

# The Free Presbyterian Magazine

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

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

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

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**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.

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

**December: Third Sabbath:** Bulawayo, Santa Fe.

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## Despising the Pleasant Land

Psalm 106 sums up the deliverance of the Children of Israel from Egypt, their journey through the wilderness and some of their subsequent history. In particular, the Psalmist states that they “despised the pleasant land, they believed not [God’s] word” (v 24). Canaan was this “pleasant land” – literally, “a land of desire”, a land that they should very much have desired. And they would have desired it if they could have conquered it without having to face up to the difficulties that they assumed were involved in conquering it. They should have looked on such a land, flowing with milk and honey – referring to its productiveness – as altogether desirable. But they despised it, and in doing so, they despised the God who gave them the opportunity to live there.

When they approached the borders of the land, God directed Moses to send out 12 spies – Caleb and Joshua among them – who would search Canaan and bring back a report on the land, the people and the cities where they lived. They did as they were directed, but they did not agree on the significance of what they saw. On the one hand, there were Caleb and Joshua: faithful, believing men, trusting in God and His word. On the other hand, there were the other 10 men, who did not believe God’s word and despised the pleasant land. And, sadly, the people as a whole accepted the report of the 10 unbelieving spies.

The majority agreed that the land did indeed flow “with milk and honey”, but they focused on the strength and the height of the people and the very great walls of the city. “We saw the giants . . .”, they said, “and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight”. They disbelieved God’s promises and despised the pleasant land, so that the people wished that they had died in Egypt or in the wilderness.

Caleb and Joshua had a completely different set of attitudes; they believed God’s word and accordingly they had a sincere desire to enter the “pleasant land”. They believed that God would be faithful to His promises to Abraham – promises such as, “I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it” (Gen 15:7), and that He was

able to fulfil these promises. Caleb and Joshua assured the people: “If the Lord delight in us, then He will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey”.

They knew that He was able to bring them into the promised land. They went to the heart of the matter when they insisted, “Only rebel not ye against the Lord”, for to refuse to take possession of the land that God had promised was sheer rebellion against Him, for He had shown His power and His faithfulness in taking them safely out of Egypt and bringing them to a point where they were so very close to the promised land. With that view of the reality of their situation, Caleb and Joshua added, “Neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the Lord is with us: fear them not” (Num 14:8,9).

In a similar way, we ought to contemplate heaven as a pleasant land, a land that is worthy of being desired. It is a place where “there shall be no more curse” (Rev 22:3), because there will be no sin there, and those who are brought there will be freed from all the consequences of sin – the sorrow, the difficulties and the concerns of life in this world. It is a place of perfect blessedness, in the immediate presence of God, and all this blessedness is for the sake of Christ, who has purchased such a glorious inheritance for all who have begun to obey Him and to submit to the call He has made to sinners: “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Mt 11:28).

Those who refuse the call to come to Christ – who refuse to believe in Him as the One who suffered and died for sinners – are not only despising heaven, but are also despising the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, who endured so much in order to make such a wonderful provision for unworthy sinners. They have no desire for the holiness that believers display as they go along the narrow path, “the way of holiness”, that leads to everlasting life. These despisers want to go on in sin and to stay away from God and His grace. “Let us eat and drink”, they say; “for tomorrow we die” (1 Cor 15:32). They assume that they do not need to prepare for death today; perhaps many tomorrows will pass before death will approach them. They assume it is perfectly safe to disbelieve God and live despising heaven.

Eating and drinking are, of course, lawful; indeed they are necessary to preserve life. It is an exclusive focus on such things and the immoderate use of them, to the neglect of what is spiritual, that is sinful – and dangerous, for it is likely to keep one from wanting to walk in the way of holiness. So Christ pointed to questions about food and drink and clothing, and directed His hearers: “Seek ye first [first in importance] the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Mt 6:33).

The lessons which David Dickson, in his commentary on Matthew, draws from this verse are the following: (1.) "To be partaker of the kingdom of God's grace here, and of His glory in heaven, is worthy of our chiefest affections and most intent endeavours." (2.) "We cannot be sure to be subjects of God's gracious kingdom here, nor of His glorious kingdom in heaven hereafter, except we also study to be sure of the righteousness of God, which is by faith in Jesus Christ, and of holiness and uprightness of life flowing therefrom." (3.) "Whosoever do earnestly seek after the kingdom of God and His righteousness shall not only be sure to have what they seek, but also to have whatsoever is necessary for them in this life."

Many people think they will get to heaven, although they do not wish to live the holy life that is necessary if they are to reach there. It is a narrow way that leads there and it is a strait gate that brings a sinner into that way. There is no room for the sinner to bring in with him the baggage of self-righteousness or anything else that would interfere with a living faith in Christ Jesus alone.

The majority of the children of Israel did not believe what God had told them; instead "they murmured in their tents" (Ps 106:25) rather than go forward to take possession of the land that had been promised to them. God had assured them, "I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt . . . *unto a land* flowing with milk and honey" (Ex 3:17), but they did not credit His promise. Moses believed in God's unlimited power, as did Joshua and Caleb; he prayed, "Thou hast begun to show Thy servant Thy greatness, and Thy mighty hand", not least in bringing Israel out of Egypt (Deut 3:24), and he knew that God was therefore able to bring them into Canaan, no matter how strong the giants and their cities were. Earlier generations in Britain and elsewhere were much more willing to believe Scripture testimony to God as the Creator of all things – to see creation as evidence of God's unlimited power. But the theory of evolution has made more recent generations much less willing to accept God as creator and even to accept His very existence. Yet God has not changed, and His revelation remains totally reliable in spite of human theorising, which cannot be relied on.

So we are to receive the whole testimony of the Word of God as truth, entirely without error. We are to receive His testimony that "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (Jn 3:16). And however unable we are, in our own strength, to believe in Christ, the Holy Spirit is altogether sufficient to bring us through the strait gate into the narrow way, which does indeed lead to everlasting glory. Christ still directs us: "*Strive* to enter in at the strait gate" (Lk 13:24).

# A New Commandment<sup>1</sup>

Synod Sermon by Rev J B Jardine

John 13:34-35. *A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another.*”

**I**n the Old Testament we have many examples of rivalry between brethren. We see there the rivalry between Cain and Abel, between Jacob and Esau, and between Joseph and his brothers. When we read of these things in the Word of God they cast us down and we think to ourselves: How can there be such enmity amongst brothers? How can they be so devoid of natural affection? When we come to our text, we have the clear instruction that we ought to love one another, to leave behind what may cause separation from one another in our affections, and to strive to act as brethren according to the commandment of Christ.

This was of the utmost necessity for the disciples at the beginning of their ministries – when we think of the Saviour leaving them and the hostility and difficulties that they were to face in the years ahead. Whatever adversity they might face from the world, they were to love one another, and the unity and fellowship among themselves would compensate for the enmity they might feel from the world. Their coming together as brethren would bring them to a place of refuge amidst all the difficulties and tribulations they were to endure. In our own generation too, it is necessary for us to love one another. When we come together, it should be for mutual consolation, to comfort one another. Where we come together should be a place of refuge from the world.

(1.) Let us consider the new commandment announced here. (2.) Let us open up the new commandment. (3.) This new commandment is to be a badge of witness to the world, showing that the brethren of Christ are different to the world. (4.) Let us confirm what we have before us here.

We notice in the two verses that there is an overlap in the teaching, even a measure of repetition. But we know that what is repeated in the Word of God is of great importance. Repeating a truth was a means of emphasising the importance of that truth and that instruction.

**1. A new commandment is announced.** “A new commandment I give unto you”. Notice that Judas Iscariot was not in the company when this commandment was given; it was given to the disciples, the brethren that remained. Christ gave the new commandment to the Lord’s people, the brethren, as a

<sup>1</sup>Preached by the Moderator at the opening of the meetings of Synod in May 2021.

last testament. Christ would give His disciples this clear order, as He was about to leave them. So it carries with it, we believe, the weight of a last testament, and we are to feel that weight in our own hearts. When we read elsewhere in the Gospel of John or in his Epistles, we see that this is a commandment that John comes back to time and time again. We can go to John 15: “This is My commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (Jn 15:12-13). Clear arguments are used when the command is given, to encourage us to keep it: “And he that keepeth His commandments dwelleth in Him, and He in him. And hereby we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us” (1 Jn 3:24).

We can go back to the Old Testament, to the giving of the law of Moses. We know that the second table of the law directs us to love our neighbour as ourselves. Here that is applied, not to men in general, but to the brethren in particular. The gospel is a law of love for the brethren in their dealings with one another. They are called to love God and to love one another. They must love as brethren.

