

The Free Presbyterian Magazine

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

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

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Communions

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

February: Second Sabbath: Dingwall; **Third:** Stornoway; Carterton; **Fourth:** Zenka.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

December: Third Sabbath: Bulawayo, Santa Fe.

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Covid-19

A disease which was almost unheard of at the start of this year has become almost the sole focus of our news media. Covid-19 seems to have subsided in China, where it began, and is now most prevalent in Europe and the United States; in the United Kingdom (at the time of writing) deaths in hospital from this illness are over 6000. No one knows what the final total will be, or even if the disease can ultimately be brought under control.

The fact is that the UK, in common with other nations with a Christian heritage, has, for several generations, increasingly ignored the Most High, the Creator of all things. Ezekiel could look back on the wonderful heritage that God had given to Israel and Judah, a heritage which included holy commandments to direct people's conduct and a pure revelation to show them how – though they were guilty of breaking these commandments – they might be forgiven and brought back into fellowship with Him.

Yet their heritage was now very largely ignored. So the Lord said, “The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is exceeding great”, and the serious fact lying at the centre of such iniquity was that they were assuming that “the Lord hath forsaken the earth, and the Lord seeth not” (Ezek 9:9). It is not that the people had spoken these actual words but, as the Lord looked down on them and saw into their hearts, He could see that these words represented their attitudes: they were acting as if God did not see them and would never take to do with them for their sins; they were going on through life as if God had forsaken the earth.

William Greenhill, a Puritan minister in London, wrote, “Men entertain atheistical thoughts of God, that they may go on more securely and fully in sinful courses. They filled the temple with idolatry, the city with perverse-ness, the land with blood, and say, ‘The Lord seeth not’. When atheism hath got possession of a people, that people runs riot into wickedness, fear of a Deity ceaseth, and the door is open to all profaneness. Atheism is worse than idolatry; this robs God of His worship, that of His attributes and being.”¹

One might think of twenty-first-century idolatry in the UK and elsewhere

¹Greenhill, *An Exposition of Ezekiel*, Banner of Truth reprint, 1994, p 226 (on Ezek 9:9).

taking the form of adulation of sports stars and well-known figures in the entertainment world. These are forms of idolatry, but we should be conscious of another kind of idolatry: a godless fixation on national wealth and individual prosperity. The wishes of voters leads governments to focus on boosting the economy year after year. Most people have been setting their hearts to what they can eat, what they can drink, what they can put on – focusing on their possessions and the things they imagine will make them happy, while they totally neglect their souls and the salvation that their souls so desperately need. But because of the spread of Covid-19, we can be sure that national prosperity and the income of many citizens will be significantly lower in 2020, and perhaps for several years into the future. It is as easy for the Lord to demolish such idols as it was to cause the Philistine idol Dagon to fall and be broken in pieces. And “what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” (Mk 8:36).

God was calling for repentance, through the prophets, and the people were ignoring His call. Instead of repenting, they were going further and further away from Him and further and further into idolatry. These departures from God did not happen in a single generation; nor did the declension in countries like the UK, that has brought so many of them to their present near-atheism, happen over a few years. One can trace this near-atheism back particularly to the increasing acceptance of the theory of evolution, especially since the publication of Charles Darwin’s *The Origin of Species* in 1859. Then and afterwards there were many ambassadors for Christ calling sinners to repentance. In God’s mercy, some who heard repented; they turned from their own ways and looked by faith to Christ. Yet many hardened their hearts and went on in unbelief – some of them keeping up a form of outward religion and others drifting away from it with the increasingly-blatant unbelief of the age.

Yet God still speaks. He speaks to those who take up their Bibles and read; He speaks to those who hear the preaching of the Word. And after, perhaps, many years of hearing God speak in these ways, we should be asking ourselves: Have I profited spiritually from any of these opportunities, turning from my own ways and looking by faith to Christ?

God also speaks in His providence, not least at a time like this, when Covid-19 is causing so much fear, especially because of how it spreads so readily – much more than, say, seasonal flu does. This is reflected in the number of people who have died and in estimates of those who will yet die. A Scottish Episcopal Bishop has spoken of people beginning “to realise that we need each other”. That may well be true, yet there is no indication (at least in the report of what he said) that we need God and that we need Jesus Christ, who came into the world to save sinners. How necessary to flee to

Christ, while He is near, while our opportunity lasts for finding Him as the one Saviour of those who are still under condemnation because of their sins!

In the midst of much uncertainty, one thing is certain: God knows everything, and He is in total control of all that happens. God's children may therefore trust in Him, coming before Him in prayer. They may pray for themselves and for their families and friends, in particular for protection from Covid-19; yet they must submit to whatever may be His will for them, while recognising also that all things will work together for their good. God's people are to pray also that it would please Him to bring the present pandemic to an end, and to bless the efforts of those who are working on developing a vaccine against it and an effective treatment for it. Yet they should pray particularly that God, in His mercy, would cause multitudes of sinners to hear His voice in this providence. In the face of God's judgements, we should plead, "In wrath remember mercy" (Hab 3:2). We should not despair; God is altogether able to bring sinners to seek Him and to provide all the means necessary to achieve that end.

Various Churches in Scotland, including the Church of Scotland, the Scottish Episcopal Church and the Roman Catholic Church, called for national prayer on March 22, in view of the Covid-19 outbreak. The prayer that was published for the occasion itself did not indicate who it was to be addressed to, but presumably Roman Catholics were at least as likely to pray to the Virgin Mary as to God Himself. This prayer included, appropriately, petitions for blessing, guidance and wisdom for "political leaders and decision-makers", and for blessing, guidance, strength and well-being for "health workers and key workers". But, throughout the prayer, the real problem was not what was said but what was not said. There was no confession of sin and no petition for forgiveness, no sense of spiritual need and no request for grace to repent and to believe in Christ, no awareness of the need for salvation and to be prepared to pass into eternity.

In addition to the call to pray, people were "asked to light a candle in their window. . . as a visible symbol of the light of life, Jesus Christ". But if we use symbols in our worship, they must be appointed by Christ Himself, speaking through Scripture. Yes, Christ spoke of Himself as "the light of the world" (Jn 8:12), but He never directed His followers to light a candle to represent Him. In these solemn days, when we are reminded so forcefully of the reality of death, we need to consider most seriously what lies beyond death and the necessity for a living, spiritual religion through the work of the Holy Spirit in our souls. We must look to Christ, who died for sinners and rose again – as He is revealed in the Word of God. This is no time to take refuge in a feeble imitation in which non-scriptural practices loom large.

God Calling the Wicked to Repent (2)¹

A Sermon by John Kennedy

Ezekiel 33:11. *Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?*

Second, He tells us *what He has pleasure in*: “that the wicked turn from His way and live”. The repentance of the wicked is an occasion of delight to God; for it is the first acknowledgment that He is “the true God”; the first tribute to His godhead from His creature; the first movement of a lost one from “the wrath to come”; the first rupture between him and that abominable thing which God hates; the first act of homage to His Anointed, who is also His Son; the first fruit of the Spirit’s work of grace. It is grace returning to the fountain whence it came and bringing a “wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked” sinner back to be “filled with all the fullness of God.”

Repentance is the turning of the wicked “*from his way*”. To this way he was attached before, for in this he gratified the evil desires of his heart. But from “his own way”, as well as from all else that is sinful, the true penitent turns to God. But he cannot do so without bringing the guilt and the source of his wandering with him when he comes.

He turns *to God*. To Him he desires to come, to be a debtor to His mercy for forgiveness, and to His grace for salvation, and to consecrate himself without reserve to His service. He comes through Christ to God, for He is “the way, and the truth, and the life,” and “no man cometh to the Father but by” Him. He, as “the way”, is all that God, in the interests of His glory, can desire, and all that is required to make Him perfectly suited to the sinner’s case. He who is “the way” is “the Word . . . made flesh”, made sin and made a curse. Through His flesh, rent because of sin and by the execution of the curse, “a new and living way” was opened unto “the holiest”.

The entrance of this way is near to sinners in the gospel – so near that, though the sinner can be brought nearer to it, it cannot be brought nearer to him. No one but a sinner of our race may enter this way. It suits no one else, and no one besides is called. That he is a sinner is all that the one who returns to God knows about himself. It is not as a penitent; it is not as a loved one; it is as a “wicked” one, with all the guilt of his evil ways, and with all the corruption of the old heart, that he comes. And when, as such,

¹Taken, with editing, from *The Modern Scottish Pulpit*, vol 1, (Edinburgh, 1883). The heads are (1) the declaration and (2) the call in the text. Last month, in considering the declaration, Kennedy spoke of what God has no pleasure in. Here he speaks of what God does take pleasure in, before going on to the form of the declaration, and then the call.

he comes to God through Christ for salvation from all sin, “there is joy in heaven over” him.

It is pleasant to God that the penitent should “live”; and God secures that he shall live, and live for ever. Finding the Son, the penitent finds life, for he finds in Him a righteousness through which he is set free from condemnation and has a right to all the bliss that flows from the favour of God. He has now a principle of spiritual life, and the Spirit of life Himself to preserve and perfect it. Even now, foretastes of eternal life may be his through faith; while beyond, in the full view of God and before the wistful gaze of his own dimmed eye, are the rest and bliss and glory of the perfect life in heaven.

