

The Free Presbyterian Magazine

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

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

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Communions

January: First Sabbath: Nkayi; **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.

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

August: First Sabbath: Dingwall; **Second:** 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: First Sabbath: Leverburgh; **Second:** Glasgow; **Third:** Chiedza, Singapore.

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

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Marriage – God’s Gift

Marriage is a gift from God to mankind. After He had created Adam, He declared, “It is not good that the man should be alone” (Gen 2:18). And God, in His kindness, made provision for him; He created a woman as a “help meet” for him – perhaps, more literally, a help corresponding to him. That is what a wife is for her husband, and a husband for his wife: they are mutual helps for each other, in the ordinance appointed by God for Adam and Eve in the perfect environment of Eden.

Marriage is still a wonderful gift, even in this fallen world, a provision for which married couples should thank God again and again. But however close the friendship may be between two women, or between two men such as David and Jonathan, marriage was designed to be between one man and one woman; as God saw in His perfect wisdom, a man and a woman correspond to each other. Even in a sinful world, there is a real correspondence between a man and a woman, and it ought to be respected. Only those who reject the authority of God speaking in Scripture can begin to question the fact that marriage must be between one man and one woman.

After the creation of Adam and of Eve has been described, the narrative in Genesis continues: “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (2:24). Divine authority is indeed given here for a man and a woman to live together as a married couple. And this is the passage that Jesus quoted when challenged on the lawfulness of divorce. By referring to this passage, Jesus was affirming the divine authority for marriage, and indeed the divine authority of the whole of Old Testament Scripture.

He then added, “What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder” (Mt 19:6). No one, Jesus went on to declare, has any right to put away his spouse “except it be for fornication”. The only other situation where divorce is permissible is “such wilful desertion as can no way be remedied by the Church or civil magistrate” (*Westminster Confession of Faith* 24:6, which points the reader to 1 Cor 7:15). Accordingly cruelty, for instance, is not a sufficient ground for divorce, sad though such a situation is; but it may

well render separation necessary, for the safety of the one who has been abused, and even for the preservation of that person's life.

That marriage is an institution of huge significance should be clear from the comparison Paul makes, in Ephesians 5, between the relationship of a husband to his wife and the relationship between Christ and His Church. "Husbands, love your wives," Paul says, "even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it" (Eph 5:25). That he can make such a comparison, as inspired by the Holy Spirit, shows that marriage is not to be despised; rather it is to be respected as God's ordinance, and that respect is to extend to all that God has revealed about it. No generation ought ever to imagine that it has greater resources of wisdom than those God has revealed in Scripture. No one can ever improve on marriage, which is God's gift to mankind for their good.

Again Jesus' attendance at a wedding is evidence of His respect for the ordinance. He would never have involved Himself in anything unscriptural – in anything that was not according to the mind of God. His kindness to the couple whose marriage was being celebrated is remarkable; He delivered them from their embarrassing difficulty. And every marrying couple should seek the Lord's blessing on the occasion of their marriage, asking to be preserved from doing or saying anything sinful and praying that the whole occasion would be protected from everything inappropriate. But they should also seek God's blessing on their relationship throughout the entire time they will be spared to each other, that He would keep them from sin and preserve the love to each other which has brought them together. Further, they should seek God's blessing on whoever of them will survive the death of the other, to experience the sad and difficult circumstances of bereavement.

The counsel of Mary, the mother of Jesus, to the servants at the wedding is well worth noting: "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it" (Jn 2:5). This is good counsel for everyone; in particular, for couples at the time of their marriage. Not least does Christ say to *them*, "Follow Me" (Mt 9:9). How can they expect to be upheld as they face the difficulties, the stresses and the sorrows that may confront them during their time together – and often unexpectedly – unless they are sincere followers of Christ?

When Matthew was called to follow Christ, it was a summons to become a disciple – which involved learning, so to speak, in Christ's school. Those who become husband and wife should feel their need of being taught by this great Teacher who has access to their hearts through the Holy Spirit, who brings about spiritual effects. The result of such teaching is that the couple will live godly lives – walking together through this world, toward heaven, looking unto Jesus. And if the Lord will give them children, how much wis-

dom they need to bring up the little ones in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, especially in an age that is so much controlled by a secular agenda! How much they need God’s blessing in the responsibilities involved in looking after children, who are themselves a wonderful gift from God.

The beginning of following Christ is to trust in Him as Saviour, for “the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world” (1 Jn 4:14). Apart from Him we will continue in our sinful ways, doomed to eternal destruction. But if we begin to look to Christ, we have His promise: “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Heb 13:5). How good for a young couple to submit, in God’s mercy, to the authority of the great King who has undertaken to protect His subjects and to lead them on safely through all the troubles and temptations that, in one way or another, people experience in this world! However difficult these troubles and temptations may be, the promise is: “*All things work together* for good to them that love God” (Rom 8:28) – not every individual event, but all things together under the gracious control of their Father in heaven. Yet even their sin, *together with* the repentance that follows, will work for their good – but not apart from the repentance which God graciously gives.

What are the partners in a marriage to seek? Of course, they are to love each other and help each other. But they are to “seek *first* the kingdom of God” – giving this a greater priority than everything else they must attend to. There is no promise of God’s care and blessing to those who reject, or react carelessly to, the calls of the gospel. But above their responsibilities to each other and to other people, married couples (and single people also) are to remember the demand of the God who created us: “Whether . . . ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Cor 10:31). This is a high standard, indeed an impossible standard if even God’s children try to attain it in their own strength. How necessary then that everyone – married couples in particular – pray for help and strength in seeking to keep all God’s commandments, in heart, speech and behaviour, so that they may honour God and seek His glory in everything they do!

They are to remember that it is only for Christ’s sake, through the work of the Holy Spirit in their souls, that they can begin to seek God’s glory in anything. It should be helpful to recall that Christ has ascended on high, to His throne in heaven, from where He is distributing the gifts He has received “for men; yea, for the rebellious also” (Ps 68:18). Among these gifts is grace to seek to live to God’s glory in all kinds of circumstances, even the most difficult. Therefore let us all, not least married couples, remember the exhortation: “In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths” (Prov 3:6), and let us seek grace to put it into practice at all times.

The Marriage Feast¹

A Sermon by R M M'Cheyne

Matthew 22:1-14. *And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said, The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, and sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. . . .*

This parable describes to us, briefly and vividly, God sending the gospel first of all to the Jews and then to the Gentiles, and the different receptions which it received from each of them. Let us go over the different parts of the parable.

The *first* lesson which this parable teaches us is: **God has all along been inviting men to a marriage and a marriage feast.** "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, and sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage" (vv 2-4). This was the very message which all the prophets and apostles of old were commissioned to carry to God's chosen people of the Jewish nation. This was the very message which Christ Himself brought with Him, for He did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. It is He who spoke this parable and this is the very message which we now bring to you.

(1) *It is a marriage that you are invited to.* Men in all ages have been naked and poor and penniless – not only without any righteousness, but lying under the curse of God's wrath, infinitely sinful and abominable in His sight. Yet the delights of the Lord Jesus, the King's son, have been ever with the children of men and He condescends to choose out of them those whom He will take as His bride, that they may be with Him eternally, to behold and share His glory. Just as the husband becomes liable for all the debts of his wife,² He agreed to bear all the iniquities of His bride in His own body on the tree. And just as all the honour and merit of the husband is given to the wife, so Christ's own merit and loveliness shall be a garment to clothe His bride. He has accordingly sent forth His messengers to invite all sinners to become one with Him, and His message is, "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people and thy father's house". And the clothing He offers in which to bring them in is of "wrought gold".

¹The final sermon from the book, *Revival Truth*; it has been edited.

²This was Scottish law in M'Cheyne's time.

To this day, my friends, my anxious desire is to espouse you to that one Husband, that you may be “members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones”. What infinite honour that the Son of God should come from the bosom of the Father and propose so close, so mysterious, so blessed a union with base and sinful worms, whose bodies are of clay and who “are crushed before the moth”. If there is one thing more wonderful than this in the whole world, it is that any one of us, base-born worms of a day, should refuse a union of such unspeakable grace!

(2) *It is a feast that all are invited unto.* “Behold, I have prepared my dinner . . .” (v 4). At every wedding there is a feast, and so it is here. The blessings of the gospel have all along been set forth to men as a feast. Did not Solomon set them forth as a feast? (Prov 9). There he speaks of Wisdom having “buildd her house” and “hewn out her seven pillars: she hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table. . . . Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled.”