You can go to 2 Peter 1:7: Add “to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity”, or love. Love is to be prominent in the Church of God, among the people of God. Where we see that love, we see what is pleasant, what is profitable, what is worth having. It leaves its mark on the brethren and on others. We can go so far, I believe, as to say that here we have a fundamental law of the kingdom. In our experience as a Church over the years, we can think how we delight in communion seasons, and we can think of the question meeting on the Friday of a communion season; very often love between the brethren is given as a mark of grace. It is seen to be a fundamental part of fellowship with one another and we are not to lose sight of that. Love to the brethren goes hand in hand with believing in Christ: “This is His commandment, That we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as He gave us commandment” (1 Jn 3:23). “See that ye love another with a pure heart fervently” (1 Pet 1:22).

We ought to endeavour to keep this commandment as we are to keep all Christ’s commandments. Christ, as the King of the Church, has given this commandment to the Church as a binding obligation. “These things I command you, that ye love one another”; we are to hold it fast. The Redeemer gives us this command for our help, for our benefit – so that, in loving one another, we might overcome sin among ourselves, and in our own hearts and lives. It is given to bind us together in fellowship, to make us fit for heaven; if we are part of the same kingdom, we ought to have fellowship with one another. We are commanded to love as brethren those who love Christ.

We know there is a general way in which this applies to all the brethren. Wherever in the world anyone is found who believes in Christ, we are to love them as brethren. But we want today to note the specifics of how we ought to act among ourselves in our own communion, how we ought to act among ourselves as brethren, as we live and worship with one another, as we come together around the things of God. If we have a living faith, if we are exercised as we should be, we should endeavour to love the brethren.

We can think of the context in which the Saviour gave this command to the disciples – the wider context of the situation in Israel among the Jews at this time. We know that they had corrupted the principle of love as we have it in the second table of the law. The Jews saw it as obsolete, as out of date. They had brought in the traditions of the elders, adding to the law and twisting it in such a way that it served the spirit of self-love. But here Christ cuts through the false teaching of the Pharisees and of others and He puts new authority onto an old obligation. Matthew Henry says that the new commandment is like an old book in a new edition, corrected and enlarged; the truth is brought out in a clearer way, so that we are able to understand and appreciate it. Believers are to put this great obligation into practice, knowing that it is an everlasting command.

The Church of Christ is to be governed by this principle of love among the brethren; this surely is a part of our heritage in the Reformed Church. Go back to the First and Second Reformations and you can see that the opposite is true of the false religion that was prevalent in the times of Cardinal Beaton and Archbishop Sharp: the Church was ruled by pride, ambition, selfishness, and cruelty, especially in putting the people of God to death. But in general we see a different spirit amongst the Covenanters and the Reformers, the prevalence of brotherly love to one another. This ought to be maintained by us today, and it ought to bind us together as brethren. When times of adversity come – and we presently live in a time of adversity – we are not to lose sight of this. It is particularly necessary then to remember the love we ought to have for one another, and endeavour to exercise it. This will be the glory of the Church, and the Lord Himself will, we believe, bless it. We know the love commended here “hopeth all things, believeth all things”.

**2. The new commandment opened up.** We believe that the measure of repetition within the two verses is for emphasis and shows that it is important for us to take these things to heart. “Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren” (1 Jn 3:16). Throughout Scripture, this commandment is repeated, it is emphasised, it is brought to the fore. But what does love to the brethren entail? We are of the same family; we have the same heavenly



Father; so we are to love one another. Jacob directed his sons: “See that ye fall not out by the way” (Gen 45:24). Surely the instruction we have from our Heavenly Father is to be given greater weight; it is something we cannot overlook, “that ye love one another”.

To love one another, we believe, means to endeavour to keep together, in the same communion – to keep one another’s company, as it were. That is where we desire to be. So we need to be seeking to agree with one another if at all possible. Certainly we need to pray for and with one another. If we do so, we will be endeavouring to bear one another’s burdens. “Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ” (Gal 6:2). If we do this, we will be forbearing with one another when differences arise. When they arise, we certainly should endeavour to keep them among the brethren and to deal with them in a spirit of love.

We must forgive one another and correct one another with a gentle, patient spirit. We ought to try to build one another up in faith and holiness, not to put one another down. We should desire that the other person may come with us to heaven, that we would be yoked together with him – to be helping one another in temporal things and, most importantly, in spiritual things. We must also sympathise with one another: “Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another” (Rom 12:10) – as our text says, “that ye love one another, as I have loved you”. The Saviour gives His own ministry, His own life as the example. What He has done Himself is what His people are to do: they are to imitate Him; they are to follow His example: “As I have loved you”.

We must love the brethren, not just out of a feeling of obligation but in the newness of the Spirit. “Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour” (Eph 5:2) We are to act towards the brethren as Christ acted towards His disciples. We think of Christ as the elder brother; we think of how He dealt with these disciples. He spoke kindly to them, He cared for them – for their temporal welfare and their spiritual welfare.

Again, “Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing” (1 Pet 3:8-9). The Saviour also instructed and comforted the brethren, even when He Himself was in need of comfort. The Saviour prayed for them. When they were accused by others, He came to vindicate them. When the world was against them, He took their part against it. He was with them and He showed to them that there was nothing dearer to Himself than they were.

He also corrected them when they erred and He had compassion on them when they failed to understand His teachings, especially about His death. But He encouraged them; He did not expose their faults or failings unnecessarily; He loved them to the end. We are to love one another in the same manner; we are to do so in obedience to the command, by the grace of God in our hearts. It ought to be natural to the brethren to love one another, to take Christ as their example, to follow the directions Christ has given, and to do so willingly and sincerely – to do so with all humility, preferring others before themselves.

What are we told of the Saviour’s ministry? “Even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Mk 10:45). We ought to be of the same spirit, to minister to the needs of others, to instruct them, to teach them and to minister to them. We ought to follow the example of Christ. We may not give our life as He did on the cross but we may spend our time and energy in ministering to the needs of others, in ministering to and loving the brethren. This love is to be unconditional love to all the brethren. “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 4:10). We should be willing to love the brethren for Christ’s sake; “that ye also love one another”.

Christ loved His disciples in spite of their unworthiness, in spite of their ungratefulness, their faults and their failings. There was many a blemish on their characters and on their profession. The Saviour loved Simon Peter, in spite of all his failings. We must follow that example, even when we find things in the brethren that are disagreeable. If we have a proper spirit of self-examination, we must confess that there is much in our own heart and lives that others may find disagreeable. We are all sinners, sinners saved by grace, and we need to remember the love we should have for one another.

The Saviour loved His people without distinction; thus should we also love the brethren. The Saviour loved in deed and in truth, and so should we, not merely saying, Of course, the brethren love one another. These will be no more than vain words if they are not followed by loving actions, seeking to live in a spirit of love to one another. We are “to love with a pure heart fervently”, to “let brotherly love continue”, to serve one another, to follow Christ’s instruction, to be directed by His example. This is of great importance to us as individuals, and to the Church of God. The reason for it is what we want to consider next.

**3. This new commandment is to be a badge of witness to the world.** “By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples”. Obedience to this command establishes the sincerity of one’s profession: “This commandment have we

from Him, That he who loveth God love his brother also” (1 Jn 4:21). If we love one another, this is how it will be said that we are truly the disciples of Christ. “By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples”.

This is a principle which the Saviour Himself stated: “Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift” (Mt 5:23-24). It is thus the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ judges His people, and thus they are to judge themselves. If we love the brethren, if we seek to fulfill this command, we may conclude that we have passed from death to life, that a true work of grace has begun in our hearts.

This is an important mark of grace. The Saviour has made a judgement; believers themselves have made a judgement; and others have made a judgement on the brethren: “By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples”. This is how a congregation is going to know us, this is how the Lord’s people are going to know us, and this is how the world is going to know us. The world seeks to bring in divisions amongst the brethren. The world soon sees any division. Is it for the benefit of the Church, for the good of the brethren? No. The world and the devil seek that these divisions would be increased, so that love among the brethren may be decreased. The world is no friend of the Church or of the people of God. We ought then to seek to love the brethren and set forth before the world that their endeavours have come to nought.

To love one another is the distinguishing mark of the believer and it shows their true character. It does not matter what our outward appearance may be, or how austere we might want to be. We can think of the Pharisees and the impression they sought to give to the world. What does the world notice? What do the people of God notice in one another? Leaving aside other gifts, this grace of love to the brethren is one which is set forth as a great banner. This is a great mark. If we cannot love one another as brethren, if we cannot have this unity, what does that say?

Brotherly love is the distinguishing characteristic of the believer; “by this shall all men know that ye are My disciples”. “Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in Him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth. He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him” (1 Jn 2:8-10).