There are three reasons, each infinitely strong, why this should be pleasing to God. As our greatest pains and pleasures reach our hearts through our love, the measure of love must indicate the capacity for joy. But who can conceive what must be the gladness, resulting from the gratification of infinite love! There is a threefold love of God, through the gratification of which He receives pleasure from the penitence and life of the wicked.

(1) *His infinite love to His people.* He embraces one whom He infinitely loves when the repenting sinner reaches the bosom of His mercy. The loved one was lost, and the loved one was dead; and now the loved lost one is found, and the loved dead one is alive. It was only because this was ever present to His eternal mind that Jehovah could have rested in His love to His chosen. But now the event is actual, and the divine joy is made known throughout all heaven. O think of joy in heaven over one whose sins made the Son of God “a man of sorrows”!

(2) *His infinite love to His Anointed One.* Each case of conversion is an instalment of reward to the Son for doing the will, and glorifying the name of the Father who sent Him. The Father loves Him because He laid down His life that He might take it again; and the Father expresses this love in fulfilling the promise, “He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied”. This Christ sees when He sees “His seed” – when the Father draws sinners unto Him and follows this up by giving them, in Christ, “all spiritual blessings” according to His intercession. The bestowal of such a reward, on such a One, must be the occasion of infinite delight to God.

(3) *His infinite love to Himself and to righteousness.* “God is love.” He is so when contemplated *in the unity of the eternal Godhead*. But love requires an object; and God Himself, who is love, is the first object of the love He is. It is because, in His omniscience, He is always conscious of His own infinite moral glory, that it yields to Him who is “over all” such delight that He is “blessed for ever”. And “God is love” as subsisting in a Trinity of Persons. “The Father loveth the Son,” and that Son is, and ever was, “daily His de-

light". "I love the Father," says the Son, and was "rejoicing always before Him." And the Holy Spirit, who "proceedeth from the Father" and from the Son, lovingly fulfills the purpose of the Father through the Son. O infinitely holy sphere! O sphere of infinite loving – the unapproachable sphere of the interrelations and fellowship of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

"God is love" to righteousness in His relation to His moral government. And when He shows that He is love to His people, He does so in such a way that all which He loves shall appear in their salvation, to His infinite delight. He does so in order to afford an opportunity of expressing what He is as love to Himself, what the mutual love of the Trinity is, and how He loves righteousness.

How the beauty of His holiness, which He loves, appears in its having pleased Him to bruise His Wellbeloved, that there might be healing to diseased sinners and peace to the guilty. His delight in this display of His glory must be truly infinite, and how intent He must be on the salvation which occasioned this joy! Never did so much of His glorious character appear in any of His works as in the cross of Christ; but all this came forth in the prosecution of a scheme which bore on the salvation of sinners.

True, all redemption work is before us in the cross. But the ulterior bearings of that work must be considered. Actual salvation is the final part of the divine scheme of grace, and each step of it must be brightened with the glory that shone forth in the course which led to it. If "truth met with mercy" in the cross, it was with a view to their coming forth together, from the presence of God on His throne, in the glad tidings of the gospel, to guide a sinner unto "the holiest", where alone He can obtain the blessing. If "righteousness and peace embraced each other", it was with a view to His being righteous to Christ in giving peace, for His sake, to those who deserved to die. The infinite display, already given, finds its complement in a work of grace. To this new occasion of expressing Himself, He comes in all the glorious brightness of His name, as revealed in the cross. And in how many ways, in His work of grace that results in penitence and life for the wicked, He manifests the glory of His power, wisdom, faithfulness, holiness and love!

How salvation furnishes an opportunity of exhibiting the mutual love of the Persons of the Godhead! The Father's love to the Son appears in having delivered all things into His hand; and you are called to look, in the light of the gospel, on this demonstration of that wondrous love. And the Son desired that the world should know how He loved the Father, by His obedience unto death, even the death of the cross. O infinite wonder that the blood, which tells you there is peace for a sinner, is the demonstration which the Son has given to the universe of His love to the Father. And the Spirit, as the Comfort-

er, takes the things of Christ and of the Father and, in fulfilment of the Father's purpose and of the design of the Son's death, shows them to the sinners who are made heirs of salvation!

How exhaustive, even as a revelation of divine glory, is the expression of *His love of righteousness* given in the death of His Son! The sins of a people eternally beloved are imputed to Him who is His only-begotten Son; and for those sins, even He dies the death of the cross! How could any other exercise of justice, or all acts of justice that can occur in the course of His moral government together, express His love of righteousness as the atoning death of His dear Son has done? Only once did He, in the exercise of retributive justice, deal with One who was "His fellow", and only then could He, in one final transaction, give an exhaustive display of His righteousness. O sinner, all that God is, as He "is love", takes the side of His mercy, when He receives and blesses him who, at His call, comes to Him through Christ crucified!

(2.) The declaration is *in the form of an oath*: "As I live, saith the Lord". It is right that such a declaration should have such a form; thus only could earnestness, springing from infinite love, express itself fitly in words. What a proof this gives you of God's intense desire that you should believe what He declares! He swears by Himself, in declaring to you that He has no pleasure in your death, but that He has pleasure in the repentance and life of all who turn to Him. Ought you not to fear remaining an unbeliever after all?

Is this divine earnestness to be met by indifference? Does this oath strike on adamant when it reaches you? Can you dare to present a heart of stone to it? Are you to be unmoved and callous before this display of God's infinitely-intense earnestness? Are you to sleep on, while this oath from heaven, uttered by the voice of God, strikes on your ear? Does He not give Himself, in all the reality of His being and glory and blessedness, as security for the truth of His declaration? How real to God He Himself is! But as He consciously lives in what He is as infinite, glorious and blessed, so He is true in the declaration of the text. What higher, firmer ground of assurance can even God give you than this? O sinner, it is enough! You might suspend on this ten thousand times ten thousand souls, each one as lost as the one soul you have, and you would run no risk. Do not yield to the unbelief that would dare to make a charge of perjury against Him for whom it is impossible to lie!

And does He not give Himself, in all the infinite resources that are His as God, as a pledge of action, as the text declares? Does this not suffice? Can more be asked? He shall cease to be, before He can fail to be the God of salvation to you, if you return to Him at His call. O what condescension is here! How can you be at ease while the infinite Jehovah is thus bending over you in intensest earnestness? Lie in the dust before Him, as He approaches you in

this marvellous act of condescension, and allow Him to lay the weight of His oath on your heart, to press out of it all its doubts about His truth and grace!

2. The Call. From the midst of divine glory, from the divine throne of grace, and intense with divine earnestness, comes the call to the house of Israel: "Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways". *Whence, whither* and *how* to turn are the questions which these words require us to consider.

(1.) *Whence?* "From your evil ways." Every way in which you depart from the fellowship and service of God is "evil". Forsaking God is the great evil. It appears so to God as He looks on His infinite glory, and on the provision of His everlasting love. Why? Because of His love to Himself and of His zeal for His own glory, His holy indignation must rise into infinite flame against that sin on the part of the creature He has made. How wonderful it is that, in the full view of all that evil and in His immovable resolution to deal out to all sin a full retribution according to justice, He should call the sinner from his evil ways, to be embraced on the bosom of His mercy!

The call is issued through the rent flesh of His own dear Son. The precious blood of His Lamb is before Him, as He calls the sinner from his evil ways. And to the praise of His name, He can call the sinner to His mercy seat. What the great High Priest presents meets all God's holy indignation in inflicting the curse. And in gracious dealing with the wicked for Christ's sake, God's indignation is brought to bear, as consuming fire, on the sin from which the guilt sprang which atoning blood removed.

"From" all "your evil ways" you are called to turn, for there can be no turning to God if any sin is reserved. Each evil way is infinitely contrary to the will of God. Sometimes the conscious reserve is reduced, under pressure of conscience, to one evil way. What eager cries come from the flesh for that one reserve, and only that one! What attempts are made to come to terms with God, while still cleaving to some darling sin! But all sin must be forsaken by the will that inclines Godwards. How can God's holiness allow any reserve? To cover any sin is to place yourself naked before the sword of God. He must strike at sin. Beware lest He strike at sin through you! Come in your desire, out of all sin, to God. Cut off your right hand, pluck out the right eye, rather than pass on to the fire that never shall be quenched.

How can God's grace admit of reserve? Salvation from *all* sin is the boon which grace confers. Nothing less than this can express its bounty, and nothing less than this can suffice for you. Less than this you cannot have from the hand of God. He cannot give you salvation to the dishonour of the law of Christ, as the one authoritative rule of life. His holy grace undertakes yet to give to the law its claims in full; and it begins to do so by bringing a sinner, with a heart broken from all sin, under its holy yoke.

But must I rid myself of my guilt and of my evil heart before I come back to God? No indeed. You are called to come as you are, in the midst of your evil ways, with all the guilt that lies on you and with all the fountain of evil in you. You are called to come burdened and filled with sin, having no righteousness to cover you, and no excuse to hide your guilt. While there is nothing in all your consciousness but sin, all over and all through – with no ability but the deadly power to transgress – you are called to receive all the pardoning mercy and all the saving grace you need.

