

The Free Presbyterian Magazine

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Elijah and Prayer

Elijah was an altogether remarkable man; indeed he was one of the most remarkable of all God's prophets. We may think of how he dealt with the 850 idolatrous prophets whom he directed King Ahab to gather to Mount Carmel. Elijah was alone there as God's representative, yet with strong faith he called fire down from heaven to consume the sacrifice, when the heathen prophets were completely unable to do so. The people were so impressed by this demonstration of God's power that they cried out: "The Lord, He is the God; the Lord, He is the God" (1 Ki 18:39).

The prophet was taken up to heaven without experiencing death, in "a chariot of fire" drawn by "horses of fire". We may surely understand the way he was removed from the world as an indication of his great holiness and faithfulness to God. Yet he was, James tells us, "a man subject to like passions as we are" (5:17). He was a man, not an angel. He was subject to the common infirmities of human life, as when, following the extraordinary incident on Mount Carmel, he was intimidated by Jezebel's threats and asked the Lord to take away his life. Thomas Manton comments, "All kinds of infirmities incident to man are ascribed to him".¹ Again he says that even "God's eminent children are men of like passions with us".

The example James gives of Elijah's remarkable actions is his power in prayer: "He prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit". He was a human being like ourselves, although remarkably holy; yet when he prayed earnestly, God gave him what he asked for. Elijah is but one instance of the general truth: "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (Jas 5:16). This is still true and always will be, whether in biblical times or in the twenty-first century. Manton puts it like this: James' "drift is to show that, if he obtained so much, our prayers shall not altogether be in vain; there may be less of miracle in our answer, but there will be as much of grace".

¹The quotations in this article from Manton, a noteworthy English Puritan, are all taken from his *Exposition on the Epistle of James*, Banner of Truth 1962 reprint (on 5:17,18).

This passage in James' Epistle is intended as an encouragement for the righteous in every generation to pray earnestly and perseveringly, and believers today, in particular, are to take that encouragement to themselves. The passage is not directed merely to those who are exceptionally godly; in any case, such people would have difficulty recognising that description. It is directed to all who have believed in Christ and so have His righteousness imputed to them – those who are hungering and thirsting after righteousness, who are seriously seeking to live godly lives. But no matter how conscious they may be of coming short in many ways, they are not to be discouraged because of their infirmities; they are not to restrain prayer. Let them seek the Holy Spirit to awaken prayer in their hearts. Let them remember that Elijah “was a man subject to like passions as we are”. He prayed earnestly and he was heard. Manton states, by way of encouragement, “Where the heart is upright, our infirmities shall not hinder prayers . . . imitate [Elijah's] faith and earnestness, and your infirmities will be no impediment”.

Believers may be afraid that their sins may prevent God hearing their prayers. Yet God does not hear prayer because the person praying is free from sin. But Christ is free from sin, and He is the Mediator; He is the Great High Priest who comes before God the Father on behalf of sinners, making intercession for them on the basis of the perfect sacrifice that He offered while in this world. That is why we say, “For Christ's sake”, when we pray. We cannot get access to God because of anything in ourselves; we are altogether unworthy, for we are sinners. But Christ is altogether worthy; He said to His Father after raising Lazarus from the dead: “I knew that Thou hearest Me always”.

It is still true that when Christ presents the petitions of people in this world to the Father. In His intercession, He is always heard; whatever He makes intercession for, it will be granted. And petitions offered up in this world are granted for the sake of Christ, because of what He has done. We are assured that “we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Heb 4:15); He understands the experience of people in this world, who inevitably have infirmities. And so we are encouraged: “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need”. For the sake of Christ, all our needs can be supplied, whatever these needs may be. We are encouraged to bring them all before God, looking unto Jesus.

Prayer is a duty for everyone, even for the unconverted, it is part of their duty to worship the God who made them. In particular, they are directed to seek the Lord (Is 55:6), which involves coming before Him in prayer, plead-

ing for His saving mercy. But on what basis can a guilty, unsaved sinner dare come before the holy God looking for blessings? The answer is that Christ is calling sinners to come to Him, in faith, that they may obtain mercy. He calls, “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Mt 11:28). Sinners are to seek, from the Lord, even the grace they need so that they may come to Christ – that they may believe in Him – for we are told that faith “is the gift of God” (Eph 2:8). He gives it freely; we cannot earn it by our good works, for we have none at all, except by grace. We must be altogether dependent on Christ for salvation and for every aspect of it, including regeneration and forgiveness.

