambassadors and those who listen to them must cling firmly to this vital revelation that God has given in the gospel – that it is solid truth and therefore altogether worthy to be embraced. Preachers who neglect or reject the solid truth of Scripture are doing grave damage to themselves and to their hearers; likewise those who refuse to embrace the gospel are guilty of murdering their souls, unless they yet repent of this terrible sin and believe the solid truth contained in the gospel.

What a responsibility lies on every ambassador to present his message faithfully! And what a responsibility lies on every hearer to receive the message!

²Dickson, *Matthew*, Banner of Truth, 1981 reprint, p 416.

Christ's Continual Intercession¹

A Sermon by Robert Gordon

Isaiah 62:1-12. *For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. . . .*

In the previous chapter, the Messiah says of Himself: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me; because the Lord hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent Me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound". The Saviour expressly applied the passage to Himself in the synagogue at Nazareth. And in this chapter He speaks on His mediatorial work, on behalf of His Church. He assures His people that He will never cease carrying on His undertaking till all the glorious results which He has foretold are fully brought about "until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth".

The meaning of the figurative language here used about Jerusalem is obvious. It predicts the time when the character of the true Church, as contrasted with that of a world lying in sin, should be more fully manifested and her influence more powerfully felt than before. From the beginning, the Church had been raised up to reflect the glory of her great Head – to be a light in the midst of a world sunk in the darkness of ignorance and idolatry. There were indeed times when it shone very dimly, when the true people of God were so few and had become so cold as to raise but a feeble testimony for God and His truth. So it was in Isaiah's time. Multitudes still came to Jerusalem professedly to worship the true God. But Isaiah thus testifies: "Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah".

The light which the Church at that time gave forth, must have been very faint. And it was destined to be still fainter, for, with some occasional, partial revivals, the men of Judah continued to degenerate, till the long-threatened judgement of captivity overtook them. Though they were delivered from captivity, they again fell away into cold formality, if not idolatry. Thus when the Messiah appeared, the true Church was as weak as perhaps it had ever been. Still, even then there was a remnant. The light from the Church was not extinguished; and it was here foretold that not only would it revive, but the revival would be more glorious as a result of the feebleness to which it

¹Taken, with abridgement, from *Christ in the Old Testament*, vol 4. This four-volume set has been reprinted by Free Presbyterian Publications, and gives an excellent exposition of the types and prophecies of the Saviour in the Old Testament.

had been reduced. The prophet addressed the Church in her low state: "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee".

This is what, in this chapter, the Messiah declares He would accomplish for His Church. The promise implied she was in a low condition – disregarded by an ignorant, ungodly world. There was nothing about her which men recognised as proof that she was the special object of God's favour, and that He would exalt her to a state of honour. He assured her that her righteousness would "go forth as brightness" and her salvation "as a lamp that burneth" – in other words, God would make it clear that she was the object of His favour and would work out a deliverance for her which should constrain men to acknowledge that it was from Him. There is here an obvious reference to the Messiah's words in the previous chapter: "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord . . . for He hath clothed Me with the garments of salvation". Christ spoke here of His mediatorial work, in which He undertook to fulfil all righteousness. Having done so, he was exalted to glory and honour, in testimony of having finished the work His Father gave Him to do.

The righteousness which He fulfilled was wrought out on behalf of His Church – those whom He had undertaken to redeem. As that righteousness was to be imputed to them, so they were to participate in all the blessed effects it was to produce – in all the glory and blessedness to which Christ Himself was to be exalted. Christ was clothed "with the garments of salvation" and covered "with the robe of righteousness" that He might impute the same righteousness to His people, for their acceptance with God – and that He might adorn them with the holy beauty of His character, and so fit them to enjoy the blessedness with which His righteousness was rewarded. Accordingly Christ declared He would assuredly do all for His Church; and make it plain to all that He had done so – that the Church was righteous before God, enjoying His approval, that she was saved from the power of sin and Satan, being adorned with the beauties of holiness, the Saviour's graces.

Her righteousness shall "go forth as brightness" and her salvation "as a lamp that burneth". Thus the predicted deliverance of Zion – the revival of true religion – would not only equal, but excel in glory, anything that had been seen even in the purest times of the Church. The light from her would be brighter, and her influence more powerful and extensive, than at any former period. This is confirmed: "The Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory; and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name". There was a time when Jerusalem attracted mighty sovereigns. When the Queen of Sheba heard of Solomon's fame, "she came to prove him with hard questions". And "all the earth sought to Solomon, to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart".

But the outward prosperity of the visible Church, in Solomon's time, was only a type of the spiritual glory of the true Church when a greater than Solomon would appear. That glory was not to consist in a display of temporal power and grandeur, such as the world naturally admires. It was to be such as the world naturally hates, a righteous and holy grandeur, the reflected glory of Him against whom the kings of the earth were to set themselves. Ultimately they too will be brought into subjection to the King of kings, and will esteem it their highest honour to serve Him. But whether they are rebellious or submissive, whether they should hate or admire the Church, it is here foretold that they will not be able to ignore the likeness of her divine Head: "The Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory".

That the spiritual glory of the Church is here spoken of is further evident from what follows: "Thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name. Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God." The Church is here called "a crown of glory" and "a royal diadem" as in other passages of Scripture where the salvation of His people is represented as the glorious reward of the Messiah, for all that He did on their behalf.

Thus Zechariah prophesied of Him as "the Branch", on whose head crowns were to be set, because He was to "build the temple of the Lord", "bear the glory", "sit and rule upon His throne" and "be a priest upon His throne". The New Testament declares that, because Christ finished His mediatorial work, He was crowned "with glory and honour". In Revelation He is described as having "many crowns" on His head. And in a subordinate sense, Paul speaks of those as his crown who, through his ministry, had been converted or built up in the faith: "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?"

The Church is here represented as "a crown of glory" and "a royal diadem" in the hand of Jehovah, to be placed on the head of the Messiah, who was to purchase her with His own blood. And while He was thus to be glorified in and by her, she was to be honoured by Him; for she was to "be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name". From verse 4 we are to understand a state of higher attainments in holiness and a corresponding increase of happiness: "Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken . . . but thou shalt be called Hephzibah" – that is, "My delight is in her".

Almost always, in Old Testament times, the true Church was so small, and so infected by the prevailing sins of the age, as hardly to be distinguished from the hypocritical multitude of the visible Church, who differed little from the heathen nations around them. The light which emanated from the true Church must have been very faint and the testimony she lifted up for God

very feeble. As her love waxed cold, so her faith became weak, her hope less bright, and her spiritual comfort less abundant. The Old Testament Church must often have been in great darkness, which must have been greatly increased by temporal judgements because of the grievous sins of the people at large. These judgements affected the true Church necessarily, and she must have regarded them as tokens of God's displeasure.

The Church must have often felt forsaken and desolate; except for the gracious messages which the prophets brought to her, she must have sunk into despondency. In the message now before us, she was there assured that she was not forsaken; notwithstanding all she then suffered, the time would come when she should receive a new name – she should be brought into a better condition, and the word of Jehovah Himself was pledged to accomplish this. But those who belonged to the true Church when this prediction was given might not live to witness the change that was foretold.

Yet the prediction contained consolation for them; for the prophecy also assured them that, if they would cleave to the Lord and make Him their refuge, He would not forget them or forsake them. The preservation of the true Church was essential to the fulfilment of the promise, and however much they might be afflicted, they could not be cast off. Thus, however long till the promise was fulfilled, the Church of that and of all future times could draw abundant encouragement from it: "Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shall be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah [Married]: for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married".

This great change in the condition of the Church began to take place when, in the fullness of time, Christ appeared as announced: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me; because the Lord hath anointed Me to preach good tidings". Christ, by His death at Jerusalem, finished the work which His Father gave Him to do, rose from the dead, ascended up on high and, according to His promise, poured out His Spirit on the apostles. Then there followed such a revival of the true religion as had never before taken place, so that the "righteousness" of Zion went forth "as brightness" and the "salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth".