Did not Isaiah set them forth as a feast (Is 25), when he says, “In this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined”? And again, in chapter 55, He invites all, saying, “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk [the richest parts of every feast] without money, and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto Me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.”

Did not Christ set the gospel blessings forth as a feast, when He said, “He that cometh unto Me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst. For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed”? Again, does He not set them forth as a feast in the holy ordinance of the Supper, where bread and wine are offered to you, to picture the blessings of redemption? Yes, we have utterly failed in our preaching of Jesus, if we have not set Him forth to you as “a feast of fat things, of wines on the lees well refined”. And you have utterly misunderstood every sermon that you ever heard, if you think that we have been inviting you to anything but a *feast* of peace and love, of joy and eternal life.

Yes, the message we are commissioned to bring is not one of wrath, but of love and joy. “Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage” (v 4). I beseech you to note that we do not invite you to come and make a feast for yourselves – to bring your own provisions with

you. No, we invite you to a feast that is already prepared. "All things are ready." The oxen and the fatlings are killed; the wine is poured out; the garments are waiting for you to accept them; all things are ready; not one thing is unprovided.

Pardon of all your sins is ready. God has provided the ram for the burnt offering. You do not have to bring anything to blot out your sins before you come. No, pardon of sin is one of the dishes of the feast. An old writer says, "A good conscience is a continual feast". And so it is, but who has a good conscience? He only who has partaken of the Lamb of God, that "taketh away the sin of the world". He has a conscience void of offence, not because he never sinned, but because his sin is all taken away.

A garment of righteousness is ready. Christ has provided wedding garments for all the guests, as was customary in the East. You cannot say, Wait till I have made myself worthy to come, for this garment is part of the feast. "All things are ready: come unto the marriage."

The oil of the Holy Spirit is ready. At all feasts, the guests were anointed with the most precious ointments; and now in the East, a rose oil is sprinkled on every guest.³ So Jesus has provided this promise of the Father. You cannot say, Stop till I have changed my heart; for that is one of the good things of the feast. "All things are ready: come unto the marriage."

If you keep away from the feast after such an invitation as this, the only reason is that you are too proud to come to a feast where you provide nothing. Be sure then that if you do not come to the real feast in the gospel, you do not come to the image of it in the Lord's Supper, lest you eat and drink judgement! Will you perform such a mockery on your own soul – such a mockery on God – as to refuse to partake of the true feast this day, and yet sit down at that which is an image of it another day? First take, as we freely offer you, the true feast, and then what is any man that he should forbid you the bread and wine at the table of the Lord?

The *second* lesson which we learn from this parable is, ***the treatment which the Jews gave to the message*** (vv 3-6). Three kinds of refusal are given to the message.

First, they would not come. This was the way in which simple souls treated the message. It seems never to have reached their understanding. Perhaps they were asleep before the messenger got to the end of his message. They have no reason to give, just that they will not come. How many such people there are among us! Simple souls who never yet could understand that the Bible message was addressed to them. How many will not so much as give a hearing to the messenger of Christ – will not come as far as the church to

³Perhaps describing the late 1830s, when M'Cheyne and colleagues visited the East.

hear the invitation! How many have the Bible lying by them and do not read, or even if they do, they do not hear it speaking to them! Or if they do come to the house of God, it is for custom's sake, or to while away the tedious hours of the drowsy Sabbath Day. Poor simple souls, loving their simplicity, who live and die in their ignorance! All that can be said of you, when you are sinking into hell and begin then for the first time to awake, is: Jesus would often have gathered you, but you would not.

The *second* class of refusers *treat religion with far greater respect*. They give the Word, and the ministers of the Word, a full and patient hearing – they hear the description of the feast and try to understand it, but weighing all they hear in the one scale and their farm and their merchandise in the other scale, they make light of the message. These are the thorny-ground hearers over again. How many such people there were among the Jews! How many there are among you! How many of you have set your whole mind on business and say to us in your inmost heart, There is something in what you say and, when I have a convenient season, I will call for you. When Lot tried to warn his sons-in-law, he seemed to them as one that mocked. And so, when we stand here inviting you Sabbath after Sabbath, you treat us as idle talebearers. It is enough to make an angel weep to see such spirits as yours – which, if redeemed and sanctified, might rejoice more loudly than angels before the throne – grovelling all your days without one thought higher than your farm or your merchandise!

The *third* set of refusers *took the servants and entreated them spitefully* (v 6). These formed a large class among the Jews – so large that Christ named Jerusalem, “Thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee”. And Stephen asked them the question, “Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted?” Again we find Christ warning His disciples that they would be used in the same way, “Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves . . . and ye shall be hated of all men for My name's sake”. “If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.”

And it is so to this day and specially so in our day. If there is a faithful and godly minister in any place, be well assured that some have hated and spoken ill of him because of his message. When an ardent preacher of Christ comes first into the work of the ministry, he is so conscious of having no motive but love for perishing souls that he thinks everyone will receive him with open arms. Alas, he should have read more deeply how unconverted men treated the Master. If they called Him Beelzebub, what will they not call His servants? “It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master.”

Ah yes, the sooner the romance of life is broken up the better. The sooner he comes to know that there are many who will love him the less because he loves them the more, so much the better. Search and try your own hearts, my friends, and if you feel disgusted by my plainness – if you turn away with dislike from my pointedness – think, on your way home, how much you resemble those who mocked the disciples, saying, “These men are full of new wine”. How like you are in spirit to those who took the “servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them”.

The *third* lesson which we learn from this parable is: ***How God rewarded these unbelieving Jews, and sent the gospel message to the Gentiles*** (vv 7-10). Observe God’s judgement on the unbelieving Jews. “He was wroth, and sent forth His armies.” The armies which destroyed Jerusalem were the heathen armies of Rome, under the command of the heathen emperor Titus, and yet here they are called His armies. Does not this show that all power is God’s, in heaven and on earth – that He is the governor among the nations. The Assyrian and his armies were but a rod in God’s hand – an axe and a saw – even when “he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but it is in his heart to cut off nations not a few”. Yet all armies are under God’s control – wars, famines, plagues all fulfil His counsel. “None can stay His hand [from working], or say unto Him, What doest thou?”

O believers, why should you fear any evil tidings? Let your heart be fixed, trusting in the Lord. If He is for you, who can be against you? They are more that be with us than they that be with them. And you who turn away from the invitations of Christ just in the same way as the Jews did – you who will not come just because you will not, you who make light of it and prefer your farm and your merchandise, you who treat His servants spitefully in your hearts, loving them all the less because they love you the more – consider that God is an unchangeable God, that He is a God of principle, not of passion; that He acts from principles as fixed and sure in the world of grace as He does in the world of nature!

If then He did not spare the Jews, do you think He will spare you? If He burned up their city, will He not burn up your city? As surely as Jerusalem is at this day trodden under foot of the Gentiles, and the highly-favoured nation is now composed of strangers and wanderers – a taunt, a proverb and a curse in every nation of the globe – so surely shall you be vagabonds and outcasts in a miserable eternity, if you persist in turning away from this message.

Observe how God sends the message to the Gentiles (vv 9,10). Before this refusal, the disciples were to go only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. But now the message is, “Go ye into all the world”; and, accordingly, we go to every door; we carry the message to every bosom. And the effect of the

call is just as Christ represents it. We gather together as many as we find, both bad and good. The parable of the tares shows that we are to expect bad and good together in the professing Church. The parable of the net shows the same thing, that the last day will be the time of separation.

These three parables seem to teach us the impossibility of ever having what has been called a pure communion of the faithful on this side of eternity. There is but one assembly and one feast where the unclean cannot enter, and that is the general assembly and church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. Remember it is no sure test of you being a Christian that you partake of the Lord's Supper with Christians. Both bad and good will be found sitting at that table. The blood, the garment, the peace, the witness – these are the only true tests that you are a Christian indeed.

The *fourth* lesson we learn from this parable is: ***A day of separation and judgement is coming.*** “And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: and he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen” (vv 11-14).

(1) Learn from this that, *however much unconverted men may mingle with the godly on earth, they shall be at once detected in the judgement.* The tares are in this world growing up with the wheat in the same families, in the same congregations. The good fish and the bad fish are drawn to shore in the same net. Indeed those who have put on the righteousness of Jesus, and those who are dressed in the filthy rags of their own righteousness, sit down together at the same gospel feast and at the table of the Lord. And, however much godly ministers may warn and beseech the unconverted not to come to the Lord's table until they come to Christ, yet it ever will be so.