We profess to be among the Lord’s people and we believe that the Lord has shown great love to us; therefore we ought to seek to love the brethren as the Lord loves us. The Lord loves us greatly and so He forgives us what

we do wrong. The Lord forgives many sins, for Christ's sake. We ought then to forgive the brethren. Our love ought to abound towards the brethren; "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Rom 5:20). If we do not show that love to one another, it is a reproach on our profession; it is cause for others, and for ourselves, to question our sincerity in religion. "But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? (1 Jn 3:17). The believer is to love the brethren. There is to be no place for malice or spite or for the believer to become angry quickly, or to be of such an ill nature that it causes discord among the brethren.

To have this badge of love towards the brethren is what the believer is to strive for. No duty will be accepted without it. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing" (1 Cor 13:1-3). Again, "charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. . . . And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity" (1 Cor 13:8,13).

Nothing will be more productive of unity among the brethren and of prosperity in the Church of God than for the brethren to put into practice this commandment to love one another. Therefore the very truth of it is repeated to us: "If ye have love one to another".

**4. Confirming the matter.** We have much to be thankful for when we think of our privileges as a branch of God's Church in having the Presbyterian system of church government, in the wonderful parity that exists among brethren. In a church court, there are teaching and ruling elders – the teaching elder educated to convey knowledge to the brethren and the ruling elder rich in Christian experience and mature to deliberate. We have to add to this token of the Lord's goodness that He has been pleased to preserve amongst us a self-denying love towards one another. We are all passing through the same trials; we are all here as wanderers in this wilderness. We are in this world, but we are not of it; we are pilgrims here in this wilderness. We need a fellow feeling of others' infirmities, and that fellow feeling ought to bind us together. Christ's people should excel in brotherly love; they should be kindly affectioned one to another, preferring one another.

The Saviour's love was a practical love, He loved the brethren in a way

that was for their good, and this is how we ought to love. As individuals, we ought to think of the banner that is over the people of God as a banner of love. As the people of God we should take hold of that banner and wave it as our own banner. We are under this banner of love and, as we have love to God, we ought to love one another. We should love one another sincerely, perseveringly, in a self-sacrificing way, so that – no matter what difficulties we may face, no matter what troubles may come upon us as congregations, as presbyteries, or as a Church at large, at home and abroad – we may have this unity together around the things of God, a brotherly love towards one another. This is a love to one another’s souls for God’s glory, for the sake of Christ – a regard to one another’s spiritual and eternal good. When we do so, we fulfil the command we have here.

You may remember the story of James Ussher visiting Samuel Rutherford and what he said about the 11 commandments rather than 10; the eleventh being that of love to the brethren. “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another”. The Apostle Paul said, “We preach Christ crucified”. We are to preach Christ from the pulpit. “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” We are never to lose sight of the gospel: “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn 3:16).

We are also to preach Christ in our daily lives; we are to preach Christ by our brotherly, Christian example to one another, in faithfulness to the Word and to the gospel, to show forth the commands of Christ. We must remember this commandment in particular, “that ye love one another”. He loved His people even to the end, to death itself, to the cross. His desire is that they would be with Him where He is and that they would dwell together in unity while they are here in this world.

“Behold, how good a thing it is, and how becoming well,  
Together such as brethren are in unity to dwell.”

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## A Sound Heart<sup>1</sup>

*Charles Bridges*

Psalm 119:80. *Let my heart be sound in thy statutes, that I be not ashamed.*

**T**he perverseness of the proud will be sure to put them to shame (v 78). David prays therefore for a sound heart as the preservative from this shame – a heart filled with solid principle, delivered into the mould of the

<sup>1</sup>Taken with editing from *Psalm 119*, an exposition by Bridges.

Word (Rom 6:17, Greek) – like the sacrifices of the law, entire for God (Lev 22:22,23, compare Mal 1:8). Often had he prayed for divine teaching (vv 12, 33,64,68); now he begs for soundness in the Lord’s statutes. How many “have made shipwreck of faith and of a good conscience” (1 Tim 1:19) because of an unsound heart! Ignorant of the spirituality of God’s requirements and resting in an outward obedience, they falsely conceive themselves to be “alive without the law” (Rom 7:9) and, “touching the righteousness that is of the law, blameless” (Phil 3:6).

Others go a little beyond the surface; while the lack of “simplicity and godly sincerity”, of brokenness of heart, love to the Saviour and dependence on His grace sooner or later reveals, to their eternal confusion, that “the root of the matter is” not in them. “Their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust” (Is 5:24). Their “goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away” (Hos 6:4, compare Mt 13:20,21). An unsound professing Christian, like beautiful fruit, may attract the careless eye; but a more careful inspection will show a worm at the core, which has spoiled the fruit nearly to the surface. Such religion is only a shrivelled mass of inactive formality – a dead image of a living thing.

Alas, how common it is to profess to take Christ for a Saviour, while the heart is evidently worshipping mammon as its God! It is constrained – not inclined – to the Lord’s statutes! How possible it is to be “carnally minded” in the daily routine of spiritual duties! How important to recollect that no change of place, of company, or of circumstances can of itself effect a change of heart! Saul “among the prophets” was Saul still – with “another heart” indeed (1 Sam 10:9-12) but not a new heart. Sin was restrained but not crucified. He “went out” therefore, as one of his ancestors had, “from the presence of the Lord” (Gen 4:16) and perished, a miserable apostate from the statutes of his God.

Will profession, knowledge, gifts, feelings, or privileges avail without a sound heart? Need we speak of Judas, a follower of Jesus Christ, even an apostle, living in a close contact with his Master – yet, with all his privileges, all his profession, gone “to his own place” (Acts 1:25), the sad victim of his own self-deceitfulness? Need we allude to Balaam, the man whose eyes were open, who heard the words of God, who “saw the vision of the Almighty”, who could mark the goodness of the Lord’s inheritance and, even on the distant horizon, catch a glimpse of Jacob’s star and sceptre, and yet he “loved the wages of unrighteousness”? (Num 24:2-5,17; 2 Pet 2:15). Need we bring to the mind’s eye Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-10), Alexander (1 Tim 1:20, 2 Tim 4:14) and Demas (2 Tim 4:10) and others of like stamp, all of whom once shone as stars (Rev 12:4) in the firmament of the Church?

Need we speak of the end of these men, in order to give energy to the prayer, Let my heart be sound in Thy statutes?

How fearful the thought of only being by profession “a branch in the true vine”, to be taken away at length, cast forth as a branch, withered, gathered, cast into the fire, burned! (Jn 15:2,6). It is in the inner man that hypocrisy sets up its throne, whence it commands the outward acts into whatever shape or form may be best suited to effect its purpose. The upright Christian will therefore begin with calling in the help and light of God to ascertain the soundness of his heart. “Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me” (Ps 139: 23,24). Can there be a true and solid work where there is a professed change of heart but no manifested change of temper and conduct? Can that heart which, on inquiry, is found to be earthly, unprofitable under the power of the Word (Heb 6:8), which regards secret iniquity (Ps 66:18), seeking by-ends of praise (2 Ki 10:16), reputation (Jn 12:43), or gain (Jn 6:26, 1 Tim 6:5), and for the attainment of these ends shrinking from the appointed cross – can that heart be sound in the Lord’s statutes? Impossible.

But, on the other hand, do you find that your trust in God is sincere, your desire towards Him supreme, your obedience to Him entire? Prize those evidences of soundness of heart. Thank God for them. They are the workings of His mighty Spirit in your heart, perhaps the answer to the prayer which that same Spirit had indited: “Let my heart be sound in Thy statutes”. Make diligent use of all the means of grace for keeping your heart in a vigorous state. Abide daily – indeed, continually – in the vine, receiving life and health from its fullness (John 15:4,5.). Be very familiar with the Word of God, loving it for itself, its holiness, its practical influences. Be afraid chiefly of inward decay – of a barren, sapless notion of experimental truth – remembering that unless your profession is constantly watered at the root, the things that remain in you will be ready to die (Rev 3:2).

Specially “commune with your own heart”. Watch it jealously, because of its proneness to live upon itself, its own graces or fancied goodness (a sure symptom of unsoundness), instead of living “by the faith of the Son of God”. Examine your settled judgement, your deliberate choice, your outgoing affections, your habitual, allowed practice; applying the blood of Christ to every unsoundness you detect, for the blood is the sovereign remedy for the diseases of a heart that is “deceitful and desperately wicked”.

But it may be said, Will these exercises of godly jealousy not hinder our Christian assurance? Far from it. They will efficiently preserve from carnal security. They will induce increasing tenderness, activity and care in our daily walk; thus, instead of retarding the enjoyment of our heavenly privilege,

they will settle the foundation of a peaceful temperament (v 6, 1 Jn 3:20,21). A light and careless frame is the real hindrance to confidence. An unsound professor knows nothing of the true spirit of adoption, nothing of that holy familiarity with which a child of God unbosoms himself to his heavenly Father. And if he preserves an empty name in the Church, he will be put to shame before the universe of God (see Dan 12:2, Lk 12:1,2).