(2.) *Whither?* To Himself God calls you – to Himself as revealed in the declaration going before, to Himself as on His throne of grace, to Himself through Jesus Christ. Beware of a Godless Christianity, as well as of a Christless religion. Souls that have only the uneasiness caused by the fear of death are anxious only for something that will take their blind dread away. They have not known God in His awful glory as Lawgiver and Judge, and they do not care to realise Him in the person of the Saviour. They do not feel their need of a divine Saviour to remove the guilt of sin and to subdue its power. They do not ask to be admitted, under the Spirit's teaching, into the mystery of the cross, to see a way for sinners to come to God. The glory shining from the face of Jesus does not draw them through the Mediator unto God. And they shrink from the pressure of God's authority on their conscience.

But "he that believeth on Me," Christ says, "believeth not on Me, but on Him that sent Me". By Christ you must "believe in God that raised Him up from the dead and gave Him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God". "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." Believing thus, God will be before you – in such an aspect of His character, in such a relation to sinners through Christ, in such marvellous love, and in such readiness to bless you when you come – that you will be sweetly subdued into compliance with His call and you cannot but choose to come.

Divine glory, shining from the face of Jesus on a soul that is made alive, melts the heart and brings it to the footstool of the throne of mercy. And the very view of God which wins his confidence, secures the homage of the penitent. He must appreciate God's awful righteousness as displayed in the cross, as well as realise His majesty, before he can have hope. And what he needs to encourage him suffices to subdue him into an unreserved surrender of his whole being to God. The life that moves towards Him, in hope, bows to His sovereign will and lies in adoring worship at His footstool.

(3.) *How?* In willingness to accept the terms proposed by God, as terms of salvation and of service. You may feel that you cannot come back to God – that, unless He, in His almighty grace, comes for you, you cannot come to

Him. Yes, you may shrink from asking Him to come, but if you only turn in the distant darkness to Him who is the way, and to God through Him – willing to owe Him the turning and drawing power so that you may come, as well as the blessing when you have come – He “will pour out” His “Spirit unto you, and make known” His “words unto you”. Turning thus, you will indeed be debtors to His grace for all you need. Though debtors, you may have hope, for He raises the poor from the dust; He brings the fallen out of the horrible pit and He gathers, as He calls, outcasts from the very ends of the earth.

Surely, then, God may ask the question, “*Why will ye die?*” *You* have this question to answer. The reason for your dying is not on God’s side. He has abundantly shown this. And on your side it is not found in your fall in Adam, nor in the ruin resulting from that fall. It is not in your helplessness, for you are called to lie under the gracious power of God to be saved by Him. It is not in the influence of the world, insidious and mighty though that is, for it cannot constrain you to be aliens from God. It is not in the might of the great enemy, nor in the multitude of his hosts, nor in the depth of his cunning, nor in the greatness of his cruelty, for though he is a “strong man” and a “murderer”, he cannot for one moment keep you away from Him who calls you, if you are disposed to come.

Then, “*Why will ye die?*” God meets you in the face, where you are and as you are, with this question. You are bound to give an answer, for only your own unwillingness to return can slay you. And are you to remain unwilling? If so, how can you justify yourself. My unwillingness, you say, is just the lack of something which I can only have from God, and if He does not bestow it, then what can I do? But, friend, do not think of your unwillingness as a mere negation – a blank for God to fill up. It is positive wickedness; it is sinful madness. It is an insult to God, implying contempt of His love, of His Son’s precious blood, of His great salvation and of His glorious name. To remain unwilling is to remain a rebel, disowning God’s authority, and defying His power. And are you to choose this, rather than submit to be saved, ruled and filled by God?

But my unwillingness is the result of being in a state of death as an alien from God, under the guilt and power of sin. How then can I help myself? But, friend, the question is not, How can you help yourself? But, Will you be indebted for all help to God? Will you die in your pride, even when confessedly helpless, rather than let Christ be “all in all” to you – rather than let the grace of God do all for you? To this point you are shut up, and this leaves your unwillingness exposed in all the nakedness of excuseless rebellion.

“*Why will ye die?*” “Precept upon precept . . . line upon line . . . here a little, and there a little,” have been given you, and is death to be your end?

But the gospel has been preached to the Gentiles, and God has granted repentance unto life to Gentiles also. To each gospel-hearer, God therefore addresses this question. "The Son of man", who came "to seek and to save that which is lost", has come to you in your sinful helplessness, offering Himself to be to you all that you need, in order to your everlasting salvation. And, after all this, "will ye die?"

And "why will ye die"? What is there in death that you should choose it rather than life? And yet every sinner who remains impenitent is charged with choosing death. God charges you with this when He addresses to you this question. And you are charged with choosing death because you love it, for He says, "he that sinneth against Me wrongeth his own soul; all they that hate Me love death". Rejecting the gospel is sinning against Christ. You cannot do so without wronging your own soul. And this you do because you hate Christ. Not because you are merely indifferent. You would not sin against Him as you do, if you were merely indifferent. A consideration of your own interest would turn the scale, if there was an even balance. But it is not indifference, but hatred, that is your state of feeling towards Christ. And you cannot hate Him without loving death.

No, you say, I cannot love death; I shrink from shame and agony, and both are implied in death. True, what you regard as death you would wish to escape from. But, in the view of Christ, it is death to be away from God. And you do love to be away from Him. In loving this, you love death. Such is your love of this that you will not abandon it, though God tells you, and your conscience whispers to you that, if you abide an alien, you must perish for ever. You know that the death you love is linked to the death of woe from which your conscience makes you shrink and you know that you cannot cleave to the former without holding both in your grasp. You never have at once any portion of time but the passing moment, and on that narrow foothold you always stand at the brink of hell. What you do there is always finally done, for it is done by you in all you have of time, and you are keeping fast your hold of what must bring you down.

"Why will ye die?" Is there aught in "outer darkness" to commend it to you, so that you would choose to pass into the midst of it? Or is there aught in the "devouring fire" and the "everlasting burnings" to induce you to "dwell" with them for ever? Do you care to be in the bonds of despair and under the fang of the "worm" that "dieth not"? Why will you thus die? To God, who puts the question, give an answer if you dare. And if you have no answer to give, fall silenced before the footstool of Him who calls you. But break the silence of excuselessness by a prayer for mercy, and continue to cry, "Turn Thou me, and I shall be turned," till an answer comes from the mercy seat.

John Kennedy of Dingwall¹

1. His Background and Conversion

Two hundred years ago, on 15 August 1819, a child was born in the Killearnan parish manse, on the north side of the Beaully Firth, a few miles from Inverness. The child was the fourth son of Rev John and Jessie Kennedy; he was given his father's Christian name and was to become Dr John Kennedy, Free Church minister of Dingwall until his death in 1884, one of the most appreciated and most used preachers of his generation.

He was born into a godly home, in a district where there were many godly people, and others visited at communion seasons, no doubt having a considerable influence for good on the parish of Killearnan. The younger John Kennedy describes some of them in his tribute to his father, *The Minister of Killearnan*.² One of them was Alexander Hutcheson, a former catechist. "He was but 11 years of age when he first felt the impression of the truth. Engaged in tending his father's sheep, one night, as he was shutting them up in the fold, he was strongly moved to kneel down and pray. There, in the midst of his little flock, he fell on his knees, and ere he rose he thought that Christ had won his heart. The impression then made gradually wore away, till he had fallen back into the lethargy that preceded it. Just a year had elapsed, when the same feeling was again excited, and in the same circumstances as before. This, once more, in the course of time wore away.

"The listlessness, which succeeded continued till, one night, just after he lay down in bed, an impression of his guilt and danger as a sinner was made with irresistible power on his heart. So sudden and so overpowering was the awe that came upon his spirit, that he had sprung out of bed, to rush out to the hill, when, suddenly, the light of the glorious gospel illuminated his soul. Never from that hour did Alexander Hutcheson return to the ways of sin, and thus began his Christian life. Enjoying unwonted nearness to God, he was at the same time a most humble, loving, tender-hearted Christian."³

The future minister of Dingwall described his father's last days: "His last sermon in church was preached on the Tuesday evening before his death, and closed the series of discourses" on the words, "We are come . . . to God, the Judge of all" (Heb 12:22,23). "At the close of the service he announced

¹The first section of a paper, now somewhat enlarged, given by the Editor at the Theological Conference in 2019.

²It is bound up with *The Days of the Fathers in Ross-shire* and is particularly recommended as a warm, spiritual biography.

³John Kennedy, *The Days of the Fathers in Ross-shire*, Christian Focus Publications reprint, 1979, p 189.

that on Thursday, he would preach in the schoolhouse in the eastern district of the parish, in order to take the last opportunity of wiping off his skirts the blood of the people who resided there. The congregation was then dismissed by him under the assured persuasion that he and they would never meet again on earth. On coming out of church he stood for a few minutes looking to the people as they were retiring under the clear moonlight. 'My poor people', he was heard exclaiming by one who had come up beside him, and whose approach caused him to turn away and to hurry on to the manse."