Such a change in her condition made the glory of the Church clearer than ever before, showing that she was the special object of God's favour and should no more be termed "Forsaken" or "Desolate". She was not exempted from temporal distress, nor was a temporal inheritance granted her. But such an inheritance no longer had the importance it once had; nor did she now regard even the severest persecution as a token of God's displeasure. On the contrary, she rejoiced to be counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of

Christ. The Gentiles saw the light from the Church, and kings had to recognise it. Yet they did not always acknowledge it to be light from heaven; they hated it because they loved darkness. The Apostles saw the fulfilment of the psalmist's words: "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against His Anointed". But this opposition made it more evident that He who was for His Church was far greater than all against her, and so she never could be forsaken or desolate. In spite of this opposition, the light of the Church spread rapidly among the Gentiles, so that multitudes turned from the power of Satan unto God.

Though, thus early, the promise to the Church, "The Gentiles shall see thy righteousness", was largely fulfilled; yet even the glory of the apostolic age was only a partial fulfilment. The light which then broke forth from Jerusalem, and spread rapidly through an idolatrous world, is destined to be still brighter. The full accomplishment of the promise is infallibly certain, for the Messiah here says, "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth". This very strongly expresses how earnestly the Saviour carried out His mediatorial work when He did not cease to preach the glad tidings of pardon to the guilty, while demonstrating His divine authority by miracles of mercy. But His words declare as emphatically that He will never cease from His mediatorial work until the glorious result here foretold shall be realised – He will not cease to make intercession and exercise His divine power on behalf of His Church, until her "righteousness" shall "go forth" over all the earth "as brightness", and her "salvation . . . as a lamp that burneth".

But if Christ has never held His peace from interceding and has always acted for the extension of His kingdom, why did that kingdom not long ago embrace all the kingdoms of the earth? And why does His cause still remain in conflict – sometimes apparently unequal – with error and ungodliness in every form? Perhaps it is sufficient to say that known unto Christ are all His works from the beginning and that, however mysterious His dispensations may appear, He has not forgotten His promise and He will one day make it clear to the satisfaction of His people, and to the confusion of His enemies, that He has never ceased to intercede and to act on behalf of His Church.

Yet the general tenor of His dealings with the Church provides a farther reply – one full of important practical instruction. The fulfilment of the most notable of God's promises to the Church was, according to men's estimate of time, long delayed. Israel did not possess Canaan, which had been promised to Abraham, till 400 years after the promise was first given. And 4000 years elapsed before the great promise of the great Deliverer, the seed of the woman,

who was to bruise the serpent's head, was put into effect. But now that both these promises have been fulfilled, who will allege that divine power was not constantly operating to have them accomplished and that, when they were accomplished, the long delay only brought out more clearly the infinite wisdom, almighty power and unchangeable faithfulness of Him who determines all things according to the counsel of His will?

The manifestation of the divine sovereignty and perfections was not the only consequence of the seeming slackness in the fulfilment of the divine promises. Provision was also made for exercising the faith and patience of the Church, and we are indebted to this exercise of the faith and patience of Old Testament saints for those holy examples which were recorded for the instruction, reproof and encouragement of the Church in all subsequent times.

Can the Church now, with the clearer revelation she has of the principles of God's government, doubt that Christ is faithful to the promise: "For Zion's sake will I not hold My peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth"? Can she doubt that He is overruling all events, though she may not see how, to further His cause and finally establish His kingdom? And can she fail to learn the lesson, taught by all God's former dealings with His people, that one of the purposes to be accomplished by the seeming delay in fulfilling His promise, is to exercise her faith and patience – to keep her in a state of earnest expectation for the time when "the Gentiles shall see [her] righteousness, and all kings [her] glory". This is the attitude which all true believers are required habitually to have – each in his own sphere seeking to reflect more clearly the image of Christ, and all uniting to make the glory of that image more manifest to the world around them.

How sad if the seeming slackness in fulfilling the promise of the universal spread of the gospel produces the very opposite effect on believers! Yet is there not reason to fear that often, instead of becoming more anxious for the fulfilment of the promise the longer it is delayed, they come to regard it as something they hardly expect – that the slow progress of the truth, together with the many apparently-insurmountable obstacles that oppose it, creates in their minds a feeling of near hopelessness for its final triumph? Though they would tremble at expressing the sentiment of the scoffer, they entertain the question of the ungodly, "Where is the promise of His coming?"

But the practical lesson about the Church's duty to be deduced from the Messiah's gracious promise is expressly given in the subsequent verses. At verse 6, He says, "I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give Him no rest, till He establish, and till He make

Jerusalem a praise in the earth". By the *watchmen* we are to understand the office-bearers in the Church; and the purpose of their appointment is that they may constantly watch, labour and pray for her extension and prosperity. It is said of them that they will do so, in a declaration that emphatically expresses the heavy responsibility resting upon them – if they cease to do so, they belie their profession, betray their holy trust, and do what they can to defeat the great purpose of their office. We find unfaithful watchmen, and the consequences of their unfaithfulness, thus described in an earlier chapter: "All ye beasts of the field, come to devour, yea, all ye beasts in the forest. His watchmen are blind; they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber."

Yet this duty is required of all "that make mention of the Lord" – all God's people – "Keep not silence, and give Him no rest, till He establish, and till He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth". This strong language implies, on the one hand, that the progress of the true religion was at times to be so slow that it might almost appear as if God had forgotten His promise and had ceased to further His cause. On the other hand, it commands the people of God to be as earnest as if they prayed to one who was unwilling to grant their request. And Christ taught this doctrine anew when "He spake a parable" to His disciples, "to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint".

What an exalted view is here given of the privilege and responsibility of believers! By the injunction here laid on them to be importunate in prayer, till God shall "establish" and "make Jerusalem a praise in the earth" – till the Church shall embrace men of every kingdom, tongue, nation and people – they are invited to the honour of participating in the very work in which the Saviour Himself is engaged in His glorified state. He declares, "For Zion's sake will I not hold My peace . . . until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness". This gracious assurance is followed by the gracious injunction to His people, "Ye that make mention of the Lord," or, ye that are the Lord's remembrancers, "keep not silence, and give Him no rest, till He establish, and till He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth". This is accompanied with a promise that their prayer will in God's time be answered; for the remainder of the chapter describes the spiritual glory which the Church is one day to exhibit throughout the whole world, but expressed under the figure of great temporal prosperity to the literal Judah and Jerusalem.

The Church is here taught plainly and emphatically that, though Christ is exalted to universal sovereignty and is unceasingly exercising His mediatorial offices on behalf of His Church, and though He needs no aid to accomplish the work for which He has pledged His power and faithfulness, yet He does not dispense with the prayers and labours of His people to further His cause

in the world. He has assured them of His unceasing intercession on their behalf so that they may be encouraged to pray and labour for the advancement of His kingdom. He thus intimates that, if the progress of that kingdom appears at times to be held back, they ought to inquire if they have become faint and faithless in what He has assigned to them.

There is surely enough in the honour of being fellow workers with the Saviour, if they did but realise it, to awaken and keep alive in their minds a holy earnestness of desire for the spread of the gospel, as the glory of the Church reflects the glory of her living Head. While their earnest perseverance in prayer for this great object must redound to the honour of the Redeemer, it will also contribute to their spiritual health and comfort. What is better fitted to raise their affections above everything that would bind down their hearts to earthliness than to have their minds seriously exercised about the manifestation of the Saviour's glory, and the visible display of His supremacy in subduing all nations to His righteous government?

I assume that the interest they feel in the advancement of Christ's cause is not confined to the time they set apart for their devotions – a time when they can hardly avoid recollecting the petition, "Thy kingdom come". But I assume that true Christians will always seek to have on their minds the progress and universal establishment of the kingdom of Christ. I assume too that in all the events which affect society they will ask, How will these events affect the spread of the gospel? Yet they may not be able to answer this question, nor will they dare speculate about it beyond what is warranted by the plain declarations of Scripture and the clear leadings of providence. Let them also remember that in seeking a habitual interest in the extension of the Church, their minds are going forth in the same direction as the mind of Christ – they long for what He intercedes for, for which He exercises His divine power. Therefore they cherish a feeling which He approves of.