But the sound heart is connected with “a hope that maketh not ashamed”, the full blessing of scriptural confidence. For the heart is made sound by the “sprinkling of the blood of Christ”; and if thus “sprinkled from an evil conscience”, we “have boldness” to “draw near”, even to “enter into the holiest”, “in full assurance of faith” (see Heb 10:19-22). Blessed privilege of access and communion with a reconciled God! Every moment endears the Saviour to our souls, and enlivens the hope of His glorious coming, as the joyful consummation of all the prospects of faith. “Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgement” (1 Jn 4:17).

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## Aeneas Sage<sup>1</sup>

*Rev Donald Beaton*

**A**mong Highland parishes made famous by the ministry of noted preachers, an outstanding place must be given to Lochcarron, Here for many years the saintly Lachlan Mackenzie ministered, and the name of the parish is indissolubly linked with his. Prior to Lachlan Mackenzie’s ministry, Lochcarron was privileged to enjoy the ministry of Aeneas Sage, who had a sore and trying struggle in dealing with the people, who did not hide their hatred to Presbyterian church government and the ministers who, by the new order of things, were placed over them.

The records of the Presbytery of Gairloch have a number of entries indicating the turbulent attitude of the people within its bounds. For instance, in giving instructions to their commissioners to the General Assembly, the Presbytery represent to the Assembly that they have “not access to settle the vacancies in their bounds, because of the violent opposition given by the enemies of the present establishment, and [requesting] that a Select Committee may be appointed by the Assembly to consider of this and other grievances in their bounds”. The Presbytery had to invoke the strong arm of the civil

<sup>1</sup>Taken, with some editing, from *The Free Presbyterian Magazine*, vol 23. The series of articles, of which this was one, was published as *Some Noted Ministers of the Northern Highlands*, and was reprinted in paperback by Free Presbyterian Publications; it is available from the Free Presbyterian Bookroom at £5.00.



and military authority to maintain ecclesiastical order, and as late as 11 February 1726, it is minuted at one of their meetings: "The missioners having represented that they met with very barbarous and rude treatment in the bounds of this Presbytery, [the Court] appointed the Moderator to write a particular account thereof to the Sheriff Principal of Ross, and to crave that proper measures may be taken to secure both missioners and residing ministers from such insult in time coming".

It was over a parish in which such a state of matters existed that Aeneas Sage was ordained on 10 February, 1726. Aeneas was the son of Murdoch Sage and was born on 12 March 1694 at Chapelton, a small farm on the Black Isle, in Ross-shire. About 1715 he entered King's College, Aberdeen, and on 18 August 1725 he was licensed by the Presbytery of Tain. Prior to his ordination, he acted as missionary within that Presbytery.

Sage was not only well equipped spiritually for his heavy task, but he was also endowed with great muscular strength, which stood him in good stead many a time as the only kind of argument that appealed to some of his parishioners. "In bodily stature," says his grandson, Rev Donald Sage, Resolis, "Aeneas Sage approached the gigantic. He was six feet two inches in height, with dark eyes and hair, and with more than ordinary strength. His zeal as a minister, the rough subjects he had to deal with, and the rude age he lived in, rendered this last quality of no ordinary service to him."

The following incident shows that Aeneas Sage was quite capable of dealing with rough material. On the evening previous to his settlement at Lochcarron, he was lodged in a barn which, during the night, was set on fire. The minister elect, half dressed, rushed out and saw the fire-raiser throwing away his torch as he took to his heels. Mr. Sage pursued and gripped him just as he was about to enter his own door. He was dragged back to the scene of his crime and, while expecting nothing but a terrible flogging from the powerful minister, he received quite unexpected treatment.

He was asked why he had set the barn on fire, and frankly confessed it was to rid the parish of the new "Whig minister"; "but I am now in your power, and take your revenge," he added. "We shall do so," said Sage, "but mark well how we do it." Meat and drink were then provided, and God's blessing asked. The culprit, after his exciting adventures, had a good appetite and ate heartily. "You came here," said Sage, addressing him, "with no less certain intention than to deprive me of my life. I have returned good for evil. Go and tell your neighbours how the Whig ministers avenge their wrongs." The man was deeply grateful, and did not fail to tell his neighbours, as Sage's grandson facetiously adds, of the minister's generosity and his great strength.

In 1728, Sage married Elizabeth, eldest daughter of John Mackay, formerly

minister of Durness, and latterly of Lairg. Mackay, like Sage, had a heavy task before him when he became minister of Lairg in 1714, and many are the stories that have been handed down from past generations telling of the rough and ready methods used by this gracious and able minister of the New Testament, in taming a wild people. The manses at the beginning of the eighteenth century were very far removed in comfort and commodiousness from the goodly houses that generally now shelter the parish ministers throughout the Highlands. Sage's manse was "about 100 feet long, the walls were built of stone for about three feet in height above the foundation and around the roots of the couples which were previously fixed in the ground; over this were several layers of turf, so as to bring the wall to the height of 10 feet. The whole was then thatched with heather." To this humble home Sage took his young bride and here, through joys and sorrows, they spent their lives serving the best of all Masters, and in the noblest of all services.

It is interesting to note, as recorded in the Presbytery records, that the sermon preached at Sage's ordination, by Archibald McQueen, minister of Snizort, Skye, was from the text, "Son of man, go, get thee unto the house of Israel, and speak with My words unto them. For thou art not sent to a people of a strange speech and of a hard language . . . whose words thou canst not understand. Surely, had I sent thee to them, they would have hearkened unto thee. But the house of Israel will not hearken unto thee, for they will not hearken unto Me, for all the house of Israel are impudent and hardhearted. Behold, I have made thy face strong against their faces, and thy forehead strong against their foreheads. As an adamant harder than flint have I made thy forehead; fear them not, neither be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house" (Ezek 3:4-9).

Sage was to learn, to his cost, how rebellious his parishioners were and, in the depressing struggle, the courage of the good man failed, for we find him in 1731, five years after his ordination, petitioning the Presbytery. Sage's own words give the best idea of what he had to face, the following sentences from his petition may be quoted: "Your petitioner was very much encouraged to take his life in his hand, and to venture upon a work incredible to man, to have any success, especially by me, who had not the least acquaintance or friendship with the people amongst whom I was to travail; and indeed, at first sight, and after some time spent amongst them, so much of prejudice and spite against the very name of Presbytery showed itself so evidently that I dare declare none would venture to stay amongst them, save he who would be esteemed rather any way pious than cautiously wise for himself.

"Secondly. That notwithstanding what melancholy impressions I had of my circumstances as above, yet I was bold enough, through Christ strengthen-

ing me, even to accept of a call from this Presbytery to be minister of Lochcarron, in the year 1726; merely to pave the way, if it was practicable, for settling the bounds with a gospel ministry, though it should be at the peril of my life, in which indeed I was. Four nights before my ordination some of the country people set fire to the house where I was lodged, when they thought two ministers from Skye were in bed with me, and this attempt upon my life might have for once deterred me from settling there, and have given me a just title to the ordinary favour and sympathy of this Church, in such cases, towards several who have been so treated by people disaffected to our constitution; but I was so far from being discouraged by this very bitter welcome to my flock, that I did not so much as make the least complaint of it, in a judicial manner, to this day.

“Thirdly. That upon several occasions afterwards there were plots laid either to shoot me on the highway or to drown me, of which I have been particularly informed, whether to terrify me from my work or out of disaffection to my person I know not, the informers being almost entirely strangers to me.”

He further adds: “That he had to travel no less than nine hundred miles in one year [outside] his charge. That prejudices against his person have vented themselves sufficiently by abusing his character, raising infamous libels and reports against him, and accusing him to the people of the worst of crimes, to the withdrawing from him of a third part of his congregation at least. That he never had one farthing of stipend from his heritors without the utmost of law diligence . . . against them. . . . How is it possible I can stand it out any longer, in such pitiful and pinching circumstances as I am in, but notwithstanding of all this, and though I should be reduced to rags and a piece of bread, I would never give up my charge, nor part with my flock, did I find they could be edified by me, or that my ministry had the least moral evidence for success amongst them. . . . But it appears to me, to my great grief and sorrow, that my work is at an end in this corner, and that another not so odious to the people and heritors will be more acceptable to them, and more useful to their souls.”

The Presbytery refused to grant his request, but as the weary years passed by, there were signs that the seed sown with tears was beginning to bear fruit. One or two striking instances may be mentioned as illustrating this. It had been the custom of the people to gather on a plot of ground and engage in games every Lord’s Day, almost at the church door. Grieved with such irreligious conduct by his unruly flock, Sage watched his opportunity, if by any means he might put an end to these God-dishonouring practices. As the people retired from their sports one day, Sage accosted one of them, and

made a bargain with him, to the effect that, if he would come to the church and bring his family with him, the minister would give him a pound of snuff. The bargain was faithfully kept on both sides, but the sequel is interesting as showing how God can work in the hearts of godless men.