There was then no indication of declining health, yet he was convinced that death was near. "His sermon on Thursday was on spiritual worship, and in preaching it his whole soul seemed to go out in aspirations after the pure service of heaven." The next day he became unwell. "He expressed no anxiety and uttered no complaint, and his family had no distinct anticipation of danger. Remaining in bed, he seemed lost in contemplation, an expression of placid joy resting on his face. He had calmly laid himself down to die. His work was done; he knew that his eternal rest was nigh; and with his eye fixed on the glory that was dawning on his vision, he awaited with joyful expectation the coming of death. His reply to all enquiries about himself was, 'I'll soon be quite well'. . . . On Sabbath evening he fell asleep in Jesus."⁴ The death of John Kennedy of Killearnan was a great loss to the cause of Christ in the wider area, but as we will see, the Lord was to use it for the spiritual good of the son.

Young Kennedy attended the local parish school and was already learning Latin by the time he was six. He began attending university in Aberdeen about the age of 17. In due course he graduated MA, having won several prizes during his course. His biographer, Alexander Auld of Olrig, in Caithness, does not credit him with having applied himself "with more than a moderate degree of diligence",⁵ but another writer states that "he really began to apply himself to classwork" towards the end of this course.⁶

In 1840 Kennedy began his divinity course, again in Aberdeen. A fellow student, John Mackay, indicates that Sir Walter Scott's novels occupied more of his time than the teachings of Calvin's *Institutes*. Mackay went on: "Apart from this, there was nothing in his character and conduct outwardly inconsistent with his profession. But to his intimate acquaintances there appeared a want of that high sense of the sacredness and solemnity of the

⁴Kennedy, *Days of the Fathers*, pp 196-7.

⁵Alexander Auld, *John Kennedy, DD*, London, 1887, p 2. Unidentified quotations in this paper are from this volume.

⁶"Memoir of the Rev John Kennedy DD" by John Noble, in John Kennedy, *The Days of the Fathers in Ross-shire*, Inverness, 1897 edition, p xxxiv.

ministerial office which might be expected in . . . an aspirant to the gospel ministry. Mr Kennedy's religion . . . seemed to consist of little more than a strong dislike to a cold and heartless Moderatism⁷, a high admiration and peculiarly warm affection for his venerated father, and great confidence in the efficacy of that father's prayers – a confidence which, in his own case, proved to be well founded."

One day in January 1841, Kennedy and Mackay were talking together in Kennedy's room when another student, also from Killearnan, walked in with a very sad expression on his face. Kennedy jokingly asked what was the matter. The visitor remained silent. Kennedy became alarmed and asked, "What has happened?" and asked further if he had heard bad news from home.

"I had a letter this morning," was the reply, "and I hear your father is seriously ill." Upset, Kennedy asked, "Is my father gone?" and was told, "I fear he is".

Kennedy turned slowly and silently away and threw himself on his bed with a half-stifled moan. Early the next morning he caught the stagecoach for Inverness. Back at the Killearnan manse, he was too upset to go inside and found somewhere in the garden to pour out his heart in prayer to God. Colin Forsyth, a noted godly man in the district, noticed him and was able to overhear his petitions, commenting later: "He became a man of prayer before he became a preacher, and to my mind his prayers were always ahead of his preaching" (p 7).

Auld summed up what Kennedy long afterwards told him about this spiritual experience at this time: (1.) "Indescribable agony of mind under a sense of sin against God, especially in the neglect of the admonitions, instructions and example of his father, now lost to him for ever." (2.) "Striving to keep himself from sinking into utter despair of God's mercy by betaking himself to prayers and meditation on passages of Scripture." (3.) "An apprehension that the way of salvation by Jesus Christ was opened in the gospel to the very chief of sinners" (p 8). This apprehension came mainly as a result of conversations with Forsyth. Kennedy was to write later, thinking of his father's death: "The memory of that loss I can bear to recall, as I cherish the hope that his death was the means of uniting us in bonds that shall never be broken" (p 5).

Mackay continues his recollections: "Within a fortnight he returned to Aberdeen another, and to all appearance a new, man. No change could be more complete than that which was visible in his whole nature. His former indifference to divine things had given place in his mind to deep seriousness, his self-sufficiency to self-abasement, the things of time to the things of eter-

⁷The opponents of the Evangelical party in the Church of Scotland of the time.

nity. . . . He did not then profess to experience much of the peace which flows from believing and a well-grounded assurance of sin forgiven, and certainly he knew nothing of those raptures and high joys of which we nowadays hear so much, but which too often prove so deceptive. His mind during that period, and until the close of the session, appeared to me to be chiefly occupied with that sense of the majesty and sovereignty of God, the purity of the divine law, and the exceeding sinfulness of sin which is the best preparative for an intelligent and saving appreciation of the gospel remedy” (pp 6,7).

About that time, as part of his course, he had to preach before a professor, who commented that it contained “much that was excellent” and “gave promise of future eminence, but [was] at the same time too Methodistical in its tone and spirit”. In other words, the professor (presumably a Moderate in his religious outlook) found too much of the spirit of the gospel in the sermon (p 7).

Some entries in his diary illustrate Kennedy’s spiritual condition in the months after his conversion. First, on 24 September 1841, he notes, “Felt this morning, while on my knees, somewhat humbled and assured when reflecting on, and being enabled in a measure to appropriate, the free offer of Christ, with all His fullness and in all His offices. On going downstairs was tempted by Satan to believe that I had renounced Christ. Relieved by these three short but unspeakably rich words, ‘in no wise’ (Jn 6:37). . . .

“Found a hell within me, rebelling during the day against God’s right to charge the guilt of sin. O the flinty hardness of my heart, equalled only by its rebellion against the Creator, the Author of the law, the Ruler of providence and the God of salvation! Wherever God is to be seen and found, thither will the hellish enmity of the human heart pursue to dishonour His holy name to His face and vent its weak but infernal malice against the Most High. . . . O to have higher conceptions of the Almighty in His moral perfections, as shining forth in the sufferings of Christ! . . . May the Spirit of grace teach and lead me. Ignorance, enmity and the devil are strong when they go together, and all the three lay snares for my understanding; but the Holy Ghost is almighty” (pp 11-12).

On September 25, he wrote, “Experienced, while engaged in prayer, somewhat of soul satisfaction in viewing the sufferings of Christ. O to find shore on the interminable continent of His Godhead and personality! [I] see more of the holiness and justice of God than I experience of the drawing power of the love of Christ – am more engaged with the odiousness of sin than the love of the Redeemer. ‘Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today, and for ever.’ What a wonder that He waited at my door for a second refusal! Fear I have not given Him my heart. I think I may say, I would give it to

none else. Were I assured that He would receive my soul, 'twere easier to give him the heart. . . . How different are the effects of a carnal and legal notion of faith! Never does a sinner cease to work till he begins to believe. O Lord, preserve me from stumbling on the dark mountains to rise no more! Blessed are the people who know the joyful sound” (pp 12-13).

Comfort in Bereavement¹

A letter from *Samuel Murray*

Although my loss of a worthy brother, an eminent and faithful servant of the Lord, is very great in many respects, yet I must own that your loss, considering the special intimate relation between you and him, which was continued for many years to your mutual comfort, is more heavy on that account. But we cannot quarrel with what the sovereign Lord of death has done. He does all things well, and for the best to His own family, of which I am persuaded you are one. If one servant or member of a family is sent away before another to an infinitely better lodging than any here, even to an everlasting habitation in heaven, where the whole family is to be transplanted at last, who can speak against it? That servant is a gainer beyond what we can conceive, and those who are left behind should encourage themselves in Him who, in due time, even most seasonably, will transplant them to the paradise of God that they may be all together, and for ever with Him, without any danger of parting from Him or from one another. They will encircle the throne to eternity without wearying, and with perfect delight and joy.

Those who died in Christ will rejoice to see such as were their endeared relations here, walking in white and crowned with victory and, through redeeming love, made more than conquerors over all the evils they were liable to, either from within or from without. No sin, nor any of its consequences, will give them the least disturbance; they will sing to the praise of sovereign grace for eternal redemption from all these. Yet their exceeding joy, and the source of it, will be God and the Lamb, who are in the temple above. There is no need there of ordinances and sacraments; in the triumphant Church all her members are perfectly taught and comforted, although there are degrees among them. They are exactly like Christ and see Him as He is, which the strongest believer cannot attain in this imperfect state.

¹This letter of sympathy was written, on 26 June 1732, to Catherine Boston, after the death of her husband, Thomas Boston of Ettrick, in the Scottish Borders. It was written by the minister of Penpont, in Dumfries-shire, and is taken, with editing, from *The Scottish Christian Herald*, vol 1 (1836).

They are favoured with near and direct views of their exalted Redeemer which are unspeakably ravishing. They all say, without one dissenting voice: It is good for us to be here. Therefore we may not say that it is ill for us, having a sweet, comprehensive promise that all things, even the death of dear friends, shall work together for our good, which will be fully accomplished – as all the promises will be – in the perfection of believers and in their enjoyment of the chief good. We will then understand this clearly, to our everlasting comfort. The promises, being confirmed and ratified by our Surety, will not fail; they will be made out to all that embrace them in Christ, even though providence seems sometimes to go counter to them, and our misbelieving haste is ready to say, “Doth His promise fail for evermore?” This is graciously overruled in love and mercy to us, that we may believe and hope against hope and that the Lord may surprise us with His faithfulness in performing His good word.