Whatever our needs are, for our souls or our bodies or our circumstances; whatever we desire for ourselves or our friends, for the Church of Christ or for the whole world, let us pray. Let us commit everything to the Lord, recognising that He knows what is best for us and others, and what is most for His own glory. Let us bear in mind that a consciousness of our infirmities is not to keep us back from praying, for Elijah was a man with infirmities, and God heard his prayers. Yes, we are sinners, but “the blood of Jesus Christ [God’s] Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 Jn 1:7) – which should bring us back to the thought that our prayers can only be heard for the sake of the Mediator. May the Lord keep this thought active in our minds.

Let us conclude with some more quotations from Manton:

(1.) “When God meaneth to bestow blessings, He stirreth up the hearts of the people to pray for them.”

(2.) “Though we are sure of the accomplishment of a blessing, yet we must not give over prayer. Elias had foretold rain, yet when he seemed to hear the sound of it he falls a-praying.”

(3.) “Prayer is a good remedy in the most desperate cases, and when you are lost to all other hopes, you are not lost to the hopes of prayer. Though there had been three years’ drought, yet he prayed till he had drawn down sweet showers. . . . When the case is desperate the Lord is wont to come in.”

(4.) “The efficacy of prayer is very great. Elias seemed to have the key of heaven, to open it and shut it at pleasure. Nothing hath wrought such wonderful effects in the world as prayer.”

(5.) “All that God wrought by and for His eminent servants was with respect to His own grace, not to their worth and dignity. God did much for Elijah, but he was a man of like passions with us; though his prayers were effectual, yet he was, as every believer is, indebted to grace. When we have received a high assistance, yet still we are unprofitable servants (Lk 17:10).”

(6.) “Thy prayers may be heard as well as those of Elias; thy sins may be pardoned as well as Paul’s.”

“The Foolishness of Preaching”¹

A Sermon by Rev Neil M Ross

1 Corinthians 1:21. *For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.*

We shall concentrate mainly on the second half of the text, “It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe”. In verse 17, Paul says, “Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel”. He says, as it were, My main work is to preach the gospel. But what exactly was his purpose in preaching the gospel? It was, of course, that sinners would be saved. The saving of sinners, as the great objective in preaching the gospel, is what our text speaks of: “It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe”.

There are two points which we wish to enlarge on, the Lord helping us, as we find these in our text: (1.) There is the salvation of certain people: “to save them that believe”; (2.) There is the preaching by which they are saved: “it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.”

1. The saving of certain people. We shall look at some fundamental points so that we may bear them in mind as we proceed. The first is that absolutely *everyone needs to be saved* (when we say “saved”, we mean saved from his or her sins). We know this solemn fact, but have we really laid it to heart? Without exception, each of us by nature needs to be saved because, as the Bible says, “All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom 3:23). When we say, “All have sinned”, we mean that all have sinned in Adam, our representative in the Garden of Eden. When he sinned, we sinned; when he fell, we fell. We have the guilt of Adam’s first sin upon us, and that is a very serious matter indeed. So all of us are *born as sinners*; that “innocent” infant in the cradle needs to be saved.

Because we are born as sinners, the natural bent of our being is towards sin. Our natural inclination is to sin because we have been not only born as sinners but born in a state of spiritual death, and therefore are “dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph 2:1). Not only were we born in sin but we also *add sin to sin* and thus are increasing our guilt. The solemn reality is that we are treasuring up wrath to ourselves against the day of wrath. We are also in the grip of sin; *sin has dominion over us*. It is one thing for someone to leave off committing a certain sin but it is another matter to free himself altogether

¹The sermon preached at the induction of Rev A W MacColl to the pastorate of the Dingwall and Beaully congregation on Friday, 9 August 2019.

from the slavery of sin. In fact, it is impossible for him to do so, apart from grace. Truly, as sinners, we are in an awful plight!