What is here specially brought before us is earnest longing and persevering prayer for the advancement of the kingdom of grace, which ought to characterise all believers. While the blessed effects of cherishing such a spirit must be a matter of experience in the growing holiness of their own soul and in their growing peace and comfort, they are encouraged to believe that their prayers will have an effect in bringing about the glorious state of things which they long and pray for. They cannot doubt that, among the various means by which Christ carries on His mediatorial work, a place has been assigned to the prayers of His people. And it will be made clear to them that in the final success of Christ's kingdom, there will be an answer to the petitions they presented to God when they kept not silence, and gave Him no rest, pleading that He might "establish" and "make Jerusalem a praise in the earth".

The Free Offer of the Gospel¹

3. The Atonement and the Gospel Offer

Rev A W MacColl

The question of the atonement and its relationship to the gospel offer must be addressed. The doctrine of limited, or definite, atonement is one of the principal distinctives of scriptural Calvinism and is taught unambiguously in the *Westminster Confession of Faith*. At the same time, it is sometimes alleged that a universal atonement is required to ground a universal offer of the gospel.

We can never be too certain about the definite nature of the atonement as designed to accomplish the salvation of all the elect seed that the Father gave to Christ in the everlasting covenant. It is clear that the addition of any element of imprecision or ambiguity as to the reference of the death of Christ can have baleful consequences, as was ultimately manifested by the Atonement Controversy in the United Presbyterian Church, descended from the Seceders of 1733. The atonement is based on the eternal decree of election and the particularity of the covenant of grace, and the desire to square the theological circle of how the atonement relates to the universal amnesty proposed indiscriminately to sinners, in the gospel, can clearly lead to erroneous teachings.

In answer therefore to the question as to where we ground the offer of the gospel, we would contend that it does not lie in the intrinsic sufficiency of the atonement as such. The offer is grounded in the authority and veracity of God's Word given to His commissioned ambassadors. William Cunningham is very strong on this particular point.² The suitability of that atonement, however, and the certain salvation it accomplishes for all who will believe form powerful motives for preachers to proclaim the good news concerning Christ. The infinite nature of the atonement itself is also a profound and real incentive for sinners to come to an all-sufficient Saviour.

It is clear from passages such as Matthew 5:43-48 that there is a universal benevolence in God to sinners of mankind. It is difficult to separate such benevolence from the indiscriminate administration of the gospel covenant among men; indeed the offer of mercy must surely represent the highest extent of divine goodness shown to those who are not among the elect. But that is not to say that the gospel offer rests on the foundation of God's general love to all men. On the contrary, we are sure that the special love to

¹Last month's section of this Theological Conference paper demonstrated the biblical grounds for the gospel offer. This article concludes the series.

²Cunningham, *Historical Theology*, Banner of Truth reprint, 1994, vol 2, pp 345-8.

the elect is God's primary purpose in sending the gospel among men, for Christ said, "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me" (Jn 6:37).

Ultimately, we are led to the conclusion that Cunningham adopts: we must keep separate our warrant and God's purpose for issuing the gospel offer. We are commanded to preach the gospel to every creature and that command – resting as it does on Divine authority and supported by the tenor of the gospel revelation in the Word – is a clear and sufficient ground for us to offer Christ's salvation to sinners.³

What then is the sinner's warrant to accept the offer and receive Christ for himself? K W Stebbins gives a useful list of warrants at the end of his book⁴ and a number of these are based on the "Warrants to Believe" contained in the *Sum of Saving Knowledge*, bound up with the *Westminster Confession*. Usually regarded as the work of James Durham and David Dickson, this short document indicates the teaching of the leading Scottish divines on the subject.

Four warrants are given: firstly, there is "God's hearty invitation", based on Isaiah 55:1-5. Secondly, they point to "the earnest request that God maketh to us to be reconciled to Him in Christ", based on 2 Corinthians 5:19-21. Thirdly, there is "the strait and awful command of God, charging all hearers of the gospel to approach to Christ in the order set down by Him, and to believe in Him," as expressed in 1 John 3:23. Finally, there is "much assurance of life given, in case [that is, if] men shall obey the command of believing; and a fearful certification of destruction, in case they obey not", taken from John 3:35,36.⁵ As we can see, these four warrants to embrace Christ in the gospel are grounded squarely on the Word itself, rather than on inferences concerning the atonement or the nature of the love of God.

One of the most helpful descriptions of the warrant to believe is found in John Colquhoun's *View of Saving Faith*, where he defines the direct warrant to believe as consisting, firstly, in the offer of salvation in Christ held out as a gift by God the Father which confers a right to every hearer to trust in Christ for all the blessings of salvation. Colquhoun then mentions the invitations in the Word to accept Christ, the promise of God to those who will accept

³Cunningham, *Historical Theology*, vol 2, pp 344-8. For further discussion of these points see also John Murray, "The Free Offer of the Gospel", in I H Murray ed, *The Collected Works of John Murray*, vol 4, Banner of Truth, 1982, pp 113-132; I H Murray, *Spurgeon v Hyper-Calvinism, The Battle for Gospel Preaching*, Banner of Truth, 1995, both of which tend to ground the offer to a lesser or greater degree in God's general love. See K W Stebbins, *Christ Freely Offered*, Covenant Press, 1996 edn, pp 37-38, 91-92, for a criticism of John Murray's position.

⁴Stebbins, *Christ Freely Offered*, pp 100-101.

⁵"The Sum of Saving Knowledge" in *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, Free Presbyterian Publications reprint, 1997, pp 332-39.

Christ and the command of God to repent and believe. These form a full warrant for every sinner who hears the gospel to believe in Christ.⁶

One of the most forceful of all the objections advanced against the doctrine of the free offer is the view that those passages of Scripture which are generally used to prove the doctrine do not actually apply to all men but must be limited in their application by various qualifications. There is no doubt that only the elect will truly be brought to a spiritual hunger and thirst for Christ through the work of the Spirit in them and that the free offer is made precious and effectual in their case only. But we cannot insist that a certain degree of conviction of sin is essential before a sinner is entitled to lay hold of Christ. The warrant for coming to Christ is that He is offered to us in the gospel as the Divine remedy for our sins. If it were otherwise, a subtle form of self-righteousness might easily develop which would lead the sinner to base his hope more on inward experiences than on the firm foundation of the promises of the Word.

Conclusion. In preaching the gospel we must not limit the offers and invitations of the Word so that we exclude any. The gospel is to be preached to sinners *as sinners* without reference to their standing in relation to the eternal decree, which is something beyond our knowledge. We cannot expect to look for marks of grace and effectual calling before we call men to come to Christ, since dead and hardened sinners are not excluded from the call of the Word as we have proved. Neither is the degree of felt conviction of sin the ground upon which an entitlement to Christ can be founded. We are to press upon our hearers the solemn fact of their accountability to God for the manner in which they treat the sincere overtures of mercy that He sends them, through the preaching of the Word. Their inability will not excuse them, not least because of the fact that God has decreed the means whereby sinners may obtain the faith and repentance they cannot work for themselves.

We cordially endorse Cunningham's sentiments on the manner in which the gospel is to be set before men: "God has commanded the gospel to be preached to every creature; He has required us to proclaim to our fellow men, of whatever character, and in all varieties of circumstances, the glad tidings of great joy – to hold out to them, in His name, pardon and acceptance through the blood of atonement – to invite them to come to Christ, and to receive Him, and to accompany all this with the assurance that whosoever cometh to Him, He 'will in no wise cast out'".⁷

Our desire is to preach Christ's gospel freely to every creature, beseeching

⁶John Colquhoun, *A View of Saving Faith*, Free Presbyterian Publications reprint, 2010, pp 115-35.

⁷Cunningham, *Historical Theology*, vol 2, p 345.

men in Christ's stead that they be reconciled to God. The doctrines of Calvinism ensure that the salvation we offer is sure and certain to everyone that will believe on Christ. We are not called upon to reconcile the sovereignty of God with human responsibility other than stating that both are biblical and their presence together in God's Word demonstrates that there is no contradiction in the revelation He has given us. We find the free offer in the Bible; therefore we preach it. At the same time, finding electing love also in the Bible, we know that all that the Father gives to Christ shall certainly come to Him, and that none who truly come shall be cast out. In short, the proper theological balance concerning the presentation and reception of the gospel has been found and has been handed down to us to maintain and pass on.