In the course of his pulpit ministry, Sage one day preached from the text, "What shall it profit a man if he should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" At the end of the service, the minister came as usual with the snuff to offer it to the man, but he turned away with tears, saying: "No, sir, I receive that no longer. Too long have I been hearing God's Word for hire; today I have heard it to my condemnation." Such was the beginning of a new spiritual life that afterwards found fruition in a beautiful Christian character, evidencing the genuineness of the momentous change that took place that day, when this man heard, for the first time, the searching and solemn words of the Saviour of the lost.

Another case, seemingly more hopeless than the foregoing, but again illustrating clearly how God can turn the most wicked from the error of their ways, is seen in the conversion of a small proprietor who lived a licentious life. Greatly daring, Sage announced one Sabbath that he intended having a diet of catechising in the man's house. On the day appointed, the minister arrived at the house and, on knocking at the door, was asked by the proprietor what brought him there? "I come," said Sage, "to discharge my duty to God, to your conscience, and to my own." "I care nothing for any of the three;" was the contemptuous answer, "out of my house, or I'll turn you out." "Easier said than done," Sage coolly replied.

This was enough; no further challenge was required; the proprietor made at once for his powerful antagonist, but the minister was more than a match for him, and he had him soon completely under his control. Procuring a rope, he tied his arms and feet firmly, and then called the people, who had gathered for the catechising, to come into the house. When the catechising was over, he then dealt with the delinquents, and particularly directed his searching remarks to the bound proprietor. The minister's words were evidently blessed by the Holy Ghost, as the proprietor from that day gave up his licentiousness and, not only so, but he became a decided Christian.

As already stated, the dreary winter of spiritual death was gradually passing away, and the welcome spring, followed by summer, was now at hand. And before he passed away, Sage was privileged to see a fruitful harvest of the seed sown in such discouraging circumstances at the beginning of his ministry. "The light of that gospel," says his grandson, "which he had faithfully preached, had arisen in full strength, and the gloom of ignorance and prejudice had passed away. Converts to the faith of the gospel became con-

spicuous, alike by their numbers and by their character, and constituted, if not the majority, at least the most influential portion of the parishioners.”

Still he had to maintain his position against those in authority, and his rough and ready method in doing so is seen in his treatment of Calan Dearg (Red Colin), Lord Seaforth’s factor.<sup>2</sup> The factor was the supreme authority in the parish and did not relish the place given to the minister, but matters were at length brought to an issue when the factor, after collecting the rents, refused to pay the minister’s stipend.

Calan Dearg, knowing the man he had to deal with, immediately set off to Brahan Castle, but he was overtaken by Sage. “Colin,” said the minister, “I am come to get what you owe me.” The factor drew his sword but, by skilfully parrying the stroke, the minister got to grips with his man, broke the sword in pieces, and before Colin knew where he was, Sage had his head thrust up the chimney. The factor capitulated, with as much becoming dignity as one in his confined and uncomfortable position could muster, but he never forgot his humiliation or forgave the minister. This was seen on the occasion when Sage rebuked Lord Seaforth and his retinue, who intended prosecuting their journey to Lewis on the Sabbath. Seaforth was ready to take the minister’s rebuke and desist from his intention. But Red Colin swept away any hesitation in Seaforth’s mind, with the sneering words: “Never mind what the old carle<sup>3</sup> says, my Lord; let us continue our journey; we need all our time.”

Turning to the factor, Sage solemnly and deliberately addressed him: “Colin, mark my words, you are now on a journey which you shall not repeat; you are going on a way by which you shall not return.” A few months afterwards, on his return journey, Red Colin went down in an open boat in the waters of the Minch,<sup>4</sup> never to be heard of again. Such a striking coincidence, with the minister’s address to him, made a profound impression on the people, and they were ready to attribute prophetic powers to him. But Sage disclaimed all such honours. “No, I am not a prophet,” he said, “but judgement, I know, will follow upon sin.”

The last days of the once-powerful minister, whose earthly tabernacle was surely but gradually breaking down in extreme old age, are full of interest. On his deathbed, as the weakness of death was all too surely undermining the once-strong constitution, his eyes were closed as if shut to the world. The sobs of his daughter arrested his attention. Opening his eyes, he turned to her, saying, “Mary, weep not as those who have no hope, for if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will

<sup>2</sup>The factor was the landowner’s local representative.

<sup>3</sup>Possibly “a man”; perhaps more likely “a clown”.

<sup>4</sup>The stretch of sea separating the Isle of Lewis from the Scottish mainland.

God bring with Him”. Then, feeling he had reached the end of his earthly journey, he said, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit”. These were his last words. It is a beautiful ending to a ministerial life, in which there was much disappointment at its beginning. The sure hope of entering on that sleep, from which none ever wake to weep, showed how securely he had cast his anchor within the veil, where the Forerunner, even Jesus, had entered. He died on 15 July 1774, at the patriarchal age of 88 years and after 47 years of ministry.

To show the change that had come over his parishioners, we cannot do better than quote his grandson’s words: “His burial was attended by the parishioners – men, women, and children – who long and deeply felt their bereavement, for many of them had become true and vital Christians through his ministry, and were themselves the primitive fathers of the spiritual generations that followed them”. In his case the Psalmist’s words found a fitting application:

“That man who, bearing precious seed, in going forth doth mourn,  
He doubtless, bringing back his sheaves, rejoicing shall return” (Ps 126:6).

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## Common Grace and Saving Grace<sup>1</sup>

*Robert Traill*

There is a very notable distinction in God’s grace as received by a sinner, between common grace and saving, or special, grace.

First, **common grace** is so called, not because it is ordinary and usual (for in bad times it is rare enough), but because it is *not saving*. It is most likely that, in such happy times when saving grace is bestowed on many (which times we cannot now boast of but only hope for), common grace is dispensed more frequently also. That there is such a thing as common grace is as certain as it is that there is such a creature (if I may so call him) as a hypocrite in the church, or in the world. For a hypocrite is nothing but an unrenewed sinner painted over with more or less of common grace. And to men that see only the outside of others, he may appear like a true Christian.

I would give some particular instances of this common grace.

(1.) There is a common *enlightening* grace, a common illumination (Heb 6:4 and 10:26). The Apostle supposes that there is an enlightening, and a receiving a knowledge of the truth, where a fatal apostasy may follow. The Lord may give the light of His Word and, in and by that light, may dart in some clear beams of gospel truth on such as are led no farther. It is far from

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<sup>1</sup>An edited extract from a sermon on “The Throne of Grace” (Heb 4:16) in *The Works of Robert Traill*, vol 1.

being true that all knowing heads have sound hearts. There may be, and often is, much clear light in the mind about points of saving truth when there is no sense, no savour, no faith in the heart.

In Acts 26 we find Paul speaking in the most noble assembly that likely he ever spoke in: a King and a Queen, and a Roman Governor greater than both. In this august assembly, Paul, though a prisoner in bonds, remembers that he is an apostle and preaches Christ, and takes Christ's grace in converting him for his text (v 14). When he is thus speaking, "Festus said with a loud voice, Paul thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad". At the same time, "Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian" (v 28). This was a great deal better than Festus' word, yet a poor word in itself. It spoke of some glancing of ineffectual light on his mind. An almost Christian, and no more, is but a sinner almost saved, and no more; or one that is no Christian, and never saved at all.

(2.) There is common *awakening* grace, The Lord sometimes alarms the consciences of the ungodly and may raise a great sense of sin in those that are never forgiven, and fears of hell – indeed a foretaste of hell – in some that never escape it. "I have sinned", says Pharaoh; "I have sinned", says Saul; "I have sinned", says Judas, "in that I have betrayed the innocent blood". Alas, poor wretch, it had been better to have confessed his sin against his Master to his Master than to his murderers. Felix trembled when Paul preached. It was grace in God to come so near to him, and great power was put forth. What else could make such a great prince as Felix was to tremble at the words of a poor prisoner standing before him in his chains?

Awakening grace is only common grace. The law wounds many a conscience that the gospel does not heal, because it is not applied to. The law can make no wound which the gospel cannot heal. Do not boast of your wounds by the law unless you can tell how you were healed. There is no cure for a conscience wounded by sin and by the law, but the blood of Jesus shed for sin. Did you come to the blood of Jesus? (Heb 12:24). Did He apply it to you? Were you cured of your wounds before you went to Him and before He came to you? Woeful is that cure, and worse than the wound. Many poor creatures are wounded by the law, and to the law they go for healing. But God never appointed the law to heal a wounded conscience; and it never did or can or will, till the end of the world or to eternity. It is Christ's name and property and glory to be the only physician of souls, and all must die of the disease of sin who are not His blessed patients.