Scripture also teaches that *we are morally and spiritually impure*, that the filth of sin cleaves to us; in other words, that we are totally depraved. There are many who will put up their hands in horror at such an idea but this is what the Bible clearly shows us. The fact that we are totally depraved does not mean that we are as great sinners as is possible, but it does mean that we are sinners through and through, that sin has adversely affected every part of our souls – our will, our understanding, our conscience and our affections. Also the members of our bodies – whether it is our eyes, or ears, or hands, or feet – are given to the service of sin; we are, as to our bodies as well as our souls, the servants of sin. When we try to think of the totality of our sin, we cannot conceive how great it is, but we know enough from the Word of God to realise that we need to be saved.

Furthermore, we need to be saved because we are facing the ultimate *consequence of our sins*. God said to our first parent Adam, “In the day that thou eatest thereof [of the forbidden fruit] thou shalt surely die” (Gen 2:17). Because we fell in Adam, death came upon us – not only spiritual death but also physical death, and beyond physical death we are exposed to the due reward of our sin, which is eternal death. O how unspeakably dreadful it will be for a sinner to be consigned to the place of eternal death! In that place of woe, there will be no annihilation, as some think; existence will continue, but what a terrible existence! “There will not be the cessation of being,” one minister has said, “but the cessation of wellbeing.” The Saviour said about that place of outer darkness, “There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Mt 8:12). O may you believe that you are in urgent need of being saved, if you are not already saved.

However, when we turn to the Scriptures, we discover that we are utterly unable to save ourselves. We cannot atone for even one of our sins; we cannot do away with our spiritual death and bring ourselves into a state of spiritual life. So what hope is there for us? The wonderful good news is that God Himself purposed from all eternity to save sinners. Whom did He purpose to save? Those whom He sovereignly elected in eternity past to be saved here in time, a multitude that no man can number. Many quarrel with the doctrine of election but, if God had not made such a choice, there would be no hope whatever for anyone.

In purposing to save sinners, God also provided a Saviour. This is the answer to our fearful plight as sinners in need of being saved: a Saviour has been provided by God the Father. “For 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). Christ came into the world to save sinners, having undertaken to be the substitute of those whom God the Father chose and gave to Him to be saved. Not only did Christ undertake to take their place before divine justice, but He also undertook to pay, on their behalf, what they were utterly unable to pay: the infinite debt they owed to the justice of God. Thus Christ became both their substitute and surety.

This in turn means that He undertook to atone for their sins, which He did by His inexpressibly awful sufferings and death at Calvary. He “endured the cross” (Heb 12:2). Upon the cross He offered Himself without spot unto God as the sacrifice of atonement for the sins of His people. There, upon that tree, He bore the sins of His own people in His body and rendered full satisfaction on their behalf to divine justice. Then He cried, “It is finished” (Jn 19:30). The work given Him by the Father, to redeem His people from the curse of the law, was now accomplished. Thus He obtained salvation for His people.

What a marvel this is! It ought to fill us with great amazement. We read of “the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow” (1 Pet 1:11), the glory especially of sinners being saved from the wrath which is to come. Little wonder then that this salvation is called “so great salvation” (Heb 2:3).

In what way is it great? Surely it is great when it cost the death of the Son of God in our nature; He gave “His life a ransom for many” (Mt 20:28). It is great because it saves a sinner from sin, the greatest of evils; and it is great because the whole person is saved, soul and body – the soul, worth more than the whole world, is then safe for ever; and the members of the body, which are servants of sin, become servants of righteousness. It is great also because it is an “everlasting salvation” (Is 45:17). When someone is saved from a deadly disease, that deliverance does not go on for ever, the disease may strike again and certainly death will come finally, but this is an everlasting salvation, the sinner being saved now and for ever.

Also it is wonderfully great because each of the persons of the Godhead is involved in it; God the Father has purposed salvation, God the Son in our nature has purchased salvation, and God the Holy Spirit applies salvation to poor sinners. Truly, “salvation is of the Lord” (Jon 2:9). The redeemed in glory have salvation as the theme of their song: “Salvation unto our God which sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb” (Rev 7:10). All glory be to Him for procuring this great salvation!