In our congregations, the bad and the good grow together till the harvest, but no longer! The king comes in to see the guests – the King of kings, the searcher of all hearts, who searches Jerusalem as with candles. His saints are all a goodly company, sitting with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, all dressed in spotless white garments; for the white linen is the righteousness of saints. In themselves, they were naked and vile, altogether unworthy of the presence of a king, and their best righteousnesses were as filthy rags. But they heard the message, “All things are ready”, and they came, standing in need of everything, and they put on Christ's white raiment, even the righteousness of God – a more comely raiment than that of angels – they obeyed the word of Christ, “Put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem”.

But the Christless soul, how naked and vile he shall be on that day! On

earth he was perhaps unnoticed; he lived on in decency and worldliness, waited on ordinances and partook of sacraments. But in the judgement, how naked and deformed, how vile and polluted he seems in the midst of the redeemed, who are all clothed with the righteousness of God. Like an ugly toad trawling in some lovely garden, like Satan when he appears in the ranks of the holy angels, so shall the Christless soul appear in that day, when he shall hear the awful words, "Friend; how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment?" It is easy to pass for decent religious men among your neighbours; it is easy to deceive ministers, and to deceive the world; it is easy to join with the people of God, and to sit down with them at the same sacrament.

But there is one whom you cannot deceive. There is one eye upon you at the feast that knows at a glance whether or not you have put on the righteousness of God, which is Christ's wedding garment. And at the forthcoming Lord's Supper you may venture to sit down at that feast to which none but believers are invited, yet not having this garment and not caring anything about it. It is true that He may suffer you to sit quietly and unchallenged here, but the day is at hand – at the very doors, for many of you – when the King shall say to you, "Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment?"

(2) Learn that *every Christless soul will condemn itself*. "And he was speechless." So, my friends, it will be with you. Every Christless soul before me this day may be ready to give a thousand excuses why you are as you are. Indeed I dare say not one Christless soul shall sit down at the sacrament but shall have some kind of defence for so unreasonable and so unmeaning a profanation. But in that day you will be *speechless*; you will condemn yourselves. Think what blushes shall cover you when you have not a word to say. You that are stout-hearted and boasters, think how you shall be quashed and silenced. And will it not be the hardest part of your condemnation that you must condemn yourselves? If you could cry out, It is unjust, that would be some relief. But to feel that it is a just condemnation, this is the very hell of hell!

(3) Learn that *outer darkness will be the home of such souls*. The man thought he would enjoy the brilliance and joy of the feast, but instead he is cast into outer darkness. How much darker because of his former light! How dismal will your change be, you that sit down at our sacraments here and think of sitting down in heaven, who have no wedding-garment! You lovers of darkness, how just that outer darkness should be your portion!

(4) Remember that *many are called but few chosen*. When we speak to the unconverted, we speak to the many. You are all called this day, and all things

are ready. Are you of the many or of the few? How sad to think that most of you will not heed; most of you will not turn; most of you will go away to your “farm” and your “merchandise”, and will finally stand “speechless” before the throne! But, little flock, whose hearts the Lord has touched, who have put on the wedding garment, welcome to the feast of love! Take it as a pledge of your Father’s love, and that you shall never lack any good thing. Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

Luther and the Reformation¹

9. A First Set of Theses

J H Merle d’Aubigné

Luther displayed the same courage before the mighty of this world, that he had shown amid the most formidable dangers. The Elector was very pleased with Staupitz the vicar-general, who had made a rich harvest of relics in the Netherlands. Luther gave an account of them to Spalatin. A bishopric seemed to the only worthy reward for the services of the vicar-general. Luther strongly disapproved of such an idea. “There are many things which please your prince,” he wrote, “and which, nevertheless, are displeasing to God. I do not deny that [the Elector] is skilful in the matters of this world; but in what concerns God and the salvation of souls, I account him . . . sevenfold blind. I do not say this behind their backs, like a slanderer; I do not conceal it from them, for I am ready myself, and on all occasions, to tell it them both to their faces. Why would you”, he continues, “surround this man [Staupitz] with all the whirlwinds and tempests of episcopal cares?”

The Elector was not offended with Luther’s frankness. “The prince”, wrote Spalatin, “often speaks of you, and in honourable terms.” Frederick sent the monk some very fine cloth for a gown. “I am not worthy that any man should think of me”, said Luther, “much less a prince, and so great a prince as he. Those are my best friends who think the worst of me. Thank our prince for his kindness to me; but I cannot allow myself to be praised either by you or by any man, for all man’s praise is vain, and only that which comes from God is true.”

Duke George of Saxony had often manifested a desire for a Reformation.

¹This is a further abridged extract from d’Aubigné’s *The History of the Reformation in the Sixteenth Century*, vol 1. Last month we saw Luther feeling his way towards a more scriptural, though still imperfect, understanding of doctrine and church principles. The article closed by noting Luther’s courage in remaining at his post when the plague was raging in Wittenberg.

He would have been delighted to humiliate the Church and the clergy, to humble the bishops, whose princely retinue far surpassed his own; but it was another thing to receive into his heart the evangelical doctrine that would humble it, to acknowledge himself a guilty sinner, incapable of being saved except by grace alone. He would willingly have reformed others, but he did not care to reform himself. He would perhaps have set his hand to the task of compelling the Bishop of Mentz to be contented with a single bishopric and to keep no more than 14 horses in his stables, as he said more than once, but when he saw a simple monk undertake this work, and the Reformation gaining numerous supporters among the people, he became the most violent adversary of reform.

In July 1517, Duke George requested Staupitz to send him an eloquent and learned preacher. Luther was recommended to him as a man of extensive learning and irreproachable conduct. The prince invited him to preach at Dresden in the castle chapel. When the day arrived, the Duke and his court gathered in the chapel. Luther joyfully seized this opportunity of testifying to the truth before such an assembly. He selected his text from the Gospel reading for the day: "Then came to Him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons . . ." (Mt 20:20-23). He preached on the unreasonable desires and prayers of men, and then spoke emphatically on the assurance of salvation. He established it on this foundation: those who receive the Word of God by faith are the true disciples of Jesus Christ, who are elected to eternal life. He next spoke of election, and showed that this doctrine, if presented in union with the work of Christ, has great power to dispel the terrors of conscience; so that men, instead of fleeing far from the righteous God at the sight of their unworthiness, are gently led to seek refuge in Him.

The word of truth made a deep impression on his hearers. Two in particular seemed to pay great attention to the sermon. The first was a lady on the court benches, showing profound emotion. It was Madame de la Sale, first lady to the Duchess. The other was Jerome Emser, counsellor and secretary to the Duke. Emser possessed great talents and extensive knowledge. A skilful politician, he would have desired to pass at Rome for a defender of the papacy, yet shine in Germany among the learned men of the age. But under this pliant mind was concealed a violent character. It was in the palace chapel at Dresden that Luther and Emser first met; they were afterwards to break more than one lance together.

The dinner hour arrived for the inhabitants of the palace, and the conversation naturally fell on that morning's preacher. "How were you pleased with the sermon?" said the Duke to Madame de la Sale. "If I could hear but one more like it," she replied, "I should die in peace." "And I", George

replied angrily, “would rather give a large sum not to have heard it; for such discourses are only calculated to make people sin with assurance.”

Then the courtiers expressed their uncontrolled dissatisfaction. Each one had his censure ready. He is an ignorant fellow, said some; he is a proud monk, said others. The truth had fallen into the midst of a court little prepared to receive it. But while the Word of God was thus an occasion of stumbling to many, it was a blessing for the first lady. She fell sick a month later and confidently embraced the grace of the Saviour and died with joy. As for the Duke, it was perhaps not in vain that he heard Luther’s testimony to the truth. Whatever may have been his opposition to the Reformation during his life, we know that, at his death, he declared he had no hope save in the merits of Jesus Christ.

Luther returned to Wittenberg and zealously resumed his work. He was preparing six or seven young theologians who were shortly to sit an examination for a licence to teach. What rejoiced him most of all was that their promotion would tend to the discredit of Aristotle.² “I could desire to multiply the number of his enemies as soon as possible”, he said. So about then he published some theses which merit our attention.

Free will was the great subject he treated. There had long been a struggle, more or less keen, between the two doctrines of man’s liberty and his enslavement. Some, like Pelagius,³ had taught that man possessed in himself the power of loving God and of doing good works. Luther denied this liberty – not to deprive man of it, but that he might obtain it. The struggle is not, as is generally said, between liberty and slavery; it is between a liberty proceeding from man, and one from God. Those who style themselves the partisans of liberty say to man: You have power to perform good works; you have no need of greater liberty. On the contrary, the partisans of servitude say, True liberty is what you need, and God offers it to you in His gospel. Such was the contest in the times of Paul, of Augustine and of Luther.