(3.) There is common *restraining* grace, an act of God's grace and wisdom, which He often puts forth in ruling this wicked world. How quickly would this earth become a hell, were it not for this restraining grace! If God permitted

all unrenewed men to commit all the sin Satan tempts them to and their natures incline them to, the godly would not be able to live in this world. A heathen had this restraining grace: the Lord said to Abimelech: "I withheld thee from sinning against Me" (Gen 20:6). What is more, we find a great saint praying for it: "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me" (Ps 19:13); that is, Lay a powerful restraint on me by Thy grace, so that, when I am tempted, my way may be hedged up and I may be kept from complying with the temptation.

Yet a Christian in a good state of soul does not desire bare restraining grace, but also sanctifying grace. He desires not only a restraint of outward acts of sin, but the removal of inward inclinations to sin; he begs that his heart be renewed and changed. So after David had fallen foully, by the strength of inward corruption when God had left him to himself, he prays like a wise believer, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me" (Ps 51:10) – when he has been recovered by grace and renewed unto repentance.

(4). There is common *assisting* grace. Many a bad man has had good assistance from God in a good work. The Spirit of God has enabled many to do great and good works, by which God gets service and the world gets good, though the doers of it are not accepted. "Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? And in Thy name have cast out devils? And in Thy name done many wonderful works?" (Mt 7:22) All these were great things, done in Christ's name, and by His assistance. In casting out devils and in working miracles, there was an exertion of omnipotence, with and by their faith [but not saving faith], which is the greatest divine assistance we can imagine. And no doubt they were assisted by Christ's Spirit in prophesying in His name. Now such things they thus did. Christ, in His reply, does not deny that they did them and finds no fault with the works in themselves; but all His quarrel is with the workers: "I never knew you"; you are workers of iniquity.

(5.) To common grace belongs *some comfort and joy reaching the heart* in hearing the word. The Lord expressly explains the stony ground this way: "He that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it" (Mt 13:20).

(6.) There is *reforming* grace, which belongs to common grace. The power of the Word may so come on natural men's consciences that they may reform many things; as when Herod heard John the Baptist, "he did many things, and heard [Christ] gladly" (Mk 6:20; so 2 Pet 2:20).

If any say, What, should we come to the throne of grace for common grace? I answer, Not for it alone, but for it and better. It is a mercy to have



common grace; it is grace that is undeserved, but it is a woeful snare to him that rests in it. If the Lord restrains your corruptions; if He enlightens your minds and awakens your consciences; if He assists you with gifts for good works; if He helps you to mend anything that is amiss in your life; bless Him for it all, but do not rest on any of these things. The grace that is saving is higher and better, and you must seek after that.

Second, *saving grace*, as distinct from and beyond all that is common, takes to do with three things.

1. It works a change in a man's *state*, which common grace never does. Saving grace changes a person's state. By this grace an enemy is reconciled to God, a guilty sinner is justified freely through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, a stranger receives sonship by Christ. Common grace never alters anyone's state, but it leaves him where it found him. It never takes him out of the old stock of fallen Adam, nor can it; he still lies in that pit and is never translated by it into Christ, or is engrafted in him, as a new Head. But when saving grace comes, it does all (Eph 2:4-18).

2. Saving grace changes man's *sinful nature*. And this grace thus working is called the regenerating, sanctifying and renewing of men. Christ calls it, being "born again" (John 3:3) "If any man be in Christ [through this grace], he is a new creature" (2 Cor 5:17). The Apostle describes this: "According to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Tts 3:5).

Natural men are more apt to look to their life than to their nature. They may see many things amiss in their way, but are loath to look into their heart. And if light shines in to discover inward heart-faults, they are still backward to own that all is nought and that there is no good in their hearts. If the light pursues them yet closer and makes them see that there is absolutely nothing within, they are still more backward to own the true source of their disease and the true remedy for it; that all this dominion of sin over them flows from their natural state, as they still stand in and under the first sinful Adam, and can never be altered and mended but by grace putting them into Christ as the root of their new life.

3. Saving grace works on the *new nature*. Special grace not only changes a man's state, not only his old corrupt nature, but it works on this new nature, that has been wrought by grace. The special operation of the grace of God, in and from the fountain, is on His own new creation in the hearts of His children. We cannot conceive it fully; our minds are not able to take in these depths of God.

We hear from, and read in, the Word of the intimate correspondence the Lord keeps up with those in whom He dwells. Christ dwells in the heart by

faith (Eph 3:17). His Spirit dwells in His people (Rom 8:9,10,11). But what is it in their hearts that He dwells in? He dwells in His own workmanship in their hearts, in His own new creation, in His own garden that He has planted in them. There His presence is and there His eye is, on that His hand is; this is what He waters and looks after carefully. When a believer comes to the throne of grace for this grace, he comes to beg that the new creation in him may be visited, refreshed, strengthened and brought to perfection. They in whom Christ has not planted anything lack this errand to the throne of grace that believers daily come upon.

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## Last Words for Disciples<sup>1</sup>

*J C Ryle*

**W**e learn, for one thing, from these verses, that *Christ foreknows the future history of Christians, both in life and death*. The Lord tells Simon Peter, “When thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not”. These words, without controversy, were a prediction of the manner of the Apostle’s death. They were fulfilled in after days, it is commonly supposed, when Peter was crucified as a martyr for Christ’s sake. The time, the place, the manner, the painfulness to flesh and blood of the disciple’s death, were all matters the Master foresaw.

The truth before us is eminently full of comfort to a true believer. To obtain foreknowledge of things to come would, in most cases, be a sorrowful possession. To know what was going to befall us, and yet not to be able to prevent it, would make us simply miserable. But it is an unspeakable consolation to remember that our whole future is known and arranged beforehand by Christ. There is no such thing as luck, chance or accident in the journey of our life. Everything from beginning to end is foreseen – arranged by One who is too wise to err and too loving to do us harm.

Let us store up this truth in our minds and use it diligently in all the days of darkness through which we may yet have to pass. In such days we should lean back on the thought, Christ knows this and knew it when He called me to be His disciple. It is foolish to repine and murmur over the troubles of those whom we love. We should rather fall back on the thought that all is well done. It is useless to fret and be rebellions when we ourselves have bitter cups to drink. We should rather say, This also is from the Lord; He foresaw

<sup>1</sup>Taken, with editing, from *Expository Thoughts on John*, vol 3. Here are some of Ryle’s general comments on John 21:18-25.

it and would have prevented it if it had not been for my good. Happy are those who can enter into the spirit of that old saint who said, "I have made a covenant with my Lord that I will never take amiss anything that He does to me". We may have to walk sometimes through rough places on our way to heaven. But surely it is a resting, soothing reflection, Every step of my journey was foreknown by Christ.

We learn, secondly, in these verses, that *a believer's death is intended to glorify God*. The Holy Ghost tells us this truth in plain language. He graciously interprets the dark saying which fell from our Lord's lips about Peter's end. He tells us that Jesus said this, "signifying by what death he should glorify God".

The thing before us is probably not considered as much as it ought to be. We are apt to regard life as the only season for honouring Christ and action as the only mode of showing our religion, so that we overlook death except as a painful termination of usefulness. Yet surely this ought not so to be. We may die to the Lord as well as live to the Lord; we may be patient sufferers as well as active workers. Like Samson, we may do more for God in our death than we ever did in our lives. It is probable that the patient deaths of our martyred Reformers had more effect on the minds of Englishmen than all the sermons they preached and all the books they wrote. One thing, at all events, is certain: the blood of the English martyrs was the seed of the English Church.

We may glorify God in death by being ready for it whenever it comes. The Christian who is found like a sentinel at his post, like a servant with his loins girded and his lamp burning, with a heart packed up and ready to go – the man to whom sudden death, by the common consent of all who knew him, is sudden glory – this is a man whose end brings glory to God. We may glorify God in death by patiently enduring its pains. The Christian whose spirit has complete victory over the flesh, who quietly feels the pins of his earthly tabernacle plucked up with great bodily agonies and yet never murmurs or complains, but silently enjoys inward peace – this again is a man whose end brings glory to God.

We may glorify God in death by testifying to others the comfort and support that we find in the grace of Christ. It is a great thing, when a mortal man can say with David, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil" (Ps 23:4.) The Christian who, like Standfast in *The Pilgrim's Progress*, can stand for a while in the river and talk calmly to his companions, saying, "My foot is fixed sure; my toilsome days are ended" – this is a man whose end brings glory to God. Deaths like these leave a mark on the living and are not soon forgotten.

While we live in health, let us pray that we may glorify God in our end. Let us leave it to God to choose the where and the when and the how and the whole manner of our departing. Let us only ask that it may "glorify God". He is a wise man who takes John Bunyan's advice and keeps his last hour continually in mind and makes it his company-keeper.