Luther and the Reformation¹

5. In Rome

J H Merle d'Aubigné

Luther was teaching both in the university and in the church when he was interrupted in his labours. In 1510, or possibly 1511 or 1512, he was sent to Rome. Seven monasteries of his order were at variance on certain points with the vicar-general. Because of his acute mind, his powerful words and his talent for discussion, Luther was selected to represent these monasteries before the Pope. This was a necessary providence for Luther; he had to know Rome, for he had always imagined it to be a place of sanctity.

After crossing the Alps, Luther had scarcely descended to the plains of Italy before he found astonishing scandal. The poor German monk was entertained in a wealthy Benedictine convent in Lombardy, where the splendid rooms, the expensive dress and food confounded him. Luther was astonished and silent. But when Friday came, he was surprised to see the Benedictine table groaning under a load of meat, and he resolved to speak. "The Church and the Pope," said he, "forbid such things." The Benedictines were irritated at this unpolished German's reprimand, and some thought the simplest course would be to get rid of their importunate guest. The porter of the convent forewarned him of the danger he incurred by a longer stay. He accordingly left and reached Bologna, where he fell dangerously ill.

¹This is a further abridged extract from d'Aubigné's *The History of the Reformation in the Sixteenth Century*, vol 1. This series marks the five-hundredth anniversary of the European Reformation. We have already seen Luther beginning to lecture on the Bible at the new University of Wittenberg. There, as he was meditating on the words of Romans 1:17: "The just shall live by faith", the words struck him and he got true light on the way of salvation.

He again relapsed into the dejection that was so natural to him. To die far from Germany – how sad! The sense of his sinfulness troubled him; the prospect of God’s judgement filled him with dread. But at the very moment these terrors had reached their highest pitch, the words of Paul, that had already struck him at Wittenberg, “The just shall live by faith”, recurred forcibly to his memory, and enlightened his soul like a ray from heaven. Thus comforted, he soon regained his health and resumed his journey to Rome, expecting to find there a very different manner of life from that of the Lombard monastery. At length, at the beginning of summer, he drew near to Rome and fell on his knees, exclaiming, “Holy Rome, I salute thee!”

The Wittenberg professor stood in the midst of the ruins of the capital of the Roman Empire, the city of so many martyrs and confessors of Jesus Christ. Christian Rome with its sufferings had more power over the heart of the Saxon monk than pagan Rome with all its glory. Here that letter had first arrived in which Paul wrote, “The just shall live by faith”.

But in Rome at this time, the warlike Julius II filled the papal chair. Luther often related that when the news reached the Pope that his army had been defeated by the French, he was repeating his daily prayers. He flung away the book and, with a terrible oath, blamed God for not protecting the Church. Ignorance, levity, dissolute living, a profane spirit, a contempt for all that is sacred, a scandalous trade in divine things – such were what Luther saw in Rome. Yet the pious monk remained in his delusions for some time longer.

Having arrived about the time of the feast of St John, he heard the Romans repeating around him a proverb current among them: “Happy the mother whose son performs mass on St John’s eve!” “How should I rejoice to make my mother happy!” said Luther to himself. He tried to repeat a mass that day, but he could not; the throng was too great.

Fervent and meek, he visited all the churches; he believed all the falsehoods he was told; he devoutly performed all the holy practices required there, happy in being able to execute so many good works from which his fellow countrymen were debarred. “How I regret”, Luther told himself, “that my father and mother are still alive! What pleasure I should have in delivering them from the fire of purgatory by my masses, my prayers and by so many other admirable works!” He had found the light, but the darkness was far from being entirely expelled from his understanding. His heart was converted; his mind was not yet fully enlightened. He had faith and love, but he lacked knowledge. It was no trifling matter to emerge from that thick night which had covered the earth for so many centuries.

Luther several times repeated mass at Rome. He officiated with all the dignity that such an action appeared to require. But what affliction seized

the heart of the Saxon monk at witnessing the Roman priests celebrating the “sacrament of the altar” mechanically! And they laughed at his simplicity. One day he found that the priests at an adjoining altar had repeated seven masses before he had finished one. His astonishment was still greater when he found in the dignitaries of the papacy what he had already observed in the inferior clergy; he had hoped better things of them. It was the fashion at the papal court to attack Christianity, and you could not pass for a well-bred man unless you entertained some erroneous or heretical opinion on the doctrines of the Church. Some of the Pope’s youthful courtiers maintained that the orthodox faith was the result of the crafty devices of a few saints.

As envoy from the German Augustines, Luther was invited to numerous meetings of churchmen. One day he was eating with several prelates who displayed openly their impious conversation; they did not scruple to utter a thousand mockeries, thinking, no doubt, that he was of the same mind as themselves. Among other things, they told him with laughter and pride how, when they repeated mass at the altar, instead of the words that were supposed to transform the bread and wine into the flesh and blood of the Saviour, they pronounced over the elements the words: “Bread thou art, and bread thou shalt remain; wine thou art, and wine thou shalt remain”. And they went on: “Then we elevate the host, and all the people bow down and worship it”.

Luther could hardly believe his ears. His disposition was remarkably serious whenever sacred matters were involved. He described his reaction to the mockeries of Rome: “Such language grieved me bitterly. . . . And how they must have deceived me, who have heard them read devoutly so great a number!” Luther had thought to find the edifice the Church encompassed with splendour and strength, but its doors were broken down and the walls damaged by fire. He witnessed the desolation of the sanctuary and drew back with horror. All his dreams had been of holiness; he had discovered nothing but profanation.

He found the disorder outside the churches just as shocking. “The police in Rome are very strict and severe,” he said. “The judge or captain patrols the city every night on horseback with 300 followers; he arrests everyone that is found in the streets; if they meet an armed man, he is hung or thrown into the Tiber. And yet the city is filled with disorder and murder, while in those places where the Word of God is preached uprightly and in purity, peace and order prevail, without calling for the severity of the law.” He said at another time: “No one can imagine what sins and infamous actions are committed in Rome; they must be seen and heard to be believed. Thus they are in the habit of saying, ‘If there is a hell, Rome is built over it’. It is an abyss from which every kind of sin issues.”

This spectacle made a deep impression even then on Luther's mind; it was increased before long. He said many years afterwards: "The nearer we approach Rome, the greater the number of bad Christians we meet". Luther somewhat later recognised the great importance of this journey: "If they would give me one hundred thousand florins, I would not have missed seeing Rome!" This visit was advantageous too for his learning. He took advantage of his residence in Italy to penetrate deeper into the meaning of the Holy Scriptures, taking lessons in Hebrew from a famous rabbi. At Rome he partly acquired that knowledge of the Word of God under whose attacks Rome was to fall. And this journey was important to Luther in another respect. Not only was the mocking incredulity which lay concealed behind the Romish superstitions revealed to the future Reformer, but the living faith that God had implanted in himself was there powerfully strengthened.

We have seen how he at first gave himself up to all the vain observances which the Church enjoined to take away sin. One day, wishing to obtain an indulgence the Pope had promised to all who should ascend on their knees what is called Pilate's Staircase, the poor Saxon monk was humbly creeping up those steps, which he was told had been miraculously transported from Jerusalem to Rome. But while he was ascending, he thought he heard a voice of thunder crying from the bottom of his heart, as at Wittenberg and Bologna, "The just shall live by faith". These words, that twice before had struck him like the voice of an angel from God, resounded unceasingly and powerfully within him. He rose in amazement from the steps up which he was dragging his body; he shuddered, ashamed of seeing the depth to which superstition had plunged him. He fled far from the scene of his folly.

It is often necessary for a truth to be presented many times to our minds in order to produce the due effect. Luther had profoundly studied the Epistle to the Romans, and yet the doctrine of justification by faith there taught had never appeared so clear to him. Now he understood the righteousness which alone can stand before God; now he received for himself, from the hand of Christ, the obedience which God of His free gift imputes to the sinner as soon as he raises his eyes with humility to the crucified Son of man. This was the decisive period in Luther's inner life. That faith which had saved him from the terrors of death became the very soul of his theology, his stronghold in every danger, the principle which gave energy to his preaching and strength to his love, the foundation of his peace, his comfort in life and in death.