But we would deceive ourselves if we summed up all the Reformation in that particular question. It is only one of the numerous doctrines Luther maintained. The Reformation was a noble emancipation of the human mind. Snapping the numerous bonds with which the Roman hierarchy had bound men’s minds, it restored the ideas of liberty, of what is right, of free examination; it set free its own age, ourselves and remotest posterity. It desired to lead back the human will and render it entirely subject to God’s will. But what kind of philosophy does not know that entire conformity with the will of God is the sole, supreme and perfect liberty; and that man will be really

²A Greek philosopher whose ideas were used to support some Roman Catholic doctrines.

³A monk of the fourth century.

free only when sovereign righteousness and eternal truth alone have dominion over him?

Here are some of the 99 propositions Luther put forth in the Church against the Pelagian rationalism of the theology of the Middle Ages:

“It is true that man, who has become a corrupt tree, can will or do naught but evil.”

“It is false that the will, left to itself, can do good as well as evil; for it is not free, but in bondage.”

“It is not in the power of man’s will to choose or reject whatever is offered to it.”

“Man cannot, of his own nature, will God to be God. He would prefer to be God himself and prefer that God were not God.”

“The excellent, infallible, and sole preparation for grace is the eternal election and predestination of God.”

“It is false to say that if man does all that he can, he removes the obstacles to grace.”

“On the side of man there is nothing that goes before grace, unless it is impotence and even rebellion.”

“We do not become righteous by doing what is righteous; but having become righteous, we do what is righteous.”

“Man is a greater enemy to the grace of God than he is to the law itself.”

“He who is without God’s grace sins continually, even should he neither rob, murder, or commit adultery.”

“He sins, in that he does not fulfil the law spiritually.”

“The law of God and the will of man are two adversaries that, without the grace of God, can never be reconciled.”

“What the law commands, the will never wishes, unless through fear . . . it puts on the appearance of willing.”

“The law makes sin abound, for it exasperates and repels the will.”

“But the grace of God makes righteousness abound through Jesus Christ, who causes us to love the law.”

Thus Luther ascribes to God all the good that man can do. There is no question of repairing man’s will, of patching it up, if we may use the expression; an entirely new one must be given him. And God alone can accomplish it. This is one of the most important truths that the human mind can conceive. But while Luther proclaimed the powerlessness of man, he did not fall into the other extreme. His eighth thesis teaches that originally man’s nature was essentially good: it has turned away from the good, which is God, and inclined towards evil. Yet it can, by God’s power, recover from this state. It is the business of Christianity to restore it to him. And if man thinks ever so

little, he easily discovers that all that is told him of his present purity, power and glory is but a fiction with which to soothe his pride.

Luther in his theses protested not only against the pretended goodness of man's will, but still more against the pretended light in his understanding of Divine things. Mediaeval theology, as some of its teachers represented it, was at bottom nothing but a kind of rationalism. In his theses, Luther censured the Church and the popular superstitions which had added indulgences, purgatory and so many other abuses to the gospel. In those we have just quoted, he assailed the teachings which had taken away from the gospel the doctrine of God's sovereignty, revelation and grace. The Reformation attacked rationalism before it turned against superstition. It proclaimed the rights of God before it cut off the false ideas of man. It was positive before it became negative. This has not been sufficiently observed; yet if we do not notice it, we cannot justly appreciate the true nature of that religious revolution.

The truths that Luther had enunciated with so much energy were novel. It would have been easy to support these propositions at Wittenberg, for there his influence predominated. But then people might have said that he had chosen a field where he knew that no combatant would dare appear. By offering battle in another university, he would give the truth greater publicity; and the Reformation was effected by publicity. He turned his eyes to Erfurt, whose theologians had been so irritated against him. He therefore sent these propositions to John Lange, prior of Erfurt. He wrote about them: "Please inform me, as soon as possible, of your sentiments about them. Have the goodness to declare to the faculty of theology . . . that I am prepared to visit you, and to maintain these propositions publicly, either in the university or in the monastery." It does not seem that Luther's challenge was accepted. The monks of Erfurt were content to let him know that these propositions had greatly displeased them.

But he desired to send them also into another part of Germany. John Meyer was a distinguished professor, then teaching at the University of Ingolstadt in Bavaria. He was born at Eck, a village in Swabia, and was commonly styled Doctor Eck. He was a friend of Luther, who esteemed his talents and his knowledge. He united learning with eloquence. For talent, Eck was in the south of Germany what Luther was in the north. It was through Eck that Luther thought of making his propositions on Pelagianism⁴ and rationalism known in the south of the Empire. He forwarded them to a common friend, Christopher Scheurl, secretary to the city of Nuremberg, begging him to transmit them to Eck.

⁴This system of doctrine denies original sin and credits human beings with the power to do what is truly good before God.

But the battle was not to be fought on this field. These propositions turned on doctrines of perhaps greater importance than those which two months later set the Church in flames; yet in spite of Luther's challenges they passed unnoticed. At most, they were read within the walls of the universities; they were only theological doctrines; while the theses which followed referred to an evil that was then breaking out throughout Germany. So long as Luther was content to revive forgotten doctrines, men were silent; but when he pointed out abuses that injured all the world, everybody listened.

Yet in both cases Luther only proposed to excite one of those theological discussions so frequent in the universities. He had no idea of becoming a reformer. He was humble, and his humility bordered on distrust and anxiety. "Considering my ignorance," he said, "I deserve only to be hidden in some corner, without being known to anyone under the sun." But a mighty hand drew him from this corner.

The Pharisee and the Publican¹

David Brown

The purpose for which this parable was spoken – the lesson it was intended to convey – is more precisely expressed than in most other cases. It is expressed both as a preface to the parable and as its concluding moral.

V 9. *And He spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: V 10. Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. V 11. The Pharisee stood – as the Jews did in prayer (Mk 11:25) – and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank Thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.* To have been kept from gross iniquities was undoubtedly a just cause of thankfulness to God; but instead of the devoutly humble, admiring frame which this should inspire, he arrogantly severs himself from the rest of mankind, as quite above them and, with a contemptuous look at the poor publican, thanks God that he has not to stand afar off like him, to hang down his head like a bulrush, and beat his breast like him. But these are only his moral excellences. His religious merits complete his grounds for self-congratulation.

V 12. *I fast twice in the week, I give tithes – or the tenth – of all that I possess, or acquire, of all my gains, or increase.* Not confining himself to the

¹An edited extract from the *Commentary* on the Bible by Robert Jamieson, A R Fausset and David Brown. Brown's section on *The Four Gospels* was reprinted by the Banner of Truth, but is no longer in print.

one divinely-prescribed annual fast (Lev 16:29), he was not behind the most rigid, who, as Lightfoot says, fasted on the second and fifth days of every week, and gave the tenth not only of what the law demanded to be tithed, but of all his gains. Thus, besides doing all his duty, he did works of supererogation; while he seems to have felt no sins to confess, or spiritual needs to be supplied. What a picture of the Pharisaic character and religion!

V 13. *And the publican standing afar off* – as unworthy to draw near; but that was the way to get near (Ps 34:18, Is 57:15), *would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven* blushing and ashamed to do so (Ezra 9:6), but smote – kept smiting – *upon his breast*, for anguish (Lk 23:48) and self-reproach (Jer 31:19), *saying, God be merciful* – be propitiated or propitious. It is a very unusual word to occur here, and used in the New Testament in only one other place (Heb 2:17), in the sense of “making reconciliation” by sacrifice. There may therefore be some allusion to this here, though it can hardly be pressed; *to me a sinner* – literally, to me the sinner; as if he should say, If ever there was a sinner, I am he.

V 14. *I tell you*, authoritatively, *this man went down to his house justified rather than the other*. The meaning is: and not the other. *For every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted*. This great law of the Kingdom of God is, in the teaching of Christ, inscribed over its entrance gate as in letters of gold; but how vividly it is here depicted!

Remarks. 1. The grand peculiarity of the religion of the Bible is *salvation by grace*; a salvation, however, unto holiness – not *by*, but *unto*, good works. It pervades the Old Testament (Ex 34:6,7; Ps 25:7, 34:18, 138:6, 147:6; Is 57:15 etc); though its full disclosure, in connection with “the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world”, was naturally reserved for the New Testament. Yet, so natural is self-righteousness to the pride of the human heart, that it has found its way even into the doctrinal system of the Church; and that Apostasy which panders to all the corrupt inclinations of our nature while preserving the form of evangelical truth, has erected it into a most subtle scheme. While apparently ascribing all to grace, this scheme is in reality a doctrine of salvation by works.² The very same doctrine has found an entrance even into Protestant Churches under various forms of language, and in times of religious indifference and general degeneracy has spread its deadly virus over whole regions once blooming with health. Nor is it effectually dislodged from any heart save by Divine teaching.