Well, what does this salvation mean to ourselves this evening? Are you neglecting the great salvation? O take heed to the solemn warning, “How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?” It is imperative for us to attend to the salvation of our souls, especially that we would believe, for we cannot be saved unless we believe – as our text says, “To save them that

believe”. Of course, the *believing* that is spoken of here is believing in Christ the Saviour. This believing is more than a historical belief (we all believe that there was such a historical person as Jesus Christ); it is believing in the sense of *trusting* in Christ. So *The Shorter Catechism* teaches, “Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon Him alone for salvation, as He is offered to us in the gospel”. It is absolutely necessary for us to have this faith, which is the gift of God. We read in Scripture, “Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord”. Blessed indeed is the person – man or woman, boy or girl – who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Ethiopian eunuch, for example, was blessed with this great blessing of faith. He was in his chariot reading in the prophecy of Isaiah about the sufferings of the Saviour, but he did not understand what he was reading. His question to Philip the Evangelist was, “Of whom speaketh the prophet this? Of himself, or some other man?” (Acts 8:34). Philip responded by preaching to him Jesus, using content from that wonderful part of Isaiah’s prophecy: “He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth” (Is 53:7). The preaching of Philip was blessed to the man; the truth about the blessed Messiah was applied to his soul by the Holy Ghost, and he believed. “Here is water”, he said; “what doth hinder me to be baptised? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God” (Acts 8:36-37). What a great blessing came to the Ethiopian that day when he was brought to believe!

The Philippian jailor was similarly enabled to believe. How dreadful was the apprehension he had of the condemnation of God; therefore his urgent question was, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved” (Acts 16:30-31). Paul preached “the word of the Lord” to him and his household, and the truth was blessed to him and them. They believed, became true Christians and were baptized.

In the same chapter, we see that Lydia too was blessed with faith. The Lord opened her heart, she drank in the preaching of Paul and she believed. After she was baptized, she said to Paul and his companions: “If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house” (Acts 16:15). In other words, Since you have judged me to be a believer and have shown it by baptizing me, come into my house. They did not demur; she was indeed reckoned a believer. So we find again and again in the Bible that the one who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ is truly blessed; all is well with that person for time and eternity.

2. The preaching by which people are saved. How may we attain to this believing in Christ? One answer is that we are to make use of the preaching

of the gospel, the means which God has appointed so that we would have faith and be saved. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom 10:17). Our text emphatically states the fact that "it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe". This fact is confirmed by the cases of the Ethiopian eunuch (to whom Philip *preached* Jesus), Lydia ("who attended to the things *spoken* of Paul"), and the Philippian jailor (to whom Paul and his companions *spoke* "the word of the Lord").

To preach is simply to proclaim as a herald. Usually when a proclamation is made, the matter proclaimed is of importance. Certainly that is so with this great proclamation; the all-important matter proclaimed is the gospel (the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ, by believing in Him). "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mk 16:15). True preaching of the gospel necessarily includes showing the sinner his need of being saved, which in turn means preaching about sin. Alas, the subject of sin is absent from much preaching today. Those who are sent by the Lord to preach the gospel know that they must preach "repentance toward God" and must obey the Scripture injunction, "Show My people their transgression" (Is 58:1). Otherwise sinners will be ignorant of their need of salvation.

We see also from the Bible that the preaching of the gospel of salvation includes explaining, for example, the beginning of the salvation of a poor sinner. That wonderful beginning is found in this precious statement: "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Eph 2:8). The completion of salvation is also to be included. Salvation is not only begun but also completed, as is shown by the verse, "He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved" (Mt 24:13) – that is, his salvation shall be gloriously completed. A sinner saved by grace is made perfect in holiness at the moment of death and he, as to his soul, immediately enters into the glory of Immanuel's land.

The essence of the gospel is the cross; therefore the cross is to be the main content of the preaching of the gospel. We read about "the preaching of the cross" in verse 18. Also in verse 23 Paul asserts, "We preach Christ crucified," and in the second verse of the next chapter he adds, "I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." The matter to be principally preached is that Christ Jesus, having come into the world to save lost sinners, had to die an unspeakably dreadful death, a shameful death, a painful death, and that in dying on the cross he pacified God's wrath against His people. O how astonishing that He willingly and lovingly "endured the cross, despising the shame"!