We learn, thirdly, in these verses, that *whatever we may think about the condition of other people, we should think first about our own*. When Peter inquired curiously and anxiously about the future of the Apostle John, he received from the Lord an answer of deep meaning: "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou Me." Hard to understand as part of that sentence may be, it contains a practical lesson which cannot be mistaken. It commands every Christian to remember his own heart first and to look at home.

Of course our blessed Lord does not wish us to neglect the souls of others, or to take no interest in their condition. Such a state of mind would be nothing less than uncharitable selfishness and would prove plainly that we do not have the grace of God. The servant of Christ will have a wide, broad heart, like his Master, and will desire the present and eternal happiness of all around him. He will long and labour to lessen the sorrows, and to increase the joys, of everyone within his reach and, as he has opportunity, to do good to all men. But, in all his doing, the servant of Christ must never forget his own soul. Charity and true religion must both begin at home.

It is vain to deny that our Lord's solemn caution to His impetuous disciple is greatly needed in the present day. Such is the weakness of human nature that even true Christians are continually liable to run into extremes. Some are so entirely absorbed in their own inward experience and their own heart's conflict that they forget the world outside. Others are so busy about doing good to the world that they neglect to cultivate their own souls. Both are wrong, and both need to see a more excellent way; but none perhaps do so much harm to religion as those who are busybodies about others' salvation and, at the same time, neglect their own. From such a snare as this may the ringing words of our Lord deliver us! Whatever we do for others (and we never can do enough), let us not forget our own inner man. Unhappily, the Bride, in the Song of Solomon, is not the only person who has cause to complain: "They made me the keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard I have not kept" (Song 1:6).

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The praise of a hypocrite is not of God, but of man; the praise of an Israelite is not of man, but of God. The former desires to seem good, that he may be admired; the latter to be good, that God may be honoured.

*William Secker*

# Jesus and the Woman of Samaria (1)<sup>1</sup>

*George Hutcheson*

John 4:4-6. *And He must needs go through Samaria. Then cometh He to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with His journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour.*

1. When persecutors have done their worst, neither Christ nor His followers will lack work or success so long as the Lord pleases; for Christ, driven from Judea, finds both in Samaria.

2. As persecution and exile should not discourage Christ's servants from attending to their calling and, as they should employ even the time of their journey in seeking to do good, so a very short time, through God's blessing, may produce great effects; thus Christ's practice and success, while He is on His journey, teach us.

3. In every step of men's way they should study to have a clear calling, especially for doing those things at which others are apt to stumble and take offence; therefore Christ, however His love put a necessity upon Him to visit these wandering sheep, (and He did not hold back from going to a hateful place to seek them) yet, being the minister of circumcision (Rom 15:8), and having forbidden His disciples to go to the Samaritans, (Mt 10:5), He will have His journey thither freed from criticism by the necessity of His going that way from Judea to Galilee; "He must needs go through Samaria," as being the straight way, which appears from Luke 9:51,52, 17:11, and is clear to them who know the situation of that country.

4. A lawful and necessary calling makes converse lawful with those with whom otherwise it is not justifiable, for therefore He went "through Samaria", and did so warrantably, since it was the straight way to Galilee.

5. Piety and faith in God have a sweet savour above any excellence that men can hunt after besides; therefore is this place so eminent, even in Christ's time, by reason of Jacob's abode, who worshipped God there (Gen 33:19,20); and because of his faith in giving that land to his children when they were sojourners in Egypt.

6. Christ took on, not only our nature, but its common infirmities, and He is to be as seriously looked on as emptied in His humanity, as in the glory of His Godhead, for the comfort of those who know themselves to be sinners, who come to such a High Priest; therefore it is recorded that He was

<sup>1</sup>These are the "Doctrines", or lessons, as edited, that Hutcheson (1626-74) draws from these verses, in his *Exposition of the Gospel of John*.

“wearied with His journey” before half the day was spent and that, through weariness, He “sat thus on (or beside) the well” – that is, even as the seat was available, or as wearied men use to sit.

## Faith<sup>1</sup>

*W K Tweedie*

Romans 1:17. *The just shall live by faith.*

**H**ow mighty, yet how weak, is faith! How mysterious, yet how simple! How prized in the religion of God! How undervalued or perverted in that of man!

Where does it operate? What is the secret of its power? Has it any inherent virtue? How does it save? How does it sanctify? How does it overcome the world? What secret force does faith possess, when all these things are ascribed to it?

The one answer to all these questions is that faith receives Christ; and hence is all its power. In itself it is nothing; it can do nothing. But when it welcomes or embraces the Lord, then it can do all things. It can lead to the fountain opened for sin. It can purify the heart. It can overcome the world. With the Spirit of God for its Author, with the Word of God for its foundation, with Christ for the great object to which it clings, with the salvation of the soul for its end, faith leads God’s children in triumph along the narrow way. It is the evidence of things not seen. It is the substance of things hoped for. It puts on the Saviour’s righteousness and is safe. It teaches the soul in trial to say, “Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him”.

It points, amid danger, to Him who is a hiding place from the storm, and in the day of prosperity it tells of the Sun of Righteousness. In a word, faith receives and rests on Christ. Hence its more than mortal power; hence its triumphs; hence it has led many to the stake amid songs of joy. Or, far more than that, hence it obtains from God, as an empty hand held out obtains alms, the righteousness which justifies, the blood which cleanses, the peace which is the foretaste of heaven.

The language of faith is, “I can do all things through Christ which strengthen me”; I will not fear though ten thousand be set round about against me; “The name of the Lord is a strong tower”; I flee thither and am safe, and if my faith works by love, all is well; “All things are possible”; “only believe”; “Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief”; “Lord, increase our faith”. Should these not be the cherished sentiments of every self-loving soul?

<sup>1</sup>Taken, with editing, from Tweedie’s volume, *Glad Tidings of the Gospel of Peace*.

# Protestant View

## Rome and Scripture

Of all the sources of the Roman apostasy, perhaps the most deep-rooted is the departure from the *sole* authority of Scripture. This is the fundamental error which underlies so many of the teachings and practices of Popery. In her perversion of the doctrine of Scripture, Rome has brought upon herself and her followers exposure to the two-fold curse pronounced in Revelation 22:18-19. For, in regarding her own unwritten traditions as possessing the same authority as Scripture, she has also, at the very same time, practically undermined what Scripture actually teaches. Rome's doctrine was defined at the Council of Trent (1545-63) and forbids any interpretation of Scripture other than that which accords with her own traditions: "The saving truth and discipline of manners are contained in the written books and the unwritten traditions, which, having been received by the apostles from the mouth of Jesus Christ, or from the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, by succession of time are come down to us . . . and preserved in the Catholic Church by continual succession"<sup>1</sup>.

The infamous assembly at Trent went on to state, "If any knowingly despises the said traditions, let him be accursed!" This, of course, remains the unchanging position of Romanism on the authority of Scripture and "tradition". Such is the audacity of Rome that she even arrogates to herself the authority over Scripture which Scripture properly has over the Church. She makes the (Roman) Church itself to be the ground of Scripture's authority whereas the true, Biblical position is that the Church of Christ is actually founded on Scripture.

In his treatise entitled *The Divine Inspiration of Scripture*, the Swiss pastor Louis Gaussen (1790-1863) described the devastating effects of Rome's departure from the authority of the Word of God: "Millions and millions of immortal souls . . . though they carried with them intact and complete the New Testament, although they have not ceased to read it . . . every Lord's Day, in thousands and thousands of churches for 1200 years, have been turned away from the fountains of life, have, like the Jews, 'paid more attention to the words of the scribes than to those of the law'. . . .

"It is thus they have contrived, for twelve centuries, to maintain doctrines the most contrary to the Word of God, on the worship of images; on the exaltation of the priests; on their forced celibacy; on their auricular confession; on the absolution which they dare to give; on the magical power

<sup>1</sup>Council of Trent, first decree, session 4.

which they attribute even to the most impure among them, of creating his God with three Latin words”.

They also maintain unscriptural doctrines “on an ecclesiastical priesthood, of which Scripture has never said a word; on prayers to the dead; on the spiritual pre-eminence of the city which the Scripture has called Babylon; on the use of an unknown tongue in worship; on the celestial empire of the blessed but humble woman to whom Jesus Himself said, ‘Woman, what have I to do with thee?’ (Jn 2:4); on the mass; on the taking away of the cup; on indulgences; on purgatory; on the universal episcopate of an Italian priest; on the interdiction of meals”.