Luther believed that this great doctrine of a salvation proceeding from God, and not from man, was not only the power of God to save his soul; even more it was the power of God to reform the Church. This great doctrine was a weapon too long neglected, but now to be at last taken from the arsenal

of the omnipotent God. At the very moment when Luther stood up on “Pilate’s Staircase” – amazed at those words which Paul had addressed 1500 years before to people in Rome – truth rose up also to fall no more, though till then fettered in the Church.

Let us listen to what Luther said, looking back: “Although I was a holy and blameless monk, my conscience was nevertheless full of trouble and anguish. I could not endure those words, ‘the righteousness of God’. I had no love for that holy and just God who punishes sinners. . . . I hated Him because, not content with frightening, by the law and the miseries of life, us wretched sinners already ruined by original sin, He still further increased our tortures by the gospel. But when, by the Spirit of God, I understood these words, when I learnt how the justification of the sinner proceeds from the free mercy of our Lord through faith, then I felt born again like a new man; I entered through the open doors into the very paradise of God. Henceforth also I saw the beloved and holy Scriptures with other eyes. I perused the Bible; I brought together a great number of passages that taught me the nature of God’s work. And as previously I had detested with all my heart these words, ‘the righteousness of God’, I began from that hour to value them and to love them, as the sweetest and most consoling words in the Bible.”

Thus when he was called on solemn occasions to confess this doctrine, Luther always recovered his enthusiasm. “I see”, he observed at an important moment, “that the devil is continually attacking this fundamental article by means of his doctors, and that in this respect he can never cease or take any repose. Well then, I Doctor Martin Luther, unworthy herald of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, confess this article, that faith alone without works justifies before God; and I declare that it shall stand . . . for ever . . . in spite of the Pope and all the cardinals, with the bishops, priests, monks, and nuns; in spite of kings, princes and nobles; and in spite of all the world and of the devils themselves; and that if they endeavour to fight against this truth, they will draw the fires of hell upon their heads. This is the true and holy gospel . . . according to the teaching of the Holy Ghost.”

“There is no one,” he continued, “who has died for our sins, if not Jesus Christ the Son of God. I say it once again: should all the world and all the devils tear each other to pieces and burst with rage, it is none the less true. And if it is He alone that takes away our sins, it cannot be ourselves and our own works. But good works follow redemption, as the fruit grows on the tree. That is our doctrine; that is what is taught by the Holy Ghost and by all the communion of saints. We hold fast to it in the name of God. Amen.”

Thus Luther found what had been overlooked, at least to a certain degree, by all teachers, even by the most illustrious. It was in Rome that God gave

him this clear view of the fundamental doctrine of Christianity. He had gone to the city of the pontiffs to solve certain difficulties concerning a monastic order; he brought away from it in his heart the salvation of the Church.

Enoch's Prophecy and the Response¹

Henry Law

Genesis 5:22. *Enoch walked with God.*

Jude 14,15. *Enoch, also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgement upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.*

While Lamech sinned foully in the family of Cain, Enoch shone brightly among the descendants of Seth. In the worst times, some godliness will raise its head. A star often glitters in the darkest night. In a waste wilderness, some solitary flowers bloom. A green spot sparkles amid an expanse of sands. When sin rushes in like a flood, a barrier from the Spirit meets it. When the Lord's cause lies very low, some saint confesses God; some faithful hand points up to heaven; some noble champion draws the sword of truth; some preacher of righteousness uplifts the gospel banner. While the Head breathes, the members do not wholly die. Satan never reigns undisputedly. There was an Enoch in the midnight of the old world.

His miniature is exceedingly lovely. It shows much beauty in a little space. One touch displays the man: "he walked with God". But in that simple phrase we read the pure consistency of his happy life. His career was the brightness of the tropics, the clear blue of a summer sky, the tranquil flow of an un-ruffled stream. Blessed man! He took no step but leaning on his God; he did nothing but as in God's sight; he spoke no word but as to God's listening ear. God was his light within, his life without – the polar star of all his being. He knew no deviating path, no double motive, no divided heart. His way was narrow, but it led straight forward. He saw his guide, and followed fully.

Thus he lived a type of what the Spirit can effect. What man has become through heavenly grace, man may still become through the same grace. The height attained before the flood, is not too high for other days. Away then with the thought that evenness of godly walk is too sublime for present earth! It is indeed a fearful truth that the wells of birth-corruption are very deep, that evil cleaves to us as the very skin, that Satan ever tempts, that the

¹Taken, with editing, from Law's *Beacons of the Bible*.

world spreads most fascinating snares, that man unaided surely sinks. But the Spirit lives and loves and is omnipotent. He can subdue iniquities, blunt temptation's arrows, win the heart to Christ and fill it with all the fullness of God. Thus the saint, linked to sinful flesh, can still walk closely with his God. Enochs may still bless the earth.

Child of God, do you lament your distance from this state? Be humbled, for you are not what you might be. Investigate the cause. Too often prayer is lifeless, infrequent, vague, pointless; the eye of faith is slumbering, or not intent on Christ; the heart ceases to watch; the shield is dropped; the sword is sheathed; the Spirit is grieved; the Word is not the constant food; ordinances are negligently used; the wings of wandering thoughts are not clipped; indolence puts out the fire of zeal. A walk with God is far from self, from sin, from worldly cares, from formal worship, and from frivolity's enfeebling whirl. It seeks heaven with heavenward face, besieging it with unremitting cries. It works for God, is faithful to His truth, is strong in His strength, rejoices in His presence, is valiant for His glory. "Enoch walked with God."

It may be said that he was thus a magnet to attract and not a beacon to deter. His life indeed allured others to holy paths. The halo around him was the winning beauty of devotedness to God. But while he meekly lived, he boldly preached. His steps were gentle, but his words were the thunder's roar. Among the sinners of the old world his voice was trumpet-clearness. The Spirit records his keynote. He spoke of the Judgement seat. He raised on high the great white throne. He warned of a tremendous reckoning. He told of the world's end and of the endlessness beyond. His spirit bounded to time's final goal.

Yet Enoch seems not to have dwelt on Jesus in humiliation, bearing sin and making full atonement. He strode over the first advent, the glorious ascension to God's right hand, the sitting down on the mediatorial throne, and all the wonders of Christ's wondrous reign. He pictured the awe of the concluding scene. His beacon was the coming Judge. Thus he proclaimed, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of His saints, to execute judgement upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him".

We hence learn that the old world did not rush unwarned to ruin. God did not leave them without clear notice. They were told of the sure end. They knew how terrible the wages of iniquity were. The upraised arm was shown. The crushing blow was fore-announced. They heard that clouds were gathering and that shelter should be sought. The cry went forth, "Behold the Judge standeth before the door".

So it has always been. In every case, God will be justified when He speaks and clear when He judges. Men press on to hell, surmounting many barriers. They will not turn even for the prize of heaven. Too late, one agonised confession will ring sadly in each lost cell: my anguish is my merited desert; many a signpost told that my path was towards this misery; I knew of righteous judgment; this end was blazoned on many a warning scroll; the blame is mine, even as is the suffering; I stopped my ears; I steeled my heart. I trampled on restraints; therefore I am here; justice is just, and I am righteously undone.

Reader, these thoughts lead directly to Enoch's beacon. Mark it, and you shall escape this doom. Holy Spirit, come and give realising views. All must be darkness, without Thy rays. All must be light, if Thou wilt grant Thy presence. All will be hardness, except Thou melt. The rock will soften if Thou wilt mercifully touch.

A prelude sounds, Behold, let every slumberer awake. You listless ones, listen. Let every eye turn hither, for soon each eye must meet the sight. A revelation dawns, dimming all that earth ever saw. Let all minds now contemplate.

Look onward; realise; behold. What is the spectacle? Who do you see? The Lord comes. The God-man is revealed. Jesus appears unclouded, manifest, in open glory. It is He who took flesh as Bethlehem's babe, He who grew up at Nazareth, He who walked a lowly man beside the Sea of Galilee, He who bedewed the garden with His blood of agony, He who bare the scourge, the buffetings, the mockery, the crown of thorns, He who died accursed on the accursed tree and suffered all the penal anguish of human sins. He comes to close the scene of earth and wrap up the worn-out scroll. "Behold, He cometh."