It is especially the call to come to Christ that must be at the forefront of true preaching. Christ Himself, the unsurpassed preacher, called to sinners:

“Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Mt 11:28). So ambassadors of Christ must echo and extend that invitation, and press it on poor sinners: “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price” (Is 55:1). It is vitally important, in preaching, that gospel invitations are extended to poor sinners as sinners, and that Christ is freely offered to them.

Our text implies that such preaching is foolishness to some, and verse 18 explicitly states that “the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness”. We are specifically informed by the context who those were to whom such preaching was foolishness; for example, the Greeks and especially their philosophers and wise men, the disputers who gloried in showing their brilliance, as they imagined, by their arguments.

Today, there are very many to whom the preaching of the cross is foolishness. We think in particular of those atheists who are clamorous in their protestations against preaching the gospel and teaching the Bible to young people. One sees it also in the scientific world. Yes, there are godly scientists; but how many scientists are deluded by the theory of evolution! The gospel is foolishness to such people; it is absurd to them that anyone will be saved now and for ever by believing in a Man who was crucified some 2000 years ago. Needless to say, such an attitude to the gospel is wicked. Even some professed teachers of Christianity claim that penal substitution – Christ on the cross taking the place of His people and enduring the wrath of God due to them for their sins and thus satisfying divine justice for them – is a fanciful and abhorrent idea.

When we examine the attitudes of those to whom the gospel is foolishness, we find that their mindset is really according to the wisdom of this world. Mere human wisdom is useless when it comes to knowing God, as our text states, “The world by wisdom knew not God”. Yes, there is in the minds of many non-Christians some notion of a supreme being, especially when they consider the glories of creation. But as to knowing God savingly as the God of salvation – the God who is merciful and ready to forgive – they can never attain to that knowledge by mere human wisdom.

Again, we ask the question, What hope is there for fallen mankind; for human beings in their state of sin, in their state of guilt before God and facing eternal judgement? Here is the answer of our text: “It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe”. And, of course, immediately before that phrase we have the words, “After that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God,” which we understand to mean that God, in His wise governing of the world, gave that revelation of Himself which

the wisdom of this world could never attain to. In His Word, He gave a revelation of Himself as, among other things, the God of salvation. While we are therefore to read the Word, it is “especially the preaching of the Word,” as the Shorter Catechism says, which the Spirit of God makes “an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners”. “The Lord gave the word”, we read in Psalm 68:11; “great was the company of those that published [or preached] it.” Here is what our text calls “the foolishness of preaching”.

When it describes preaching as foolishness, it is not suggesting for a moment that preaching itself is foolish, but it is alluding to how those who have only the wisdom of this world, and are wise in their own conceits, regard the preaching of the gospel – it is foolishness to them, especially its content. Yes, they regard the act of preaching itself as foolish, but in this particular verse it is the content of the preaching – that is, “the cross” – which is foolishness to them. On the other hand, to believers the preaching of the cross is the very opposite of foolishness – it is the power of God, as verse 18 says, “The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.” Then in verse 24 we read, “But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God”.

Well, friends, it is a great privilege for us to have the preaching of the cross, which is “the power of God and the wisdom of God”. It is one of the great gifts of the risen Christ, who provided apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. What a priceless privilege is given to a person, a community, a church through the pure preaching of the Word! Only that will effect a transformation in individuals and in the church. We read in Psalm 110 about the Lord sending the rod of His strength, or power, out of Zion – figurative language for ordaining the preaching of the gospel, the rod of His power. This is the powerful means appointed by God for saving sinners.

On the Day of Pentecost, for example, Peter preached to the people about the Saviour: “Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that He should be holden of it” (Acts 2:23-24). Peter preached not only about their sin but also about Christ crucified, and His name as the only name under heaven among men whereby they must be saved. So that day there were added to the Church about 3000 souls.

We see the power of the preaching of the gospel also in the church at Thessalonica. “Our gospel came not unto you in word only,” said Paul, “but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance” (1 Th 1:5), with the result that they turned to God from idols to serve the living and true

God. Such is the wonderful power of the preaching of the gospel, although the world calls it foolishness. Again, look at the church in Corinth. Paul had been preaching there for 18 months and the result was a mighty transformation of many individuals. We read in 1 Corinthians 6 that Paul, having listed various kinds of gross sinners, then says, “And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (v 11). Was that not a wonderful instance of the power of the gospel?