2. To be self-emptied, or “poor in spirit”, is the fundamental and indis-

²See the Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent. The “Apostasy” referred to here is, of course, the Roman Catholic system.

pensable preparation for welcoming the “grace which bringeth salvation”. That “mourning” which precedes comfort, and that “hunger and thirst after righteousness” which is rewarded with the fullness of it, are invariably found wherever this self-emptying exists – as in this publican. Therefore such, and only such, are the truly justified ones. “He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich He hath sent empty away” (Lk 1:53).

Persevering in Religion¹

Richard Sibbes

Those who have gone far in religion may yet, nonetheless, fall away and become apostates.

Reason 1. Because they rest on their own strength, and there is no support in man to uphold himself. Without Christ we can do nothing. We see how weak the apostles themselves were till they were given strength from above. Peter was blasted by the speech of a damsel. Therefore in every encounter and in all our fears of falling, we should lift up our hearts to Christ, who has Spirit enough for us all. We should say with good Jehoshaphat: Lord, we know not “what to do, but our eyes are upon Thee” (2 Chr 20:12). The battle we fight is Thine, and the strength whereby we fight must be Thine. If Thou dost not go out with us, we are sure to be foiled.

Satan knows that nothing can prevail against Christ, or those that rely upon His power. Therefore he considers how to keep us looking to ourselves and to the creature, but we must carry this always in our minds: that what is begun in self-confidence will end in shame.

Reason 2. Because Satan, that grand apostate, has himself fallen from the truth and he labours to draw others to fall back with him. Being a cursed spirit, himself cast and tumbled down from heaven, where he is never to come again, he is full of malice and he labours all he can to ruin and destroy others, so that they may be in the same cursed condition with himself. By his envy and subtlety we were driven out of paradise at the first, and ever since he envies us the paradise of a good conscience. He cannot endure that a creature of lower rank than himself should enjoy such happiness.

Application. I beseech you therefore, let us learn that exhortation of the Apostle, “Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall”. A watch-

¹The first of two extracts from a sermon, entitled “The Danger of Backsliding”; Sibbes’ text was: “For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world” (2 Tim 4:10). Taken, with editing, from *Works of Richard Sibbes*, vol 7. The set is available both as a set and as individual volumes. Sibbes (1577-1635) was a noted Puritan.

ful Christian stands when careless spirits have many a fall. It is no easy matter to keep our ground. We often see tall cedars shake and fall. How many are like buds in a frosty morning, nipped suddenly! We have true grace only if we hold out to the end.

Question. But how shall we persevere in goodness?

(1.) *Labour for true grace.* What is sincere is constant. True grace is what the Spirit of God works in us and is not built on false grounds: as to have respect to this or that man, or by-ends of our own.

That we may have true grace, let us labour to be thoroughly convinced of sin; grace will follow conviction of our evil ways. So we should pray earnestly for the Spirit, which will convince us of all sin (Jn 16:9) and work this grace of constancy in us, and all other graces. For where the Spirit is, there is a relish in all the ways of God. How sweet to a spiritual heart is the goodness of God in our redemption, justification and preservation!

(2.) Again, if we would hold out, *get a strong resolution against all opposition.* Know this: scandals will come, difficulties will arise, but firm resolution will carry us through all. Those that go out to walk for pleasure, return at once if a storm comes; whereas he that is to go on a journey, even if he meets with never so many storms and tempests, yet he will go through all because he hath so resolved beforehand. Things are either good or evil, as a man wills them. The bent of the soul to God makes a man good.

(3.) To persevere to the end, *labour to be as obedient in your practice* as you would for the obedience of faith – to believe the truth. Labour to know the truth and to practise what you know, that so you may be built on the rock Christ Jesus. If you fall, it is your own fault for building on the sand. Therefore put this question often to your soul: Is this truth that I hold? Would I die for it? If so, then hold it fast, otherwise suspect there is unsoundness.

(4.) Above all things, *get the love of God in your heart.* This will constrain us to obedience. If we look altogether on our discouragements, we shall alas soon flag and fall away. But if we eye our encouragements, it is impossible to desert Christ or His truth. Who would not hold out, having such a Captain and such a cause as we fight for. Where the truth is received in the love of it, there is constancy.

(5.) *Strive to grow daily in self-denial.* No one can come to heaven but he must first strip himself of himself. He must not consider his own wit, will or affections; he must be wholly emptied of himself. He must deny himself in all his aims after the world, in its pleasure, profit or advancement. He must not respect anything if he will follow Christ. Such a religion is never sound. A true Christian has a single eye; he serves God for Himself. A man that has worldly aims has a double eye as well as a double heart; such a man cannot

but waver. Bring therefore single eyes, hearts and aims to receive the Word. The great fault of many is that they bring false hearts with them to God's ordinances. It is said of Israel that he brought Egypt into the wilderness (Num 11:18). So most men want to have religion and their lusts together, but whatever begins in hypocrisy will end in apostasy.

Know this: he that has religion does not need to go out for aims or good company. He is acquainted with God and Christ, and he has an eternal inheritance to aim at. There are encouragements enough in religion itself. We need not go out and look abroad for more. I say this especially because false aims and ends are the ready means to undo men, when they have respect to such a person or such a thing in their practice of holiness. Joash was a good king all the while Jehoiada lived. This kept him in awe. The eye of a great person restrains some men and often causes them to blaze forth in a greater show than many others who inwardly are more sincere.

(6.) *Labour to have divine truths engrafted in you; not to have them loose, for then they will never grow. But get them engrafted in your heart that so they may spring forth in your life as that which is set into a stock turns the stock into the same nature. We should embrace truths inwardly. Indeed God's children will have truths as belonging to themselves. As a wife receiving a letter from her husband says, This is sent to me and belongs to me; so we should say of every truth, This was penned for me and directed to my soul in particular.*

(7.) *To grow deeper in religion, grow deeper and deeper in humiliation. A man is humble when he accounts sin his greatest evil and grace his chiefest good; such a person will hold out in time of trial. If temptations of profit or preferment come on the right hand, he will say, Christ is better to me. And if sin comes on the left hand to draw him aside, he will say, This is the vilest thing in the world; it is the worst of all evils; I must not yield to it.*

Love is the everlasting grace that shall abide and be in use and exercise when the actings of other graces shall cease. There are some graces suitable especially to our estate of imperfection in this world. To live by faith, to repent and mourn for sin, to live in hope of the glory that is to be revealed, to wait till we be possessed of the mansions which are above, to desire all the good that is promised to us, but not yet conferred upon us. But hereafter faith shall be turned into vision, hope into fruition, desires into possession, waiting into obtaining. And then we shall thus believe no more, nor hope, nor desire, nor wait; but then we shall love still, yea, more than ever, more abundantly, yea perfectly, without diminution; continually without intermission; and eternally, without cessation; in which respect, among the three cardinal graces, love hath the pre-eminence, "Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three, but the greatest of these is charity" (1 Cor 13:13) because it is the longest in duration.

Thomas Doolittle

New Testament Circumcision¹

Robert Stewart

Colossians 2:11. *In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ.*

The two main besetting sins by which the Church of God has in every age been afflicted are unbelief and hypocrisy. By the one, men are led to estrange themselves from God; and by the other to mock Him with insincere, most unworthy worship. The history of God's chosen people in the Old Testament affords numerous melancholy instances of both sins. As a nation, the Israelites were far from being spiritually minded (indeed what nation ever was?) They were disposed to arrogate to themselves all the privileges which their ancestors, the patriarchs, possessed in the favour of God, but they seldom thought of walking with God, denying themselves, confessing that they were strangers and pilgrims in this world, or looking for a heavenly country, as those patriarchs had done.

Their whole history is a succession of apostasies, chastisements, humiliations, and merciful restorations to divine favour. Even in the periods of their history when they did not apostatise or worship other gods openly, they were charged with drawing near to God with their mouth and honouring Him with their lips, but having removed their hearts far from Him (Is 29:13). The grand error in their worship, however, consisted in mistaking the means for the end. They imagined that, when they had observed the ordinance – which was intended merely as an instrument to communicate faith or strengthen it – they had done all. Yet in no way were they edified by the act that God required of them.