I do not doubt that you have sweet experience of this, as to former incidents in your life and after this great trial of your faith. I hope you will say with pious Durham,² when his wife died, “that if all the world had said this will work for my good, I would not believe them, but seeing my faithful God hath said it, I will believe Him”. The Lord may rightfully pull up His strongest cedars while He continues the weaker, to show that His thoughts are far above ours and to display His strength in bearing up the weak. According to human reason and probability, which He often baffles, that we may lean more to infinite understanding than to it, few or none thought you would have stood out against so many storms; but He is the glory of your strength. Trust in Him; wait on Him. Before long we will forget all our troubles and rejoice together. Our sorrows will be turned into joy, and no man will be able to take our joy from us. He has broken us on earth, that He may set us up in heaven.

I hope, through grace, your family and mine will make a greater figure there than many who have prospered in the world more than we have. A sight of Christ shining brighter than angels and saints will make us forget all our sad days and nights. Here we often sit in black, but we shall at last put off all our mourning for ever. I bless the Lord for what is intended about your son’s passing his “trials”.³ May he be blessed and long spared to make up for the absence of his worthy and renowned father. May the Father of all mercies and the God of all comfort grant that your consolations may abound through Christ. My wife and I sympathise with you.

²James Durham of Glasgow (1622-58), noted minister and author.

³This is a reference to trials, before a presbytery, for license to preach the gospel. This son, also named Thomas, was his father’s successor in Ettrick.

Christian Holiness¹

John Brown

As sanctification cannot be enjoyed by anyone whose state has not been changed by union to Christ, so it is to be found only in those whose characters have been transformed by the regenerating influences of God's Spirit. No man can be holy who is not "born again", "created anew in Christ Jesus", and thus made a partaker of a "divine nature". It is a fatal mistake, under which many labour, that those living in the Christian dispensation, and observing the external ordinances of the Christian Church, have all they need to entitle them to be called regenerate. We find, however, that after his baptism Simon Magus was told he was in "the gall of bitterness". Many who are baptized, and enjoy the advantages of the New Testament dispensation, have nothing of Christianity but the name. Good education is not regeneration. This may restrain from external sins, but it cannot change the heart. It may polish the exterior and tame the wildness of human nature, but it leaves the springs of action unaltered; it cannot remove their depravity.

We have a striking illustration of these remarks in the case of Joash, the king of Judah. He had received a wise religious education from Jehoiada the high priest and, as long as Jehoiada lived, he walked in the ways of the Lord, but the death of his teacher was the death of his piety. To abandon vices, to which we were formerly addicted, is not regeneration. This may be done, and yet our righteousness may not exceed, or even equal, the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees. Even though we are distinguished by strictly performing many duties, we must not conclude from this that we are born again. Before his conversion, Saul of Tarsus lived according to the strictest form of the Jewish religion. Sharp convictions do not necessarily prove that we have undergone this change, or else Pharaoh, Judas and Simon Magus were regenerated. It is dangerous to draw this inference, even from a great moving of the affections. Esau sought the blessing with many tears; the stony-ground hearers received the word with joy; and the hypocrites in the time of Isaiah took delight in approaching to God.

The change is represented in Scripture as the creation of a new man – a change pervading the whole mind and consisting in a radical alteration of its tempers and habits. The result of this change is a divine nature, proceeding from God, resembling His moral image, disposing to fellowship with Him, and leading to enjoyment of Him. Regeneration may be described as a great, inward, complete, supernatural change, consisting in making the subject of

¹Taken from *Letters on Sanctification* by John Brown of Whitburn (1754-1832), son of John Brown of Haddington.

it pursue the glory of God as the great end of his conduct, leading him to rest in God as his chief happiness, and manifesting itself in new apprehensions, affections and habits, in spiritual things. True holiness originates in this radical change, which increases gradually till the saint becomes a perfect man in Christ Jesus.

From the view which we have taken of sanctification and regeneration, as arising from the free operation of divine influence, we must beware of drawing the conclusion that God's grace supersedes the necessity for our exertions. Our exertions and God's gracious influences, so far from opposing each other, co-operate harmoniously in the great work of sanctification. Some legal teachers would separate these as entirely incongruous. A command, they seem to think, leaves no room for a promise; and a promise detracts from the authority of a command.

These men, however, greatly err. We ought to show due regard to both God's promise and His command and, if we are really sanctified, we will do so. Believers will have their consciences impressed with a sense of the supreme authority of God's command, because it is His command; their judgment will be convinced of its reasonableness, equity, holiness and usefulness, and their affections will be fixed on it as morally lovely. On the other hand, they will constantly have to refer to God's promise. Under a habitual sense of their own inability to comply with God's command from any power in themselves, they adore that kindness which has provided help for them and rely on the promise for supplies of grace to enable them to perform every duty.

Let us never forget that it is *Christian* holiness of which we are speaking – holiness derived from Christ, effected by His grace in the heart, and exemplified in the life through continued supplies of spiritual strength. We are not sufficient of ourselves to think even a good thought, “but our sufficiency is of God”. Believers desire to enjoy Christ, and be perfectly conformed to Him in faith, humility and every grace. Nothing but Christ will satisfy a sanctified soul. The predominant wish is that they may “be found in Him”. No set of feelings, however pleasing, may be the ground of our hope. Jesus Himself must be all our salvation and all our desire. All graces and duties, prayers and tears, must be connected with Christ and washed in the fountain opened.

Never, never let us forget, that all our attempts to be holy, in a natural state, will necessarily be vain. In dwelling on this truth, I am far from wishing to give men an excuse for remaining under the dominion of their corrupted desires, but I do wish to set them right about the true method of seeking holiness. No man can seek holiness too eagerly, if he will only seek it in the due order. No man can be holy too soon. But by attempting to be holy in a way not sanctioned by God's appointment, we may place ourselves at a greater

distance from gospel holiness than ever. It is folly to look for good fruit on a tree not grafted into the true vine. Not less foolish is it to expect a new life without a new heart. Many men, in a natural state, suppose (and the delusion is cherished by too many preachers) that, in order to be holy, they have nothing to do but to reform their lives, according to God's law, not recollecting, or not knowing, that men must be made spiritually alive before they can act. The person must be accepted before his services can be acceptable.

The first duty of a sinner is certainly to receive the record of God concerning His Son. He is to rely on Christ Jesus as an all-sufficient Saviour, so that in Him, and from Him, he may receive that change of heart and state, disposition and situation, which is necessary for true holiness.

Famous Books and their Authors¹

2. Augustine's *Confessions*

Rev Donald Beaton

Of all the works that have come down to us from the Fathers of the early Christian centuries, none is so well known or appreciated so universally as the *Confessions* of Augustine, the Bishop of Hippo. It is what its title states: it is the confessions of a master-mind in search of rest and peace. The work describes with touching eloquence that long and eager search which ultimately ended in the finding of that true life so much longed for and so eagerly pursued.

The author of this religious classic was the son of Patricius and Monica. He was born at Tagaste, a village of Numidia,¹ on 13 November 354. His father, a burgess of Tagaste, was a pagan and so continued until near the end of his life. His mother, however, was an earnest Christian, and some of the most beautiful and touching passages of the *Confessions* refer to the mother that watched, with all a woman's devotion and a mother's anxiety, the career of her distinguished but wayward son. Augustine began his education at Tagaste, where he studied grammar and rhetoric – these studies being further prosecuted at Carthage.

While still a young man, he gave scope to his wayward passions and fell into a course of sin. It was while leading this abandoned life that he was impressed with reading a passage in Cicero's² *Hortensius* on the value of philosophy; this was the beginning of that long and eventful struggle which

¹Taken, with editing, from the October 1902 issue of this *Magazine*.

¹A Roman province on the North African coast.

²A Roman philosopher.

was watched with so much solicitude by his devoted mother. Her character as set forth by her son reveals one of the purest and noblest types of womanhood known to history. Augustine might become an abandoned wretch, but still he was her son and, as one hoping against hope, she poured out her soul to God.

With a heart touched by the remembrance of these prayers, he says in the *Confessions*: “And Thou sentest Thine handmaid from above and deliverest my soul out of that profound darkness; my mother, Thy faithful one, weeping to Thee for me, more than mothers weep [over] the bodily deaths of their children. For she, by that faith and spirit which she had from Thee, discerned the death wherein I lay and Thou heardest her, O Lord; Thou heardest her, and despisedst not her tears when, streaming down, they watered the ground under her eyes in every place where she prayed; yea, Thou wast pleased to hear her.” In her solicitude for her son, she pled with a bishop to converse with him, if by any means he might be turned from his ways, and received as an answer from the good man: “Go thy way and God bless thee, for it is not likely that the child of these tears should perish”.

While the struggle referred to above was going on in his heart, he drifted into Manicheism as the easiest explanation to his perplexed mind of the conflicting problems of life. This heresy regarded the world as under the control of two great principles – the one evil, the other good; through Satan’s influence they had become mixed in man; to deliver the light from the darkness is a physical process and the work of a succession of prophets, of whom the heavenly Christ, not the Jesus of the New Testament, is one; Mani, the founder of the sect, set himself forth as the promised Comforter.