The preaching of the gospel is powerful only through the power of God the Holy Spirit. Therefore we should plead with the Lord, who has sent to us the word of salvation and preachers of the Word, that He would also accompany the preaching of the Word with the power of His Holy Spirit. On the Day of Pentecost, there was a wonderful working of the Holy Ghost from heaven, so that thousands were converted under the preaching of the Word. In the case of Lydia, it was the Holy Spirit who opened her heart to receive the truth preached. The ineffectiveness of human power is indicated by the message sent to Zerubbabel: “Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts” (Zec 4:6).

In conclusion, let us be pleading at the throne of grace for the presence and power of the Holy Spirit here and in all our congregations and wherever the Word is truly preached, so that precious souls would be saved and believers sanctified. We are encouraged by the words of Christ to pray for this indispensable gift: “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?” (Lk 11:13).

Luther and the Reformation¹

18. Philip Melancthon

J H Merle d'Aubigné

While Luther was still afraid of being compelled to appear at Rome, an unexpected event brought consolation to his heart. He needed a friend to whom he could pour out his sorrows, and whose faithful affection would comfort him in times of dejection. God gave him such a friend in Melancthon.

¹This is a further abridged extract from d'Aubigné's *The History of the Reformation in the Sixteenth Century*, vol 1, continued from last month. That article included Luther's thoughts about the Pope in 1518. Luther's eyes still needed to be opened further so that he might see that the corruption of the papal system went to the very top. The Pope was now taking steps to oppose Luther; he was in serious danger.

George Schwartzerd was a skilful master-armourer in the small town of Bretten. On 14 February 1497, his wife bore him a son, who was named Philip; he afterwards became famous under the name of Melancthon. George, who was highly esteemed by various princes, was a man of great integrity. Frequently he would refuse from purchasers the price they offered him; and if he found they were poor, would compel them to take back their money. It was his habit to leave his bed at midnight and offer a fervent prayer upon his knees. If the morning came without having done so, he was dissatisfied with himself all the rest of the day.

Philip was only 10 when his father died. Two days before he expired, George called his son to his bedside and exhorted him to have the fear of God constantly before his eyes. "I foresee," he said, "that terrible tempests are about to shake the world. I have witnessed great things, but greater still are preparing. May God direct and guide you!"

The lad's grandfather performed a father's duty to Philip, and took him and his brother George into his own house. Shortly after this he engaged John Hungarus to teach the boys. The tutor was an excellent man and later proclaimed the gospel with great energy. He punished the young man for every fault, but with discretion. "It is thus," said Melancthon in 1554, "that he made a scholar of me. He loved me as a son, I loved him as a father; and we shall meet, I hope, in heaven."

Philip was remarkable for the excellence of his ability to learn and to explain what he had learned. He could not remain idle and was always looking for someone to discuss with him the things he had heard. With strength of genius he united great gentleness, and thus won the favour of all. On his grandfather's death, the youthful Philip and his brother were sent to school at Pforzheim. Eager in the pursuit of knowledge, Philip made rapid progress in learning, particularly in Greek, of which he was passionately fond.

Melancthon went to the University of Heidelberg at the age of 12, and here he began to slake his ardent thirst for knowledge. He took his bachelor's degree at 14. The Holy Scriptures especially engaged his attention. Those who frequented the church of Tübingen had remarked that he frequently held a book in his hands, which he was occupied in reading between the services. This unknown volume appeared larger than the prayer books, and a report was circulated that Philip used to read heathen authors during those intervals. But the suspected book proved to be a copy of the Holy Scriptures, printed shortly before at Basle. All his life he continued this study with the most unceasing application. He always carried this precious volume with him. Rejecting the empty systems of the schoolmen,² he adhered to the plain

²Teachers of philosophy and theology at European universities in the Middle Ages.

word of the gospel. Nevertheless, Melancthon shared in the errors of his age. "I shudder," he observed at an advanced period of his life, "when I think of the honour I paid to images, while I was yet a papist."