The rite of circumcision was intended to be a token between God and Abraham and his family. Abraham had believed from the mouth of God that a second Adam – a second covenant head, a second representative – would be raised up of his posterity, and through Him he should receive pardon, reconciliation and everlasting righteousness. In the faith and hope of these high privileges, he gave up all connection with his first ancestor Adam and rejoiced to consider himself a member, by adoption, of a new and better family. God then, as a token to Abraham that his faith and hope were well founded, instituted the ordinance of circumcision, that he might more firmly know that he had been cut off from the family of the old Adam and had been introduced into the family of the new Adam.

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

And God required circumcision in Abraham, his family and all his posterity as a token that they had renounced the family of the fallen, sinful Adam and had entered into the family of Him who was holy, harmless and undefiled. In all that was important in it, the ordinance of circumcision was therefore strictly spiritual. Take away what was spiritual and typical from it, and there remained nothing but a painful, useless and unmeaning rite.

In every period of their history, however – but especially in the time of the Lord and His apostles – the mass of the Israelites were blind to its spiritual significance. Yet with extraordinary senselessness and stupidity, they insisted upon its necessity and importance. The ordinance was typical. It was a token, on God's part, that the new and better covenant Head would come; and on the believer's part, that he and his would continue to expect His coming and rely upon it.

But the covenant Head had now come, and the family was organised. While all that was spiritual in circumcision continued in full force, the material part was superseded and abrogated for ever. The believers at Colosse were generally Gentile converts, who of course had not received outward circumcision in infancy, but Paul tells them in this portion of his Epistle that they had now received it spiritually, or inwardly, in believing on Christ: "In whom ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ". That is, when they believed on Christ and He was formed in them the hope of glory, they were cut off from the guilt, the punishment and the power of the body of the sins of the flesh and were "quicken together with Him" (v 13) – the deadly weight of their trespasses being wholly removed.

In verse 12, the believing Colossians are informed that they had been buried with Christ in baptism. From this expression, Baptists have inferred that this ceremony was performed by immersion in apostolic times. There is, however, no analogy between the mode of Christ's burial and resurrection and the act of dipping in the Baptist's baptism. Christ was not put into the earth in burial, as the body is immersed into the water in baptism; nor in resurrection did He emerge from the grave, as the baptized arise above the surface of the water. His body was conveyed horizontally into an excavation in rock, and after resurrection He returned in the same way, so that there could be no allusion in this passage to the similarity of the outward form of baptism to the form of his burial and resurrection. In fact, Paul is contending for the comparative insignificance of outward forms, and the great importance of spiritual experiences.

It is therefore obvious that, by being buried with Christ in baptism, Paul means that baptism declares that believers are made one with Christ; that

when He died and was buried, they – that is, their life and hope – were dead and buried (2 Cor 5:14), that when He arose, their life and hope arose with Him; that because death could not hold Him, it will not be able to hold them (Ps 23:4), and that because He lives, they shall live also. The Colossian Christians are told that they have received spiritual circumcision “in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh”.

They are further informed that it was by baptism into Christ’s death that they had put off the body of those sins. They had put them upon Christ, who came into this world to bear them in His own body, and under them He died and entered into the grave. But as death could not hold Him – as He had finished the transgression and made an end of sins (Dan 9:24) – it was not possible that the Holy One of God could see corruption (Acts 2:27); and when He arose, they arose with Him. The essential spiritual significance of circumcision and of baptism are therefore identified; in other words, baptism is the New Testament circumcision.

If so, not only are the infant children of believing parents fit and proper subjects for baptism, but it is sinful and unchristian to forbid them being baptized. Circumcision was so strongly enforced under the Old Testament dispensation, that the uncircumcised male child was declared cut off from his people (Gen 17:14). Let men then beware lest they be found obstructing the grace of God and usurping His high prerogatives. However, the importance of baptism – like the ordinance of circumcision, which it has succeeded – is its spiritual significance. Let all the baptized then examine themselves carefully, and let parents study the obligations they have come under at the baptism of their children and attend to these obligations.

Prayer¹

4. Different Kinds of Prayer

Rev Donald Macdonald

Prayer is a means of grace, just as the Word and sacraments are means of grace. In true prayer there must be sincerity; there ought to be reverence, for God is infinitely exalted. There must be humility and importunity, the exercise of faith and submission to the will of God. The prayer of the true Christian must be offered in the name of Christ. As Charles Hodge says, “By ‘the name of God’ is meant God Himself, and God as manifested in His relation to us. Both ideas are usually united, thus to believe ‘in the name of

¹The previous part of this Theological Conference paper, last month, discussed the Spirit of prayer. This article covers the fifth main point and concludes the series.

the only begotten Son of God', is to believe that Christ is the Son of God, and that as such He is manifested as the only Saviour of men."² Some of the different types of prayer are: (1) private prayer, (2) social prayer, (3) public prayer, (4) persevering prayer. After speaking about these, we will comment briefly on methodology in prayer.

1. *Private prayer*. This has already been discussed in a general way, whether we speak to God in our mind or in an audible voice. We "clothe our thoughts and feelings with words". "Those goings forth of the soul towards God in thought and feeling . . . reveal themselves in the forms of reverence, sorrow for sin, sense of dependence and obligation."³ If our minds are bent in this direction, towards God and His Son Jesus Christ, prayer should be as natural as our breathing. Although we cannot physically be in private prayer all the time, it should be very natural to us to be speaking to God in our minds.

Even the Christian in a period of spiritual declension may experience neglect of prayer, coldness in prayer and lack of fervency, but eventually the Lord delivers His people from these situations. We would further add that, whatever a man's profession might be outwardly before men, before the world, anyone who has no desire to draw near to God in secret and hold converse with the Most High knows nothing of communion with God. Union and communion with God is the very life of prayer. A prayerless soul is a graceless soul; he may recite the Lord's Prayer or read from a prayer book, but it is an abomination to the Most High.

2. *Social prayer*, prayer in and with the family. Charles Hodge states, "As man's nature is social, he must have fellowship with his fellow men in all that concerns his inward and outward life. No man lives, or can live, for himself in religion any more than in any other relation." The most intimate bond of fellowship that the world knows is within the family unit. It is the bedrock of a happy society; it is fundamental to the well being of a nation, a community and, not least, a church of God. All the relations between parents and children, and others in the circle, are upheld and strengthened when all assemble for family worship morning and evening; there is no substitute for family religion and for the Scriptures to be taught in the home. Hodge adds, "All persons subject to the watch or care of the Church should be required to maintain in their households the stated worship of God. The character of the Church and of the state depends on the character of the family. If religion dies out in the family, it cannot elsewhere be maintained."⁴

I maintain that the root cause of the terrible declension in society, in

²Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, Eerdmans reprint, 1977, vol 3, pp 704-5.

³Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, vol 3, p 705.

⁴Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, vol 3, p 706.

Church and State and in the family, is that family religion has died out. I do not deny that Christian families may have their troubles and that children in Christian families may turn their backs on what they have been taught; there are exceptions to the rule. However, family religion is vital to the Church, to communities and nations, if they are to have God's blessing.

3. *Public prayer.* Under our Presbyterian system, public assemblies are for instruction and worship, and all parts should be in due order. Preaching is the most solemn aspect of public worship; while the other parts of praise, prayer, the reading of the Word, and sacraments are important; they are subordinate to the function of preaching. It goes without saying that there cannot be true knowledge without the true knowledge of God. There is a tendency in too many churches to make preaching subordinate to what they call worship. It is important that those who lead public worship should do so with a solemnity that befits the worship of God. In the exercise of public prayer, what is said ought to come from the heart and not be mere words, however orthodox. Needless repetition should be avoided, and unnecessary length.

The use of biblical language is important. What is said in prayer should have some relevance to the subject of instruction. On important occasions, such as sacramental occasions or days of humiliation and prayer or thanksgiving, the first prayer especially should be directed by the purpose of the occasion. "Let all things be done decently and in order."

It is a matter of importance that public prayer should not be presented to please individuals or a certain section of those present. At funerals there is a tendency to speak as if ministers were addressing men, not the Most High. Sin is hardly ever mentioned in many places today. Many prayers have descended into eulogies. If worship is controlled by the Spirit of God, both the minister leading and the people worshipping, God's people especially, will engage in adoration, praise, thanksgiving, confession and supplication – sweet incense rising from the altar of the heart.

This will mingle with those petitions that are made for all. Paul exhorted "that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time" (1 Tim 2:1-6).