Child of God, "Behold". Gaze steadily. It is your own Jesus. "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11). Recognise your kinsman, your elder brother, your unfailing friend. It is He, who loved you with an everlasting love, who loved you more than His own life, who espoused you to Himself in righteousness and truth for ever, who welcomed death that you might live, who thinks His heavens incomplete without you. By faith you often sense His smile, see your name upon His heart, hear the whispers of His love, lean upon His arm and joy in His fellowship. Now see Him at hand in very person, in glorious nearness. Behold, the Judge is your own Jesus.

Christless ones, "Behold" He whom you scorned, reviled, rejected – He whose blood you counted as a worthless thing, He whom you crucified afresh, whose love you ridiculed, whose wrath you braved, whose cause you

strove to counteract, whose kingdom you would willingly have trampled down, whose sceptre you defied, whose humble followers you derided, maligned, oppressed, whose warnings you rejected, whose truth was your jest, whose ministers you shunned, whose word you hated, whose promises and threats you sneered at. "Behold", this Jesus comes.

But who can describe the actual spectacle? Faith, with her eagle eye intently fixed on heaven, strives to conceive what soon will shine forth in reality. But weak is the effort. No painter's skill can represent the blazing flame, the sun in midday splendour, the glow of life in the human face, the expression of the sparkling eye. Paul's eloquence could not relate the words of Paradise; they were unspeakable. No angel's tongue can open out the riches of Christ; they are unsearchable. So this sight exceeds all skill of utterance. We know only that "the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him" (Mt 25:31). "The Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father" (Mt 16:27).

But here description must be silent. Let the sun intensify its rays into one focus, and magnify ten thousand times its present lustre; that brightness would be but an expiring torch – a dying spark – compared to Jesus thus appearing. His human form – for human it will ever be – will be as dazzling as Deity can render it, and every eye shall see it.

The encircling retinue too will be worthy of the King of kings, and worthy of the purpose of His advent. All the holy angels spread their wings around. Heaven sends forth its total armies. The whole company of the angelic host encircle their descending Lord. They attend in all their glittering multitudes. Thousand thousands minister unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand swell the train. Think of the beauty of one seraph's form; think of the concentrated beauty of the collected throng; think of the God-man Jesus superlatively shining above all. And still thought touches not the grand reality.

But the glory of this retinue is more glorious yet. Every angel shall be present; so too every saint. All who are Christ's, from righteous Abel to the last-born child of faith, shall add their numbers to the swell of triumph. They shall be very many. Jude depicts their hosts as myriads. At present they may appear a little drop in the vast sea of the ungodly but, when thus gathered into one mass, they will be more than numbers can express.

Believer, mourn not, though now you often seem to stand alone. Truly you are united to a band who are more than the stars in multitude, more than the sands which gird all oceans.

They shall be very bright. "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory" (Col 3:4). The corruptible shall have put on incorruption. The mortal shall be robed in immortality. The

natural body shall be changed into the lightness, purity, and power of spirit. We now bear the image of the earthly, and it is base and low and liable to pains and sad defilements. We shall then bear the image of the heavenly, and it shall be as lovely and perfect as the righteousness of God.

But why are the saints thus gloriously assembled? It is theirs now to sit as high assessors in the Judgement. "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" (1 Cor 6:2). Again, "The Ancient of days came, and judgement was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom" (Dan 7:22).

Beloved, your earthly lot may be neglect, contempt, reproach and poverty. You may drink the bitter cup of scorn. It was so with your heavenly Lord. Shall the poor servant covet greater favour? But the end is near. The scene shall change. Jesus shall re-appear. Then you shall have "beauty for ashes". Then you shall be arrayed in glory by His side. Your place shall be upon His very throne. They who crushed you shall see and tremble and bewail.

The ensuing scene is vivified by terms familiar to the courts of men. Well-known images thus awfully throw light upon the sequel. It is written: "The judgement was set, and the books were opened" (Dan 7:10). Again, "We shall all stand before the judgement seat of Christ" (Rom 14:10). Again, "We must all appear," or be made apparent, conspicuous, manifest "before the Judgement seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor 5:10). Once more: "I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened, and another book was opened, which is the book of life, and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works" (Rev 20:11,12). Thus graphically is the consummation pictured.

We are thus led in lively thought to intermingle in transactions which must take place. The Spirit takes us by the very hand and brings us to the dread tribunal. He guides us now to take our station, where we so soon must stand. He almost constrains us to make the future present. Who now can say that coming judgement is an obscure hint? It is revealed in clearest light. It is proclaimed in strongest terms. It is displayed in gigantic magnitude. O that the world would learn that it is sure, near, inevitable; that it will be universal; that it will be final. Each child of man must act his part. All who are Christ's shall then receive their crowns. All who are not found in Him must meet their condemnation.

But Enoch's teaching omits the full acquittal of the just. Each had indeed

his countless and most frightful sins. Each in nature, and by act, had merited the depths of hell. But long ago each had endured his fullest punishment – when the redeeming God-man died. Each too had put on by faith the glories of His glorious righteousness. Each had exhibited by holy walk his vital union with the Lord of life. Each displays full evidence. Each holds the title-deeds to pardon, life, glory. Each has in his heart the meetness for this home. God is faithful. Therefore they are welcomed on the strong ground of right. Jesus purchased heaven and purchased them and made them fit. They hear: “Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world (Mt 25:34). They ascend to thrones of light. Glory, glory to the God of grace! Glory, glory to the work of Christ!

But Enoch, dealing with sinners, sings not this song of triumph. He shows not the chariots which bear the saints aloft. That he might check and scare from sin's destructive paths, he opens the terrifying side. He drags the ungodly forward. They must confront the great white throne. The Judge appears, “to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches, which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him”.

To convince. Conscience is now terribly awake. It may have slept amid the warnings he was given before death. It may have stifled all inward tremors under the preaching of the gospel. But now it is all life. Its eyes are widely open to the iniquity of lost days, the flimsiness of vain excuse, the positive reality of contracted guilt, the worthlessness of now-vanished hopes, the justice of the now-arrived rejection, the truthfulness of all God's Word, the inevitable consequence of unpardoned sin.

Earth has now fled away. The guilty have no refuge in this world. Heaven is for the righteous. The guilty have no righteousness. Hell is for the ungodly. They are ungodly. They see it now. They own it. And they must endure. They are convinced that their whole life was spent in toiling hard to earn the wages of the devil. The time for payment has arrived. The reckoning place is hell. The light of the white throne makes all things clear. Wilful ignorance and self-deception are no longer blind. Memory is awake in agonised review. It sees in one expanding glance the history of all past days. Each action is apparent in true form. Each word again sounds loudly. Each rapid thought swells to the frightful magnitude of overt acts. But each act, each word, each thought, is only sin. Denial, extenuation, palliation have vanished; or if they show themselves, they aggravate and mock.

Truth now reigns. Confession speaks: Such were our lives; these are our sins; this is our fault; this is our righteous doom; this is our merited misery; the Judge of all the earth does right.

The command lingers no more. "Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Mt 22:13). They "shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power" (2 Th 1:9). "These shall go away into everlasting punishment" (Mt 25:46).

You who are not safe in Christ – who have not found the shelter of His saving wings, who have not fled for refuge to His cross, who are not hid in the clefts of His wounded side, who are not washed in the laver of His blood, who are not covered beneath His sin-concealing righteousness – listen to Enoch's faithful word. You, your works, your speeches, your thoughts are all ungodly. "If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" (1 Pet 4:18). These lives of yours will all rise up again on the Judgement Day and prove your guilt and call aloud for wrath.

But the trumpet sounds not yet. The throne is not erected yet. The Judge indeed stands before the door, but still His entrance tarries. Judgement is ready, but not yet quite come. The angels spread their wings, but they fly not. You yet have an opportunity. Delay affords you space.