The result is “that just as people annul the sole priesthood of the Son of man by establishing other priesthoods by thousands, just as they annul His divinity by acknowledging thousands of demi-gods or dead men,<sup>2</sup> present in all places, hearing throughout the whole earth the most secret prayers of human beings, protecting cities and kingdoms, working miracles in favour of their worshippers; just so, also, they annul the inspiration of the Scripture, by acknowledging by thousands other writings which share in its divine authority, and which surpass and swallow up its eternal infallibility!”<sup>3</sup> This dreadful list of popish errors shows how departing from the sole authority of the Word of God leads to all manner of apostasy and evil. The Saviour’s own words are most apposite here, “Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition” (Mk 7:9). AWM

## Notes and Comments

### Hypocrisy or Worse?

Following the resignation of Matt Hancock, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care – resulting from the circulation of CCTV images of him kissing his aide, Gina Coladangelo – the media was outraged at his hypocrisy. News outlets and social media expatiated at length and with horror on the fact that the minister, who throughout the Covid-19 pandemic had repeatedly insisted that people must stick to social distancing, had now been pictured breaking his own requirements in a romantic embrace with his aide.

Of course this was wrong, and indeed was hypocrisy, but his failing was far worse than that. Not a squeak was heard from the media about Mr

<sup>2</sup>Gaussen is referring to Roman Catholic “saints”.

<sup>3</sup>L Gaussen, *The Divine Inspiration of Scripture*, Christian Focus Publications edn, 2007, pp 106-7. The period of 1200 years referred to by Gaussen was dated from the mid-nineteenth century and so nearly two more centuries can be added to it since then.



Hancock's dreadful moral failure in betraying his wife and family. He is a married man with three children, while Gina Coladangelo is also married with three children. Matt Hancock's friends explained that his and Gina Coladangelo's behaviour was a "love match", as if this made it acceptable to destroy two marriages and damage the lives of six children.

What an indictment of our age that, while hypocrisy in public office is regarded as appalling moral failure, yet if a man betrays a wife and family to live in an adulterous relationship, it is regarded as non-censurable, commonplace and not worthy of comment! Society today claims that being "non-judgemental" is a virtue when it suits; it is actually exceedingly judgemental when anyone dares to disagree with its moral norms.

The Seventh Commandment requires of us moral perfection in thought, word and deed. We are, of course, fallen creatures who need to be kept, and to be constantly on our guard against the snares of Satan and our own deceitful, wicked hearts.

We believe that the Covid-19 virus is a chastisement on the nations of the world on account of their sin, but here is another example of the moral malaise into which our nation, once so favoured with the gospel, has fallen. "Turn Thou us unto Thee, O Lord, and we shall be turned; renew our days as of old" (Lam 5:21). *FRD*

### **Birthrate in Scotland**

National Records of Scotland (NRS) have reported that 46 809 births were registered in Scotland in 2020. This is the lowest number since records began in 1855 and is 3054 less than the previous year, which was itself a record low. The Scottish birthrate has been falling since the early 1960s, when there were over 100 000 births per year. The rate dropped to 51 270 in 2002, then there was a relative high of 60 041 in 2008, but it has dropped steadily since. There were also 13 815 abortions in Scotland in 2020, a slight increase on the previous year. Of Scottish pregnancies which do not end in miscarriage, over a fifth now end in abortion. Furthermore, of the children that are born in Scotland, a sizable proportion are non-British in ethnic origin.

The Scottish nation has cast off the Lord, and the Lord is now diminishing the nation. It is sad to watch, but the heirs of those who were blessed at Reformation, Covenanting and Disruption times are now largely an irreligious, unclean and murderous group of bullies and cowards, prepared even to debase themselves by pretending that they do not know the difference between men and women.

The curse of Israel has come upon us: "But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all His

commandments and His statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee. . . . The Lord shall smite thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart. . . . And ye shall be left few in number, whereas ye were as the stars of heaven for multitude; because thou wouldest not obey the voice of the Lord thy God. And it shall come to pass, that as the Lord rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you; so the Lord will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to nought; and ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess it" (Deut 28:15,28,62-63). *DWBS*

## Church Information

### Theological Conference

This year's Theological Conference will be held, God willing, in Inverness, on Tuesday and Wednesday, November 16-17, with Rev K D Macleod as chairman. It is expected that the following papers will be read, all in public:

**Application in Preaching**

*Rev D A Ross*

**Romanism – Changing and Unchanging**

*Rev J B Jardine*

**The “Mysteries” of the New Testament**

*Rev D W B Somerset*

**Union to Christ**

*Rev I D MacDonald*

**Jewish Ministers of the Nineteenth-Century Free Church** *Dr R J Dickie*

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

### Synod Documents

The next ordinary meeting of Synod will begin on Tuesday, 26 October 2021 at 6.30 pm, in the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, Inverness, God willing. Reports of standing committees have been received already, but any new business should be in the hands of the Clerk of Synod by the second Tuesday of September. *(Rev) K M Watkins, Clerk of Synod*

### Meetings of Presbytery (DV)

**Northern:** At Dingwall, on Tuesday, August 3, at 2 pm.

**Southern:** At Glasgow, on Tuesday, August 24, at 2 pm.

**Western:** At Lochcarron, on Tuesday, August 31, at 11 am.

**Outer Isles:** At Stornoway, on Tuesday, September 21, at 11 am.

### Jewish and Foreign Missions Fund

By appointment of Synod, the second of the year's two special collections for the Jewish and Foreign Missions Fund is to be taken in congregations during August. *W Campbell, General Treasurer*

## FREE PRESBYTERIAN PLACES OF WORSHIP

### Scotland

- Aberdeen:** 2 Alford Place, AB10 1YD, Sabbath 11 am, 6 pm; Tuesday, 7.15 pm. Rev D WB Somerset BSc DPhil, 18 Carlton Place, Aberdeen, AB15 4BQ; tel: 01224 645250.
- Bracadale Duirinish-Strath:** 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 Achary 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. 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 Barnton Avenue West, Edinburgh EH4 6DF; tel: 0131 312 8227, e-mail: dcampbell1560@gmail.com.
- Farr** (by Daviot): Sabbath 12 noon. **Tomatin:** Sabbath 12 noon. **Stratherrick:** Sabbath 12 noon. (Each of these services is held once in three weeks as intimated). 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. Manse tel: 01445 712247. Contact Rev D A Ross; tel: 01445 731340.
- Glasgow:** St Jude's Church, 137 Woodlands Road, G3 6LE. Sabbath 11 am, 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, 5.30 pm; Thursday 7.30 pm. Rev W A Weale, F P Manse, Bridge Street, KW12 6YG; tel: 01847 831758. **Thurso:** Duncan Street; and **Strathly:** no services meantime.
- 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 K M 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.
- 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. No F P services at present.
- Perth:** Pomarium, off Leonard Street. Sabbath 11 am, 6 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. Rev A B MacLean, 5 Forteviot Cottages, Pomarium Street, Perth, PH2 8JF; tel: 01738 270 213.
- 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. 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.
- 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. Contact Rev D A Ross; tel: 01445 731340.

### England

- Barnoldswick:** Kelbrook Road, Sabbath 11 am, 6 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm.; **South Manchester:** Sabbath 6.00 pm, in Trinity Church, Massie Street, Cheadle (entry at rear of building); Wednesday 8 pm, alternately in Sandbach and Gatley. 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 2AW. Sabbath 11 am, 6.30 pm; Wednesday 7.15 pm. Manse: 6 Church Ave, Sidcup, Kent, DA14 6BU; tel: 0208 309 1623. Contact Mr Hugh Campbell; tel: 01923 442497.

### 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 (once a month as intimated locally). Contact: Rev J D Smith; tel: 09 282 4195.

#### Singapore

**Singapore**: Metropolitan YMCA Singapore, 60 Stevens Road, Singapore 257854: Sabbath: 9.30 am and 5.30 pm at Palm Room; Wednesday: 7.30 pm, at Cypress Room. Contact: Mr Bernard Yong, 4 Chuan Place, Singapore 554822; tel: (65) 6383 4466, e-mail: byong1@singnet.com.sg.

#### Ukraine

**Odessa**: F P Mission Station, 3 Pestelya Street, 65031. Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm; Wednesday 6 pm. Rev D Levytskyi; tel: 00 38 048 785 19 24; e-mail: dlevytskyi@gmail.com; or contact Mr I Zadorozhnyi, P O Box 100, Odessa-91, 65091; e-mail: antipa@eurocom.od.ua.

#### Zimbabwe

**Bulawayo**: Lobengula Township, PO Magwegwe, Bulawayo. Rev S Khumalo, F P Manse, Stand No 56004, Mazwi Road, Lobengula, PO Magwegwe, Bulawayo; tel: 00263 9407131, e-mail: skhumalo.by@gmail.com.

**Ingwenya**: Church and Secondary School. Postal Address: Ingwenya Mission, Private Bag T5445, Bulawayo.

**Mbuma**: Church and Hospital. Postal Address: Mbuma Mission Hospital, Private Bag T5406, Bulawayo.

**New Canaan**: Church.

**Zenka**: Church.

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