4. *Persevering prayer:* There are many examples of this in the Scriptures. Just to mention two. First, Jacob at Peniel wrestling with the Angel and say-

ing, “I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me” (Gen 32:26). The other is Elijah on Mount Carmel on that very public occasion in determining who is the true God. James refers to him in the New Testament: “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit” (5:16-18). Many other examples could be cited also to indicate the power of prayer. The greatest example of all is the Saviour; He was a Man of prayer; He spent all nights in prayer during His earthly ministry. In particular, we see His wrestling in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Methodology in Prayer. I am not going to dwell on this; one can study Matthew Henry’s book on this subject.⁵ In the first chapter he lays down as the first matter in prayer: to have a sense of the majesty and perfections of God, the Being that we are approaching. And in the second chapter he lays down as the second matter: a sense of our sinfulness and needs as miserable creatures, for we are mere beggars at His footstool.

Conclusion. The subject that I have sought to outline is vast, and much has been written on the subject of prayer. When all is said and done, we are brought back to the need for a child-like disposition – to say with the disciples: “Lord teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples”, for “we know not what we should pray for as we ought”.

Book Reviews¹

Practical Religion, Being Plain Papers on the Duties, Experience, Dangers, and Privileges of Professing Christians, by J C Ryle, published by the Banner of Truth Trust, hardback, 470 pages, £15.00.

This book delivers what it promises – plain statements on plain duties required of believers and the blessings that will follow. From the first and basic duty of examining where we are spiritually to preparation for the eternity we are hastening to, Ryle makes the footsteps of the flock very plain and gives constant and earnest encouragement to follow in these very footsteps.

In a day when all sections of our society – even those who are willing slaves to sin – cry out for freedom, it is good to read Ryle saying, “The

⁵Matthew Henry’s *Method for Prayer* has been reprinted by Christian Focus Publications and is available from the Free Presbyterian Bookroom.

¹Both titles reviewed here are obtainable from the Free Presbyterian Bookroom.

true freedom I speak of is spiritual freedom, freedom of soul. It is the freedom which Christ bestows without money and without price, on all true Christians. Those whom the Son makes free are free indeed; 'Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty' (2 Cor 3:17). Let men talk as they please of the comparative freedom of monarchies and republics; let them struggle if they will for universal liberty, fraternity and equality; we never know the highest style of liberty until we are enrolled citizens of the kingdom of God. We are ignorant of the best kind of freedom if we are not Christ's for ever" (p 205).

J C Ryle was a bishop in the Church of England, with its holy days. On page 402 he writes, "Poor and shallow is that philosophy which sneers at Christmas gatherings". His main thrust here is the value of family gatherings, and this we would endorse; but his reference to Christmas (and it is not the only one) is unhappy and has no biblical basis.

Overall we have no hesitation in recommending this book, supplying as it does milk for the spiritual infant and meat for those who in understanding would be men.

(Rev) J R Tallach

Steps Towards Heaven, by J C Ryle, published by the Banner of Truth Trust, paperback, 160 pages, £5.50.

As stated in the Publisher's Preface, "the five chapters that make up this little book are drawn from a larger work compiled by J C Ryle and first published in 1877 under the title *Old Paths*. The chapters were among a number of papers or tracts that set forth "the leading truths of Christianity which are necessary to salvation".

These five chapters are entitled, "Our Sins", "Few Saved?", "Conversion", "Justification" and "The Holy Spirit"; they set out those subjects with the clarity and earnestness typical of Ryle. An example of this is seen in his chapter on Justification. In answer to the question, "What then are the best means of preserving in a believer's heart that sense of justification which is so precious to the soul that knows it?", Ryle offers the following hints:

"(a) To keep up a lively sense of peace, there must be constant *looking to Jesus*. As the pilot keeps his eye on the mark by which he steers, so must we keep our eye on Christ.

"(b) There must be constant *communion with Jesus*. We must use Him daily as our soul's Physician and High Priest. There must be daily conference, daily confession and daily absolution.

"(c) There must be constant *watchfulness* against the enemies of your soul. He that would have peace must be always prepared for war.

"(d) There must be constant *following after holiness* in every relation of

life, in our tempers, in our tongues, abroad and at home. A little speck on the lens of a telescope is enough to prevent our seeing distant objects clearly. A little dust will soon make a watch go incorrectly.

“(e) There must be a constant *labouring after humility*. Pride goes before a fall. Self-confidence is always the mother of sloth, of hurried Bible reading and sleepy prayers. Peter first said he would never forsake his Lord though all others did – then he slept when he should have prayed; then he denied Him three times, and only found wisdom after bitter weeping.

“(f) There must be constant *boldness in confessing* our Lord before men. Them that honour Christ, Christ will honour with much of His company. When the disciples forsook our Lord they were wretched and miserable. When they confessed Him before the council, they were filled with joy and the Holy Ghost.

“(g) There must be constant *diligence about means of grace*. Here are the ways in which Jesus loves to walk. No disciple must expect to see much of his Master who does not delight in public worship, Bible-reading and private reading.

“(h) Lastly, there must be constant *jealousy* over our own souls, and frequent self-examination. We must be careful to distinguish between justification and sanctification. We must beware that we do not make a Christ of holiness.”

Last year marked the bicentenary of the birth of John Charles Ryle, Bishop of Liverpool, and much has recently appeared in print, including articles in this *Magazine*; so little more needs to be added. This present book is highly recommended, unless one already possesses a copy of *Old Paths*. And, even if one does, one may consider this little paperback as an ideal travelling companion. (Rev) *W A Weale*

Protestant View

The Vatican in a State of Crisis

Amidst accusations that the Vatican is in a state of crisis, the former Pope, Joseph Ratzinger, has stated that the Roman Catholic Church “has taken on so much water as to be on the verge of capsizing”. His message was read out at the funeral of Cardinal Joachim Meisner, one of four Cardinals who have questioned whether the current Pope’s controversial pronouncement on remarriage and communion is compatible with traditional Church doctrine. This intervention is regarded as a clear indication of Ratzinger’s support for those who have challenged the current pontiff.

Another senior Cardinal has also launched a scathing personal attack on the current Pope after being humiliatingly sacked from one of the most important positions in the Vatican. Until June, Cardinal Gerhard Müller was the head of doctrine at the Vatican, the Prefect of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith. Müller, who has never spoken out previously against the Pope, accused him of double standards. While the Pope is always careful to stand up for workers' rights, Müller stated, he was not so careful to treat those around him with the consideration he urges on others. This has led to accusations of the Pope behaving like "a Latin American dictator". One religious commentator writes that the Pope's background as a Jesuit has contributed to his high-handed approach to his subordinates. Clearly the image portrayed in the media of a humble and approachable character is not in keeping with the reality of his dealings with those under him in the Vatican.

These reports show that the Roman Church is rent with division at its highest levels. Its much vaunted unity is a sham. May the whole system soon be submerged under the waves of Divine judgement, never to rise again. "And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall the great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all" (Rev 18:21). *AWM*

Notes and Comments

Persecution in Pakistan and India

Last month we looked at religious persecution in Kenya. In India and Pakistan also we find evidence of anti-Christian hostility. Pakistan is the sixth most populous country in the world – home, it is thought, to almost 200 million people. For political reasons, a census has not been held for nearly 20 years; but estimates of those who identify themselves as Christian in the widest sense, range from 2 to 10 million, from 2.5 to 4.5 million are Hindu, and almost all others are Muslim. It is therefore virtually inevitable for Christian minorities to be marginalised and frequently attacked.

Some Christian workers, particularly those from Youhanabad – the largest Christian part of Pakistan – are optimistic that a census will be conducted this year, which will give accurate figures for Christians and so give them a louder voice in government. However, many others are more cautious and feel that, even if a census shows an increase in the number of Christians, nothing will change until Pakistan's attitude towards non-Muslims improves.

We hear of women being violated and forced into Muslim marriages, which involve compulsory conversion to Islam. When their families protest,

they are accused of distressing the “voluntarily-converted” girl and her new family. In April last year a Taliban bombing in Lahore aimed at Christians killed at least 69 people. According to local reports, after being accused of desecrating the Quran, a Christian couple were beaten and burned alive in a kiln at their place of work. We know personally of a man who fled to Scotland after several members of his family were injured in an Islamic attack. Tragically most of his wife’s family had been burnt to death in an earlier attack on their home. The couple and their children have obtained asylum in Scotland. Significantly, from his experience he sees no difference between the attitudes of “moderate” and “extreme” Islamists and holds out little hope of peace for Christians in Pakistan in the near future.