While Augustine was under the delusion of this false doctrine, there came to Carthage a bishop of the Manicheans, Faustus – a great snare of the devil, as Augustine describes him. But with all his smooth language, instead of confirming Augustine in his error he only made him intensely dissatisfied. And leaving Carthage in disgust, Augustine proceeded to Rome. His mother bewailed his departure – though, all unknown to her, it was leading up to the event for which she so devoutly prayed. She followed him as far as the sea, where he deceived her, putting her off by saying that he had a friend whom he could not leave until he had a fair wind.

“And I lied to my mother,” he says, “and such a mother, and got away that night. . . . I stole away, and she was left behind in weeping and prayer. And what, O Lord, was she with so many tears asking of Thee, but that Thou wouldest not suffer me to sail? But Thou, in the depth of Thy counsels and hearing the main point of her desire, regardedst not what she then asked, that Thou mightest make me that for which she was ever imploring Thee. The

wind blew and swelled our sails and withdrew the shore from our sight; and she on the morrow was there, frantic with sorrow, and with complaints and groans filled Thine ears, who didst then disregard them. For she loved my being with her, as mothers do, but much more than many; and she knew not how great joy Thou wert about to work for her out of my absence. She knew not; therefore did she weep and wail, and by this agony there appeared in her the inheritance of Eve, with sorrow seeking what in sorrow she had brought forth.”

After some time he came to Milan as rhetoric-reader, where he fell in with Ambrose the Bishop, who received him with great kindness. He attended the preaching of Ambrose more to study his oratory than to receive any benefit to his soul. As to the matter of the sermon, he says, “I was a scornful and careless looker on”. It was while at Milan he formally abandoned his Manichean notions, and again lost himself in darksome deeps where he could find no resting place. Fear of the judgement to come acted as a check on him for a time, but still he had no peace. He then turned to the study of the Scriptures and seemed to discern some faint glimmerings of truth in the awful gloom that enveloped his mind, but as yet the day had not dawned. He consulted one Simplicianus about his condition, who related to him the story of the conversion of Victorinus, who was a professor of rhetoric like himself. This conversion made an impression on Augustine for a time, but he then fell into his old sins again.

Shortly after this Pontitianus, a countryman of his own who held high office at the Emperor’s Court, came to him on a visit. He took up a book lying on the table, which turned out to be some of the writings of the Apostle Paul. Pontitianus expressed delight at finding the book in Augustine’s possession. And on Augustine intimating that he bestowed great pains on the study of these writings, his friend was led to make remarks on the conversion of Anthony, an Egyptian monk. The narration of this conversion stirred his soul to its very depths and, while Pontitianus was speaking, he was inwardly stung and exceedingly confounded with horrible shame. A mighty struggle was going on in his soul; “the fever of his irresoluteness” played havoc with his more sober thoughts and, swayed to and fro by the baffling waves of indecision, he poured out his anxious complaint in his remarkable *Confessions*.

The sins of his nature, to which he gave so much reign in the days of his thoughtless folly, rose up with a new power, proclaiming their right to rule. But the awful struggle was drawing near an end – at least in its present form. When at last his mind had heaped up all the misery in the sight of his heart, there arose a mighty storm bringing a mighty shower of tears. And with these tears he offered up the earnest prayer: “And Thou, O Lord, how long?

How long, Lord, wilt Thou be angry for ever? Remember not our former iniquities.” “For I felt”, he says, “I was held by them. I sent up these sorrowful words: How long? How long? Tomorrow and tomorrow? Why not now? Why is there not this hour an end to my uncleanness?”

And then comes the ever-memorable description of his conversion. Let us read it in Augustine’s own words, “So was I speaking and weeping in the most bitter contrition of my heart, when, lo, I heard from a neighbouring house a voice – as of a boy or girl, I know not – chanting and oft repeating, ‘Take up and read; take up and read’. Instantly my countenance altered; I began to think most intently, whether children were wont in any kind of play to sing such words, nor could I remember ever to have heard the like. So, checking the torrent of my tears, I arose; interpreting it to be no other than a command from God to open the book and read the first chapter I should find. For I had heard of Anthony that, coming in during the reading of the Gospel, he received the admonition, as if what was being read was spoken to him: ‘Go, sell all that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come and follow Me,’ and by such an oracle he was forthwith converted unto Thee.

“Eagerly then I returned to the place where Alypius was sitting; for there I had laid the volume of the Apostle when I arose thence. I seized, opened and in silence read that section on which my eyes first fell: ‘Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying, but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof’. No further would I read, nor needed I, for instantly at the end of this sentence, by a light as it were of serenity infused into my heart, all the darkness of doubt vanished away.”

The day had dawned at last to the weary, wrestling soul, and the light of the morning filled his heart with unspeakable gladness. He told his friend Alypius what had taken place, and they both went to Monica. “Thence we go unto my mother,” he says; “we tell her; she rejoices at it; we relate in order how it took place; she leaps for joy and triumphs and blesses Thee, who art able to do above that which we ask or think; for she perceived that Thou hadst given her more for me than she was wont to beg by her pitiful and most sorrowful groanings.”

For her too the night was already far spent and the day was near at hand. She had prayed for her son by day and in the lonely watches of the night, and her petitions oftentimes were tears and groans. Now they had been answered and, as one whose work on earth was finished, she passed peacefully away at Ostia³, in the fifty-sixth year of her age. She was buried in an alien grave.

³The harbour city of ancient Rome.

“Did she not dread leaving her body at such a distance from her native city?” someone said to her on her deathbed. “Nothing is far to God,” was her answer, “nor need I fear lest He should be ignorant at the end of the world of the place whence He is to raise me up.”

Augustine was now in his thirty-third year and, having sold all his belongings he returned to his native land, where he passed his time in quiet meditation and study. After a period of rest he was ordained a presbyter, and in his forty-first year he became Bishop of Hippo. He held this office for 35 years, and his name is always associated with this little seaport town on the northern coast of Africa. He died in 430, aged 75, while the Vandals were besieging Hippo.

The figure of Augustine is one of those commanding the attention of their fellow men and exercising an untold influence on the centuries. Luther and Calvin came under the spell of his genius, and their teaching was deeply influenced by Augustine’s presentation of the doctrines of grace. “He was greater on the whole than Calvin”, says John Duncan. “Calvin is the more complete, but no thanks to him for that, for he was standing on Augustine’s shoulders.”

Philip Schaff sums up in a few paragraphs the character of Augustine, both as a man and theologian, perhaps as well as could be done. “Augustine,” he says, “the man with upturned eye, with pen in left hand and a burning heart in the right, as he is usually represented, is a philosophical and theological genius of the first order, towering like a pyramid above his age, and looking down commandingly upon succeeding centuries. He had a mind uncommonly fertile and deep, bold and soaring; and with it, what is better, a heart full of Christian love and humility. He stands of right by the side of the greatest philosophers of antiquity and modern times. We meet him alike on the broad highways and on the narrow footpaths, on the giddy Alpine heights and in the awful depths of speculation, wherever philosophical thinkers before him or after him have trod.”

His greatest work is his *City of God*. It was begun in 413, after the occupation of Rome by Alaric, and finished in 426. A thrill of dismay went through the Roman Empire at the news of the fall of the great city. The wild hordes from the north in their merciless advance wrecked and pillaged everything. The loud cry of unbelief was heard amidst the confusion, and irresponsible tongues proclaimed that the God of the Christians was helpless to stay these devastations. It was partly to meet this state of matters that Augustine wrote his *City of God*. He points out that calamities as tragic as these happened in the days of the Caesars, when the old gods were acknowledged and, furthermore, that all disasters are not necessarily calamit-

ies; some may have a disciplinary end in view. He then proceeds to show that there have been from the beginning two great communities or cities – the city of God comprising within it all the true worshippers of God, and the city of the world, which in its principles is diametrically opposed to the city of God. His chief controversial works are those against the Donatists and the Pelagians. In the latter he vindicates the doctrines of grace against the opinions of Pelagius.

His best known work, however, is his *Confessions*. It consists of 13 books; in the first ten he gives an account of his search for the true life, and in the last three we have discussions on the creation. Even in the *Confessions* we have statements showing that Augustine inclined to baptismal regeneration and that he believed in prayers for the dead, and there can be no question that in his later writings he contributed to promoting the adoration of the Virgin Mary. He also advocates monasticism and celibacy. From this it is evident that, even as early as his day, the Church began to drift from her apostolic moorings. But with all his shortcomings he stands before us as one of the greatest figures in the history of the Church.

Considering God's Providence¹

James Renwick

You know, my friends, that this meeting was appointed to have been at another place and occasion, but was disappointed. What the language of this disappointment may be to us, you would seriously consider. I shall tell you we think the Lord would have us to learn these three things by it.

1. He would have us to take a back-look of, and make a more narrow search into, and take serious thoughts of our own sins and iniquities which have provoked him to remove the gospel and gospel ordinances from us.

2. He would have us highly to esteem gospel ordinances and not to look upon them as common mercies and privileges.

3. Yet He would not have us so to esteem them as to put them in His room (which, alas, we have done) but to seek the living God in them. And seeing, in His providence, He has caused us to meet together this day, it may be asked, What is our errand here? We shall tell you this in these three things.

¹Taken from *A Choice Collection of Very Valuable Prefaces, Lectures, and Sermons*, by James Renwick. These remarks introduced the first public preaching which Renwick had in Scotland. It was on 23 November 1683, a fast day, at Darmead, a remote spot in north Lanarkshire where conventicles were held. This particular conventicle had to be re-arranged because of Renwick's ill health.