O then, by all the terrors of that terrific day, by all the certainties of the foretold assize, by the sure unfolding of all your most secret deeds, by the exposure of all that you have done and have been, by the inevitable sentence, by the outbreaking wrath, by the down-hurling into hell, by the ever-gnawing chains, by the unquenchable fire, by the everlasting worm, by the eternity of torment, you are now implored to pause, to think, to turn, to weep, to be repentant, to seek mercy, to flee to Christ, to hasten to His cross, to clasp His arms of love, to take Him as your only hope, to cling to Him as your only refuge, to embrace Him as your full salvation. Make Jesus now your friend. He will come to be your Judge.

The Saviour of the Lost¹

A Sermon Outline by *John Kennedy*

Luke 19:10. *For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.*

I am to speak about that which was lost, about the coming of the Son of Man, and the reason for His coming.

That which is Lost.

What is lost is not where it was before.

In Adam before the Fall, man was in the image of God.

¹Preached in Dingwall on 15 October 1882, and now edited.

As fallen sinners we have lost the image of God.
But the soul is precious; there would be no search otherwise.
Christ (in Luke 15) gives views of lost sinners:
The lost coin will not come back unless it is searched for.
The sinner is spiritually dead, and must be searched for.
He is like a lost sheep, ignorant and prone to wander.
He is like a lost son, foolish and rebellious.
He is responsible, but he is beside himself.
The coin is of no use unless found; the sheep will be devoured; and the son ruined.

The Son of Man Is Come.

One who is the Son of Man, as no one else is.
He assumed our nature apart from sin.
He is also the eternal Son of God.
He made the heavens and the earth.
He has come among men of the earth.
His place is on the throne of God.
He came in the fullness of time.
He has come, was the cry in the days of His flesh.

The reason for His Coming.

To seek and save lost sinners.
He seeks that He may find.
He finds that He may feed.

Application.

Has He found and saved you?
He comes to you in the gospel.
He comes to you by His Spirit and Word.
Has He found you in Himself?

Book Review

Bishop J C Ryle's Autobiography, The Early Years, edited by Andrew Atherstone, published by the Banner of Truth Trust, hardback, 387 pages, £15.50, obtainable from the Free Presbyterian Bookroom.

Ryle is best known as the forceful writer of such highly-profitable books as *Holiness* and *Practical Religion*. When he was 57, in 1873, he dictated an account of his life for the benefit of his children. An edition of the autobiography was published in 1976, but it was a copy of a copy, and therefore there were problems with the accuracy of the transcription. But at the end of

2015 the original manuscript was rediscovered, among the archives of one of the Bishop's descendants; it was used for this edition.

Most of Ryle's account of his life is interesting, but the details of his family background, which occupies the first chapter, quickly become tedious. No attempt is made, in this review, to summarise Ryle's early life, as described in the autobiography; this was done in a review article on a recent biography by Iain H Murray, published in the March issue of this *Magazine*. For those new to Ryle's life, this biography is where they should start.

The actual autobiography, in fact, occupies less than half of this new volume; seven appendices take up the rest of the space. The first appendix, describing the entries in the Ryle family Bible, are not of much general interest. Likewise the speeches given by Ryle at the Eton Society, when he was still unconverted, can be passed over without much loss, except that they demonstrate his considerable speaking ability, which was to be shown, in later life, in his preaching and writing.

Appendix 5, "Ryle's Earliest Tracts", is much more profitable. At one time, Ryle was probably best known as a writer of tracts. It was estimated that 12 million copies of them were produced in his lifetime. Some of these tracts were collected into volumes that are still appreciated today. Five of Ryle's earliest tracts are published here; they are very impressive, pointed pieces of writing. One was produced following a tragic accident at Yarmouth. Crowds had gathered to watch a stunt performed on the North River to promote a circus. Far too many people congregated on a bridge, which collapsed and 79 people were drowned. Ryle asked his readers to consider where they would now be if they have been among those suddenly called away to eternity. He called on them to consider their ways, to "repent and be converted".

Other tracts were much longer. One first directed to his own people at the 1846 New Year, ran to 6000 words (approximately 12 pages of this *Magazine*). Among many other points, he exhorted readers (and himself): "Let us begin . . . with a humble confession of past unprofitableness and shortcomings", "Let us be on our guard against false doctrine", "Let us resolve to make conscience of little things in our daily religion". His new year tract for 1847 was even longer, containing 10 000 words. To show how directly these tracts were based on Scripture, the Editor has given the reference for every quotation and allusion in them; the 1846 tract contains almost 160 references.

Also included is the sermon Ryle preached on the Sabbath following the death of his first wife. Practical as always, Ryle highlighted from his text, Hebrews 6:12, words of (1) warning, (2) encouragement, (3) quickening, (4) instruction, (5) duty. He addressed "undecided souls" as "having too much religion to be happy in the world, and keeping too much of the world to be

happy in your religion”. And he expressed the hope that “the events of the last few days might convince you that this world is but a shadow and the world to come the reality – that the things seen are all passing away, and Christ and the Word the only portion which will never change!”

Ryle, having served his own generation by the will of God, has long since passed away, in 1900. We are to seek to serve God in our generation and we would wish that, with God’s blessing, Ryle’s writings, including those in this book, may be used as a means of helping us to do so.

Notes and Comments

Death of Martin McGuinness

The death of Martin McGuinness on March 21 brought a former Provisional IRA leader into the presence of his Maker and Judge. By repute, at least, he was responsible for numerous atrocities for which he never publicly expressed any regret. Latterly, as a Northern Ireland politician, he forsook violence, but this appears to have been more a change of policy than a change of heart.

“The blood of Jesus Christ, [God’s] Son, cleanseth . . . from all sin”, and had Mr McGuinness gone to that atoning blood, he too would have been cleansed from his sin. But we have no reason to think that he did so, and the mere elapse of time does not cleanse from any sin. Time may bury sin as far as the memory and conscience are concerned, but the presence of God will strip that covering away in an instant. “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Heb 10:31). What Christ said of Judas applies to all who die in their sins: “It had been good for that man if he had not been born” (Mt 26:24).

DWBS

Mindfulness

The pace of modern living causes many to succumb to rising stress levels. Numerous illnesses are being diagnosed as stress-induced, and work-related stress is common, as people strive to meet difficult deadlines. The resulting absence from work is at a record high in the UK. However, God has ordained that man should work. It is a creation ordinance. Paul wrote, “If any would not work, neither should he eat” (2 Th 3:10); but we are also commanded to rest. God gave us the Sabbath as a day of rest and worship. Jesus told His disciples, “Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place and rest awhile” (Mk 6:31) and heaven is the ultimate rest for the children of God. Sadly, secular people reject the wisdom of God’s Word; so it is little wonder they get stressed. However, we find even true believers experiencing stress and finding it hard to get their work/rest balance right as they struggle to find

time to relax. One solution on offer to this stress-ridden society has become popular; it is called Mindfulness. So what is it and what are its claims?

Mindfulness promises rest by detachment and meditation, and many professionals advocate it as a relaxation technique. It claims to be spiritually neutral and its name has a reassuring ring to it. Practising it, it is said, allows the mind to slow down and meditate on the present. It teaches participants how to see sights around them and deal better with immediate pressures, which, it is claimed, leads to an overall sense of wellbeing. All this seems very plausible, and many psychologists and psychotherapists, both in the NHS and private practice, now employ Mindfulness as a mainstream therapy – as do many large businesses.

An NHS website states, “Being more aware of the present moment can help us enjoy the world around us more and understand ourselves better. Mindfulness is a practical way to notice thoughts, sensations, sights, sounds and smells. The practice may be simple, but because it is so different to how our minds normally behave, it takes practice. Mindfulness might simply be described as choosing and learning to control our focus of attention. This is a very simple concept which originates from the ancient Buddhist practice, but is essentially non-religious. Mindfulness is about being in the moment, not regretting the past or worrying about the future.”