In neighbouring India, which has a population of over 1.3 billion, the situation is also serious. Here Hinduism is the main religion (81%) with Islam the second largest (14%). Although India’s constitution claims to protect freedom of religion, violence against religious minorities has increased. Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which gained strength in recent elections, is said to be rooted in an ideology which aims to “make India a Hindu state”. It is claimed that “some adherents of this ideology . . . use violence, discriminatory acts and religiously motivated rhetoric against religious minorities, creating a climate of fear”.

One report states that “members of the ruling party have ties to Hindu nationalist groups implicated in religious freedom violations; [they] use religiously divisive language to inflame tensions, and call for additional laws that would restrict religious freedom”. Several Indian states enforce anti-conversion laws – said to be “only concerned about conversions away from Hinduism”. In July last year, a Christian minister was abducted and beaten on this basis.

There are also accounts of attempted forced conversions to Hinduism. Early last year, it is claimed, “six Gondi tribal Christian families fled the village of Katodi after their Hindu neighbors attacked and threatened them in order to forcibly convert them to Hinduism”. A few months before this, a radical Hindu group linked to the BJP, “reportedly placed signs in train stations throughout India that said Christians had to leave India or convert to Hinduism or they will be killed by 2021”. A recent International Religious Freedom report on India confirms that Christians have faced “an increase of harassment and violence, including physical violence, arson, desecration of churches and Bibles, and disruption of religious services”. It adds, “Local police seldom provided protection, refused to accept complaints, and rarely investigated incidents of persecution”.

Members of the Dev Sanskriti Raksha Manch, an extreme Hindu group,

disrupted a two-day Christian prayer meeting held at a local school in Rampur in May this year. On the first day of the meeting, the Hindu group organised a crowd of nearly 150 for a protest march against alleged “conversions”. A local lawyer complained that members of this group, “armed with sticks . . . attacked and injured several police personnel who did try to prevent them from entering the venue of the meeting”. The meeting then had to be cancelled. Afterwards members of the Hindu group made inflammatory statements to the media, alleging that Christians supported Islamic State and were conspiring against their nation.

In the first four months of this year, the Christian organization, Open Doors, reported a total of 316 incidents of persecution of Christians. Of the 68 which took place in April, more than a third involved beatings. In some cases, the victims, including two children, were almost killed; a minister was critically wounded in the head when struck by a sword; and some people have been expelled from their villages. Church members have been openly attacked with large sticks or swords. There seems to be no fear of the police as extremist groups proclaim India to be a Hindu country, warning that Christians have no right to attempt to convert people.

We should be thankful that we still have freedom to preach and to hear the gospel in the UK, however long that freedom will continue. These countries are not so blessed. Still the Saviour’s command is: “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mk 16:15). This includes the people of Pakistan and India, who urgently need our prayers. *KHM*

Mosque in Stornoway

Permission has been sought to convert a derelict house in Stornoway into a mosque. A “spokesman for the local Muslim community” said that the proposal was only for a “very small building” and would not be a large mosque at all. He said that “the premises would also host special events like birthdays and funerals – when non-Muslim friends and neighbours would be part of the gathering”. If the present religious trends in Lewis and the rest of Britain continue, within a generation this “small mosque” may well be a large mosque, and larger than some or all of the local churches. *DWBS*

Rutherford Monument

A monument, nearly 60 feet high, to Samuel Rutherford has stood since 1842 above Gatehouse of Fleet but now needs urgent repair as some large stones at the top are loose. A few months ago £20 000 had been raised; a further £6000 was required. Gatehouse Development Initiative (a registered charity of 56 High Street, Gatehouse of Fleet, DG7 2HP) is to arrange repairs. A page on the website, www.gatehouse-of-fleet.co.uk, can receive donations.

Church Information

Committee Meetings

These Synod committees will meet, DV, in Inverness Free Presbyterian Church as follows on Tuesday, October 3:

- 10.00 - 10.30 Church Interests Committee
- 10.30 - 12.00 Training of the Ministry Committee
- 12.00 - 1.00 Sabbath Observance Committee
- 2.00 - 5.00 Finance Committee
- 2.00 - 3.00 Outreach Committee
- 3.00 - 5.00 Religion and Morals Committee
- 6.00 - 7.30 Publications and Bookroom Committee
- 7.30 - 8.30 Welfare of Youth Committee
- 7.30 - 8.30 Overseas Committee

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

Overseas Fund

By appointment of Synod, the special collection on behalf of the Overseas Fund is due to be taken in congregations during September.

W Campbell, General Treasurer

Acknowledgement of Donations

The General Treasurer acknowledges with sincere thanks the following donations:

Eastern Europe Fund: Mr N Pearce, Cymru, £140.

Jewish & Foreign Missions Fund: Anon, for Thembiso Children's Home, £100.

Congregational Treasurers acknowledge with sincere thanks the following donations:

Barnoldswick: Dutch Friends, £40.

Duirinish & Bracadale-Strath: Glendale church, where most needed, £200.

Glasgow: Family of late Mrs J Knight, £150; Anon, £15, £20, £20. *Bus Fund:* Anon, £20, £15, £20, £20, £10, £200. *Eastern Europe Fund:* Anon, for manse repairs, £500; £65, £80, £62, £62, £65, £65, £62, £62, £62, £65, £50, £65, £63, £70. *Home Mission Fund:* Anon, £100.

Jewish & Foreign Missions Fund: Anon, £100. *Sustentation Fund:* Anon, £200. *TBS:* Anon, £120, £10. *Where Most Needed:* Anon, £20, £20.

Greenock: *Jewish & Foreign Missions Fund:* Anon, £60. *Sustentation Fund:* Anon, £80, £1000.

Halkirk: A Spencer, £30.

Inverness: Anon, for Induction expenses, £50. *Home Mission Fund:* A M Reynolds, £24.

Jewish & Foreign Missions Fund: A M Reynolds, £24, £16; Anon, £20.

Ness: *Communion Expenses:* Friend of the Cause, £40. *Sustentation Fund:* Anon, £60; Friend, Northern Ireland, £40 per Rev AWM.

North Tolsta: Anon, In memory of late Mr R J MacLeod, elder, Ps 107:30, £600; Anon, in memory of my dear parents, Miller 19NT, £500; Anon, in memory of beloved parents, £20; Anon, £200. *Communion Expenses:* Friend of the Cause, £30; Anon, £50; Anon, £40 per MM; Anon for minister's expenses, £90 per MM; MacLeod, 10 New Tolsta, £40. *Door Collection:* Anon, £8, £100. *Sustentation Fund:* Anon, for pulpit supply, £20.

Shieldaig: Estate of late Peggy Livingstone, £829.91. *Communion Expenses:* Anon, £100, £100. *Door Collection:* Anon, £100, £90.

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 Achany Rd, Dingwall, IV15 9JB; tel/fax: 01349 864351, e-mail: nmross2001@yahoo.co.uk.
- Dornoch:** Sabbath 11.30 am. Manse tel: 01862 810615. **Bonar:** Sabbath 6 pm. Wednesday 7.30 pm (alternately in Dornoch and Bonar). **Laig:** 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 WA Weale, F P Manse, Bridge Street, KW12 6YG; tel: 01847 831758. **Thurso:** Sabbath 5 pm; **Strathy:** Sabbath: 6.30 pm (first and third Sabbaths of month).
- Harris (North):** **Tarbert:** Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm; Thursday 7 pm. **Tarbert** and **Stockinish:** Tuesday 7.30 pm alternately. 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; Wednesday 7 pm. **Shielbost** and **Strond:** no services at present. Manse tel: 01859 520271. Contact Rev J B Jardine; tel: 01859 502253
- Inverness:** Chapel Street, IV1 1NA, 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.
- Raasa:** 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 Briercliffe 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: Burnaby Community Room, 3605 Gilmore Way, Burnaby, BC, V5G 4X5. Sabbath 9.30 am, 6.30 pm. Contact: Mr Douglas Spratt, tel: 604 990 4051, or Mr David Kuiper; tel: 519 363 0367. E-mail: info@fpchurchvancouver.ca.

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: sydneyfpchurch@aapt.net.au.

New Zealand

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

Gisborne: 463a Childers Road. Sabbath 11 am, 6 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. 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): 124 High Street North, Carterton. 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 Levyskiy; tel: 00 38 048 785 19 24; e-mail: dlevyskiy@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.

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

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

New Canaan: Church.

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

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Pressing into the Kingdom: Sermons on Seeking Salvation by Jonathan Edwards, Soli Deo Gloria, 1998, hbk, 349 pp	£21.99	£17.59
An All-Surpassing Fellowship: Learning from M'Cheyne's Communion with God by David P Beaty, Reformation Heritage Books, 2014, pbk, 164pp	£9.99	£7.99
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