(1.) Our first errand is to set about the great duty of fasting, mourning and humiliation before the Lord; even to mourn over the several steps of our defections; and in order to this, we shall descend, or go down to where we first left the Lord and declined, which hath provoked him to leave us.

(2.) Our second errand here this day is to offer you reconciliation, to tell you this: that God, whom you have offended by these sins and steps of defection and backslidings, is content to be reconciled to you. O therefore turn you, turn you unto Me, saith the Lord of hosts, and I will turn unto you, saith the Lord of hosts [see Zec 1:3].

(3.) Our third errand here this day is to lift up and raise the fallen standard of the gospel that did fall in this our land, when that valiant chariot-man, Mr Donald Cargill, fell; yea, that very part of the standard which he held; yet let not any captious creature (if there be any such here) think or say that we are following the examples of men. No, no; for we desire only to follow them in so far as they followed the Lord.

Gold Tried in the Fire¹

W K Tweedie

Revelation 3:18. *I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire.*

It is the delusive thought of all men by nature, as well as of the lukewarm Laodiceans, that they are rich and increased in goods and in need of nothing. They are proud of their very rags and would offer to God, as a price for His favour, the very thing which He declares that He hates. But the God of the gospel offers the unsearchable riches, the incorruptible inheritance, the crown of glory which does not fade away.

It is true that we read, "I counsel thee to buy", but it is no less true that it is "without money and without price". All is a gift – a free gift, an unspeakable gift from God to man. There is rest to the weary. There is peace to the troubled. There is health to the diseased. There is hope for the despairing. There is life for the dead. And, O my soul, is that not as refreshing to the soul as Elim and its palm trees were to the wanderers in the desert? Have we not here vineyards in the wilderness? May we not dig up wells in this valley of Baca, or pluck leaves from the tree which is for the healing of the nations? There is nothing lacking to them that fear God. They have gold tried in the fire and far more than all the gold of Ophir could buy.

The eye rejoices to wander over the green earth and remember that it and the fullness thereof is the Lord's. It delights to gaze on the midnight sky,

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

and meditate on the wonders which are to be seen there – the mighty, silent procession of all those innumerable stars. It looks on the sea, sleeping in its beauty, or swelling in its mightiness – now the emblem of Him who is love, and now of Him who will “by no means clear the guilty”. But none of these things: neither earth, nor sky, nor ocean can tell us aught of grace, of pardon, or of mercy. They utter no voice in reply to the question, How shall man be just before his God? For an answer to that, we must go to the cross, and blessed are they who have ears to hear and a heart to understand its language.

Statement of Church Differences (5)¹

3. Differences in Practice.

3. 1. Creed and Practice. The Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland firmly maintains that while it is the duty of all Churches to have a sound scriptural creed, it is also incumbent upon them that the practice should be in keeping with the profession. She regards the profession of a sound creed without a practice in keeping with the same as a glaring inconsistency unbecoming a professing Church of Christ.

In this connection the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland strongly condemns the disingenuous making of ordination vows and signing of strict formulas which are never intended to be kept. The Free Presbyterian “Resolution on Creed Subscription” (1904) rejects any notion that the Free Presbyterian Church will “at any time be at liberty to depart from the doctrine, government, mode of worship, and discipline which the said Confession sets forth.” It protests against “the dishonest and degrading manner in which the most solemn promises and engagements relative to subordinate standards are violated by many that hold office in Presbyterian Churches”. It further laments “the great reproach brought thereby on the name of Christ, and the reflection cast upon all office-bearers”. It asserts that these are binding vows made to God and that if any office-bearers cease to believe “in any of these doctrines and principles, or to approve of the mode of worship, which they have vowed to maintain, they should lay down their office and not help to deprive the Church of its peace and purity”. The Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland requires her Church courts to preserve discipline in this matter.

2. Admission as Office-Bearers. (1) We condemn the practice of allowing

¹This is a further section of a document approved in 2019. Its full title is: “Synod Statement of Differences Between the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland and the Other Presbyterian Churches in Scotland, Brought Up to Date (2019)”. Last month’s section completed the material on doctrinal differences.

into office in the Church men whose only qualifications may be gifts, social position, or wealth, but who manifest signs that they are still in a state of nature, spiritually dead, and have never come under the quickening power of the Holy Spirit. Dead material of this kind is only a drag on the Church which carries it. (2) We condemn, as contrary to Scripture, the practice of the Church of Scotland and the United Free Church of Scotland in admitting women to office as ministers or ruling-elders in the Church. (3) We condemn, as contrary to Scripture, the admission of sodomites to office, or to communicant membership, in the Church.

3. *Misguided ecumenism.* The Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland maintains that there should be a single Christian Church in Scotland, united in doctrine, government, and practice, as there was after the Reformation of 1560. Furthermore, she believes that her separations (from the Church of Scotland in 1843 and from the Free Church of Scotland in 1893) were justified; and she regards herself, therefore, as that Church in Scotland around whose testimony all Christians should unite. The “pulpit-swapping” that is widely practised between other Scottish denominations she thinks is a misguided attempt to promote unity, tending instead to foster low views of the importance of Church principles, and to cement rather than to heal the divisions between the Churches.

In 1975, therefore, the Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church declared that “conduct giving the impression that there is no obstacle to association with other churches undermines the necessity for a separate position and is therefore inconsistent with loyal adherence to the Free Presbyterian Church, and is consequently disapproved of by this Church”. If every Church in Scotland would adhere faithfully to the scriptural position which the Church of Scotland adopted at the First and Second Reformations, the fractured state of the visible Church would be healed.

In 1905, the Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland resolved that “the Synod refuses to consider any motion for union with any Church which does not hold the absolute infallibility of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, and the whole doctrine of the Confession of Faith, both in her profession and practice; and it warns the office-bearers of this Church of the danger of following divisive courses contrary to the solemn engagements under which they came at their ordination; and further, it instructs the Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions to maintain order and discipline in the several congregations under their charge, in accordance with the constitution of the Church, as necessity may arise.”

The Free Presbyterian Church holds that the Pope of Rome is the Antichrist prophesied in the Word of God. She utterly repudiates, on scriptural

grounds, the practice of giving place to Roman Catholic priests and prelates in ecumenical services and other activities.

4. Church Privileges. While the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland does not hold the doctrine of Close Communion, she seeks to exercise the greatest care in granting Church privileges. The Church's rule is that Church privileges, such as baptism and admission to the Lord's Table, are to be granted only to those who have been carefully examined by, and have given satisfaction to, the Kirk Session. All who engage in Sabbath work (except works of necessity and mercy), or who travel by buses, trains, trams, taxis, aeroplanes, or ferries run in systematic disregard of the Lord's Day, and all who are members of secret societies such as Freemasonry are denied Church privileges.

The Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland condemns the carelessness of Church courts, too prevalent in Scotland, in granting Church privileges to those who, on account of the life they lead, ought never to get such privileges. For Church discipline to be effective, there needs to be a consistency of standard across the courts of the Church. We therefore condemn, in particular, the practice of granting privileges to fugitives from our discipline on the part of other Presbyterian Churches without ever enquiring as to why they have been refused Church privileges. Such action renders useless the very purpose for which discipline was set up in the Christian Church. We utter an emphatic protest against the custom of asking young people to become communicants when they reach a certain age, or of presuming that those baptized and brought up in church must be regenerated, regardless of whether they display marks of a saving change.

The Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland maintains a distinction in administering the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper. These signify and seal the same Covenant, but the privileges of the Lord's Supper are greater than those of baptism; and the Free Presbyterian Church follows scriptural example in examining those who desire to sit at the Lord's Table with more scrutiny than she examines those members of the visible Church who desire baptism for their children yet do not feel able to profess saving faith in Christ. This important distinction in administering the sacraments is often neglected, with the practical outcome either of unduly raising the standard required for baptism, leading to the exclusive "gathered church" of Congregationalism, or, more commonly, of lowering the standard required for communicant membership so that virtually everybody becomes a communicant.

It is miserable to have to do when doing-time is past. He is a foolish servant who has to seek the key when his Lord knocks. He is a poor advocate who has to find a plea when he is called to plead. When death comes, have nothing to do but just to die.

Henry Law

Notes and Comments

The Queen's Sabbath Broadcast

The occasions on which the Her Majesty the Queen has chosen to address the United Kingdom directly have been rare, with the exception of her annual broadcast on December 25. It ought to be a matter of great sadness to us that she broadcast to the nation on Sabbath, April 5. That she chose to do so on the Lord's Day only emphasises the extent that watching, or listening to, Sabbath broadcasting has become well-nigh universal in the land.

The current coronavirus outbreak is certainly a national and international crisis of great magnitude, and the Sovereign took the opportunity to speak about the fact that the virus has brought "grief to some, financial difficulties to many and enormous changes to the daily lives of us all". Sadly, that is indeed the case and such providential hardships may continue for a considerable period still. The Queen went on to praise those working in the NHS, care-workers and others engaged in essential services helping to fight the virus and its effects and emphasised the need for national unity and resolve: "We will succeed and that success will belong to every one of us . . . better days will return . . . we will meet again". The tone of these words seem to reflect the man-centred confidence of many in places of authority, but they also reflect, to some extent, the godless and heedless spirit in which masses of our countrymen face the solemn reality of disease and death.