Reading the above quotation rings alarm bells. Mindfulness cannot be as spiritually neutral as would first appear if it is rooted in “ancient Buddhism” and therefore should not be described as “non-religious”. If it is about “not regretting the past” it would appear to leave no room for repentance for past actions. One writer, Marcia Montenegro, who was once a practising Buddhist but now makes a Christian profession, states, “Mindfulness is more than a meditative practice; it is an outlook on life and reality that ideally results from a type of meditation designed to cultivate detachment. Detachment in Buddhism is necessary because [it] teaches that attachment to this world, to your thinking, to your identity as an individual self, and other attachments, such as desires, keep you in the cycle of rebirth”, or reincarnation. She adds that Mindfulness “is essential to Buddhism, which leads to lessening attachment and eventual enlightenment and liberation”.

So Buddhism and Mindfulness are intimately linked together in an attempt to destroy the self and empty the mind, as the practitioner enters an altered state of consciousness, similar to hypnosis. Rational thinking and judgement are suspended and the mind is dangerously open to anything – including evil powers. Here the Buddhist seeks liberation – a nirvana, which is said to be the extinction of all illusions, including the illusions of one’s own identity. Ultimately one is supposed to attain a state of “non-existence”.

Marcia Montenegro comments on the irrationality as well as the danger of the teachings of this religion. “Buddhism has no supreme God, no mind and no self. Ultimate reality is *sunyata*, a term loosely translated as the void or emptiness. It is not the emptiness in the sense of nothingness, but rather the ultimate reality of formlessness from which all has arisen. The belief is that the world is full of rising and falling, and peace comes with the cessation of rising and falling. But there can be no joy or peace in formlessness, because the self is not there, since there is no self.”

However much it may be dressed up to appeal to our western culture – just as yoga is – Mindfulness can never be compatible with Christianity, as it is derived from eastern mysticism and a false religion. How subtle Satan is! How many lying devices he has to keep man in his vulnerable sinful state and how plausible they can appear. God deals so differently with us. He is faithful and tells us in His Word that we have a self, a personality made originally in His image, but that we are lost and fallen in Adam and are accountable as individuals. We need the Saviour, whom He has provided, that we might be saved from our sins and made whole in our persons, both soul and body, to all eternity. We are not to seek detachment, but attachment to Christ. If we die without Christ we will still have our personalities, our souls – but solemnly we will suffer, both in our souls and bodies, in a lost eternity. The self can never go out of existence.

Of course there are many legitimate medical treatments for stress and related illnesses, but if we are not saved we should be concerned about the lost condition of our soul; we should not try to get rid of such stress by Mindfulness or any other “refuge of lies”, but only by coming to Christ. How vital to be concerned about our precious never-dying souls! We need to cry to the Lord Jesus for salvation. He has the right solution for all our stresses, however great; He graciously calls to us in the gospel. “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Mt 11:28). *KHM*

Protestant View

Rome and Rwanda

The government of Rwanda in central Africa sent a request to the Vatican in November asking that the Roman Catholic Church should offer an apology for the role that some priests and nuns played in the fearful genocide of 1994, when around 800 000 people, mostly of the minority Tutsi ethnic group, were slaughtered by Hutu extremists. Dozens of Roman Catholic priests are believed to have been complicit in the killings, and some were alleged to

have personally participated in them. Several massacres were carried out in churches where people were seeking sanctuary.

Until now the Vatican has maintained that the Roman Church has borne no responsibility for this dreadful episode. But the Rwandan government has recently stated that “genocide denial and trivialisation continue to flourish in certain groups within the Church and genocide suspects have been shielded from justice within Catholic institutions”. After a visit to Rome in March by the Rwandan president, Paul Kagame, the Pope issued a statement conveying his “profound sadness” for the “genocide against the Tutsi”. He begged for God’s forgiveness “for the sins and failings of the Church and its members” who, the statement said, had “succumbed to hatred and violence”.

This papal statement is a plain contradiction of the Vatican’s previous denials. It demonstrates that, not only must the evidence have been incontrovertible that Roman Catholic figures were indeed involved in the massacres to varying degrees, but that Rome was willing to deny the truth for so long until political pressure forced a change of face. Here is yet more solemn and shameful evidence which will contribute to the enormous indictment against papal Rome in the day of accounts: “In her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth” (Rev 18:24). *AWM*

Church Information

Meeting of Synod

The Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland will meet in the Inverness church, on Tuesday, 23 May 2017, at 6.30 pm, DV, when the retiring Moderator, Rev D W B Somerset, will conduct public worship.

(Rev) *Keith M Watkins*, Clerk of Synod

Ministers’ Illness

Many readers will already know that Rev D Macdonald, North Uist, and Rev A B MacLean, Ingwenya, are each suffering from a serious illness. We hope that treatment will be successful, in the Lord’s kindness to them and to His Church, and we request prayer that this would be the case.

Mr Malcolm Gunn

Mr Malcolm Gunn, latterly an elder in the North Tolsta congregation, passed to his eternal rest on March 23. We send our sympathy to his wife and family.

Home Mission Fund

By appointment of Synod, this year’s special collection for the Home Mission Fund, is due to be taken in congregations during May.

W Campbell, General Treasurer

FREE PRESBYTERIAN PLACES OF WORSHIP

Scotland

- Aberdeen:** 2 Alford Place, AB10 1YD, Sabbath 11 am, 6 pm; Tuesday, 7.15 pm. Rev D W B Somerset BSc DPhil, 18 Carlton Place, Aberdeen, AB15 4BQ; tel: 01224 645250.
- Bracadale Duirinish-Strath:** **Struan:** Sabbath 12 noon. **Glendale** and **Vatten:** Sabbath 6pm, alternately. Thursday 7 pm, rotating between Struan, Vatten and Glendale. Contact Rev I D MacDonald; tel: 01478 612110.
- Dingwall:** Church, Hill Street: Sabbath 11 am, 6.30 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. **Beauly** (Balblair): Sabbath 6.30 pm, Thursday 7.30 pm. Rev Neil M Ross BA, 10 Achary Rd, Dingwall, IV15 9JB; tel/fax: 01349 864351, e-mail: nmross2001@yahoo.co.uk.
- Dornoch:** Sabbath 11.30 am. Manse tel: 01862 810615. **Bonar:** Sabbath 6 pm. Wednesday 7.30 pm (alternately in Dornoch and Bonar). **Lairg:** Church and Manse; **Rogart:** Church; no F P services. Contact Rev N M Ross; tel: 01349 864351.
- Dundee:** Manse. No F P Church services.
- Edinburgh:** 63 Gilmore Place, EH3 9NU, Sabbath 11 am, 6 pm; Thursday 7.30 pm. Rev D Campbell, 35B Barnton Avenue West, Edinburgh EH4 6DF; tel: 0131 312 8227, e-mail: dcampbell1560@gmail.com.
- 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, F P Manse, Bridge Street, KW12 6YG; tel: 01847 831758. **Thurso:** Sabbath 5 pm; **Wick:** Church; **Strathly:** Church; no F P Church services.
- Harris (North):** **Tarbert:** Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm; Thursday 7 pm. **Stockinish:** Tuesday 7 pm. Rev J B Jardine BD, F P Manse, Tarbert, Isle of Harris, HS3 3DF; tel: 01859 502253, e-mail: northharris.fpc@btopenworld.com.
- Harris (South):** **Leverburgh:** Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm. **Sheilebost:** Sabbath 12 noon (as intimated). Prayer meetings in **Leverburgh**, **Sheilebost** and **Strond** as intimated. Manse tel: 01859 520271. Contact Rev J B Jardine; tel: 01859 502253
- Inverness:** Chapel Street, Sabbath 11 am, 6.30 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. Rev K D Macleod BSc, 11 Auldcastle Road, Inverness, IV2 3PZ; tel: 01463 712872.
- Kinlochbervie:** Sabbath 11.30 am; Tuesday 7.30 pm. Manse tel: 01971 521268. **Scourie:** Sabbath 6 pm.
- Kyle of Lochalsh:** Sabbath 6 pm. Manse tel: 01599 534933. Contact Rev D A Ross; tel: 01445 731340.
- Laide** (Ross-shire): Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm; Wednesday 7.30 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 Brierciffe 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: Mr David Kuiper; tel: 519 363 0367; or Mr Gilbert Zekveld; tel: 519 363 5899. 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: 45 Cliff Road, Sabbath 11 am, 7 pm; Wednesday 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 Levytskyi; tel: 00 38 048 785 19 24; e-mail: dlevytskyi@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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