She added, "Though self-isolating may at times be hard, many people of all faiths, and of none, are discovering that it presents an opportunity to slow down, pause and reflect, in prayer or meditation". Although many have requested the Queen and the Government to call for a national day of prayer (including the Moderator of the Free Presbyterian Synod), this was the only hint in her address of the idea of prayer. That fleeting mention was, however, in a multi-faith context, with no reference to the true and living God, nor to our need of repentance from sin as a nation under the afflicting hand of the Lord.

Our Queen reigns as a Protestant monarch in a historically-Christian country but once again she did not use her considerable influence to direct the thoughts of millions to the Word of God and to the faith of Jesus Christ, which she has sworn to uphold. Nothing is more needful in a time of national emergency than to call upon the Lord in the day of trouble, and we fear even greater judgements coming upon the nation and our royal house if we do not acknowledge the need for the Lord's mercy at such a time. It is plainly the duty of the Queen to call the nation to prayer and repentance, after the ex-

ample of the King of Nineveh, who said, “Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from His fierce anger, that we perish not?” (Jonah 3.9). Indeed her own late father, King George VI, did so on a number of occasions during World War II. AWM

Brexit

We should note the Lord’s kind hand in bringing the United Kingdom out of the European Union on 31 January 2020, after 47 years. The work was “done suddenly” in that the whole of 2019 had been spent in political wrangling and obstruction, with no fewer than three dates being vainly appointed for Brexit; but the powerful opposition to Brexit was abruptly silenced by a heavy defeat in a General Election in December.

The Free Presbyterian Church has been opposed to Britain’s membership of the European Union (formerly the European Community, and before that the European Economic Community) since membership was first mooted, as a bond inconsistent with Britain’s Protestant constitution and heritage. Her time in the European Union has been one of fearful religious and moral decline for Britain, but as the Christian Institute (CI) observed at the time of Brexit, many of Britain’s problems have been of her own making. The CI mentions bioethics (for example, destroying human embryos), goods and services equality law (used against the Ashers Baking Company), employment law, human rights law, and LGBT issues as cases in point. Very few of the issues fought by the CI have directly involved the EU. Nevertheless, the enemies of godliness in Britain have drawn strength from the European Union and have bitterly lamented our departure from it.

In his sermon on Deuteronomy 3:24-25 on a day of thanksgiving for the Glorious Revolution of 1688, John Flavel develops various doctrines, one of which is that “great mercies received (though there be yet greater than they to be expected) call for an answerable sense and acknowledgment in the saints” (*Works*, vol 4, p 312). Britain’s exit from the European Union is an answer to the prayers of many of the saints (many of them now deceased) over many years, and we should acknowledge that fact; but it does not in itself bring a revival of true religion. Flavel’s next doctrine is that “the beginnings of mercy and deliverance to the Church are convertible into some pleas and arguments in prayer for the perfection and consummation thereof”. Let us then convert the unexpected political mercy of Brexit into pleas and arguments in prayer for accompanying spiritual mercies. DWBS

Coronavirus and the Homosexual Movement

The coronavirus has already affected the homosexual movement in at least three ways. First, homosexuals are not getting the publicity that they used to,

especially from the BBC. Presumably the BBC is finding that news items about homosexuality do not generate much interest at present. Two of the big homosexual events – the marches in London and Brighton – have been cancelled. For such an attention-seeking movement this must be a great blow. Second, the grossly promiscuous lifestyle of many in the movement has been severely curtailed, or entirely halted. Again, this is a severe blow to those for whom incessant promiscuity was so important. Third, the rainbow symbol, which the homosexual movement had hijacked, has abruptly been wrenched out of their hands and become a symbol of “hope” during the coronavirus crisis. We pray that the Lord will continue to diminish the power of this movement, and even destroy it altogether. *DWBS*

Coronavirus and Abortion

The coronavirus is troubling Satan’s kingdom in many ways, but he is a resilient spirit and he will never give up the struggle until he is cast into the lake of fire (Rev 20:10). On March 18 New Zealand greatly relaxed its abortion laws, a week before the country went into lockdown. The abortion law that the Westminster Parliament imposed on Northern Ireland last October came into effect on March 31; and the day before, Parliament announced that women in the rest of Britain would be allowed to use abortion pills at home for the duration of the Covid crisis.

Stephen Green of *Christian Voice* observed that the daily number of Covid deaths in the UK surpassed the 2018 average daily abortion rate (595 per day) on around April 3. Meanwhile the US state of Texas has banned abortion during the Covid crisis as “a non-essential medical procedure”, a decision that has been challenged in the courts. The coronavirus has reduced the levels of promiscuity for the time being, and it may be that abortion rates will fall as well. The lockdowns that so many countries have imposed have placed emphasis on the family structure of human life, and this may have a lasting beneficial effect. *DWBS*

Church Information

Home Mission Fund

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

W Campbell, General Treasurer

That which shall be a thousand ages hence is as well known to God as that which occurred yesterday. *W S Plumer*

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, IV15 9JP; Sabbath 11 am, 6.30 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. **Beauly** (Balblair): Sabbath 6.30 pm, Thursday 7.30 pm. Rev A W MacColl MA PhD, 10 Achany Road, Dingwall, IV15 9JB; tel: 01349 866546.

Dornoch: Sabbath 11.30 am. Manse tel: 01862 810615. **Bonar:** Sabbath 6 pm. Wednesday 7.30 pm (alternately in Dornoch and Bonar). **Lairg:** Church and Manse; no F P services; **Rogart:** Church; no F P services. Contact Mr J Campbell; tel: 01863 766296.

Edinburgh: 63 Gilmore Place, EH3 9NU, Sabbath 11 am, 6 pm; Thursday 7.30 pm. Rev D Campbell MA, 35B Barrton 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 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 R 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 pm. Contact Rev R MacLeod; tel: 0141 954 3759.

Halkirk: Sabbath 11.30 am; Thursday 7.30 pm. Rev WA Weale, F P Manse, Bridge Street, KW12 6YG; tel: 01847 831758. **Thurso:** Duncan Street; Sabbath 5 pm; **Strathay:** Sabbath: 6 pm (first and third Sabbaths of month).

Harris (North): **Tarbert:** Sabbath 12 noon, 6 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. **Sheilebost:** as intimated. Rev KM Watkins BA, F P Manse, Ferry Road, Leverburgh, Isle of Harris, HS5 3UA; tel: 01859 520271.

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 6 pm; **Scourie:** Sabbath 11:30 am, Tuesday 7 pm (as intimated). Contact Dr A Ross; tel 01971 502099.

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.

Ness: Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm; Wednesday 7 pm. Manse tel: 01851 810228. Contact Rev K M Watkins; tel: 01859 520271.

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; Thursday 7.30 pm (fortnightly). Manse tel: 01876 510233. Contact: Rev J B Jardine; tel: 01859 502253.

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 BA, F P Manse, Achachork, Portree, IV51 9HT; tel: 01478 612110.

Raasay: Sabbath 12 noon, 6 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. F P Manse, Clachan, Staffin, IV51 9HY tel: 01470 562243.

Stornoway: Matheson Road, Sabbath 11 am, 6.30 pm; Thursday 7.30 pm. **Achmore:** Sabbath 12 noon; Tuesday 7 pm. Rev J R Tallach MB ChB, 2 Fleming Place, Stornoway, HS1 2NH; tel: 01851 702501.

Tain: Church. **Fearn:** Church. No F P services. See Dornoch and Bonar.

Uig (Lewis) Miavaig: Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm; Wednesday 12 noon. Manse tel: 01851 672251. Contact Rev K M Watkins; tel: 01859 520271.

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). Contact Mr R Middleton, 2 Emerald Drive, Sandbach, CW11 4ND; tel: 01270 761673.

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 7.15 pm. Rev J MacLeod MA, 6 Church Ave, Sidcup, Kent, DA14 6BU; tel: 0208 309 1623.

Northern Ireland

Larne: Station Road. No F P services. Contact Rev R Macleod; tel: 0141 954 3759.

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, Wednesday 7.30 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, 5 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 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.

Carterton: 124 High Street North, Carterton. Sabbath 11 am, 4 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. Contact: Mr Hank Optland, P O Box 150, Carterton, 5743; tel: 02 7432 5625.

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, 6 pm; Thursday 6.30 pm (but on first Thursday of month place will be as intimated locally). Contact: Rev J D Smith; tel: 09 282 4195.

Singapore

Singapore: Sabbath: 9.30am and 5.30 pm; Beacon International College, 70 Martaban Road, Singapore 328667 (entrance is opposite 37/39 Mandalay Road); Wednesday: 7.45 pm, Lion Building B, #02-11, 12 Arumugam Road, Singapore 409958. Contact: Mr Bernard Yong, 4 Chuan Place, Singapore 554822; tel: (65) 6383 4466, fax: 6383 4477, e-mail: byong1@singnet.com.sg.

Ukraine

Odessa: F P Mission Station, 3 Pestelya Street, 65031. Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm; Wednesday 6 pm. Rev D Levytskyi; tel: 00 38 048 785 19 24; e-mail: dlevytskyy@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.

Ingwenya: Church and Secondary School. 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.

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