In 1514, he was made doctor of philosophy and then began to teach; he was 17. The charm that he imparted to his lessons, formed a most striking contrast to the tasteless method which the schoolmen and, above all, the monks had pursued till then. Agreeable in conversation, elegant in his manners, beloved by all who knew him, he soon acquired great authority and a solid reputation in the learned world. It was at this time that the Elector Frederick decided to invite some distinguished scholar to the University of Wittenberg, as professor of ancient languages. Melancthon was recommended to Frederick, who foresaw the celebrity that this young man would confer on an institution so dear to him.

In this invitation Melancthon acknowledged a call from God. At his departure the university was filled with sorrow; yet it contained individuals who were jealous of him. He left his native place exclaiming, "The Lord's will be done!" He was then 21. Melancthon arrived in Wittenberg on 25 August 1518, two days after Pope Leo X had signed the letter to the elector.³

The first impression Melancthon made on the Wittenberg professors did not correspond with their expectations. They saw a young man who appeared younger than he really was, of small stature, and timid. Neither Luther, whom he first got to know, nor his colleagues entertained any great hopes of him when they saw his youth, his shyness, and his diffidence. On August 29, four days after his arrival, he delivered his first lecture. All the university was assembled. This lad, as Luther calls him, spoke such elegant Latin and showed so much learning and so sound a judgement that all his hearers were struck with admiration.

When the speech was finished, all crowded round him with congratulations, but no one felt more joy than Luther. He hastened to impart to his friends the sentiments that filled his heart. "Melancthon", he wrote to Spalatin, "delivered, four days after his arrival, so learned and so beautiful a discourse that everyone listened with astonishment and admiration. We soon recovered from the prejudices excited by his stature and appearance; we now praise and admire his eloquence . . . But I fear that his delicate frame will be unable to support our mode of living, and that we shall be unable to keep him long on account of the smallness of his salary."

Melancthon began immediately to lecture on the Epistle of Paul to Titus. He was full of ardour. "I will make every effort", he wrote to Spalatin, "to conciliate the favour of all those in Wittenberg who love learning and virtue."

³See the previous article.

Four days after his inauguration, Luther wrote again to Spalatin: "I most particularly recommend to you the very learned and very amiable Grecian, Philip. His lecture room is always full. All the theologians in particular go to hear him. He is making every class – upper, lower and middle – begin to read Greek."

Melancthon responded to Luther's affection. He soon found in him a kindness of disposition, a strength of mind, a courage, a discretion, that he had never found in any man. He venerated him. "If there is anyone," he said, "whom I dearly love, and whom I embrace with my whole heart, it is Martin Luther." Thus Luther and Melancthon met; they were friends until death. We cannot too much admire the goodness and wisdom of God in bringing together two men so different, and yet so necessary, to one another. Luther possessed warmth, vigour and strength; Melancthon clearness, discretion, and mildness. Luther gave energy to Melancthon, Melancthon moderated Luther. If Luther had been without Melancthon, perhaps the torrent would have overflowed its banks; Melancthon, when Luther was taken from him by death, hesitated and gave way, even where he should not have yielded. Luther did much by power; Melancthon perhaps did no less by following a gentler method. Both were upright, open-hearted, generous; both ardently loved the Word of eternal life and obeyed it with a fidelity and devotion that governed their whole lives.

Melancthon's arrival at Wittenberg effected a revolution not only in that university, but in the whole of Germany. The mild spirit of the gospel animated his meditations, and in his lectures the driest pursuits were clothed with a surpassing grace that captivated his hearers. A new manner of teaching and of studying began with Melancthon. "Thanks to him," says an illustrious German historian, "Wittenberg became the school of the nation."

It was indeed highly important that a man who knew Greek thoroughly should teach in that university, where the new developments of theology called upon masters and pupils to study in their original language the earliest documents of the Christian faith. From this time Luther zealously applied himself to the task. The meaning of a Greek word, of which he had been ignorant until then, suddenly cleared up his theological ideas. What consolation and what joy he felt when he saw, for instance, that a Greek word which, according to the Roman Church, signifies a *penance* – a satisfaction required by the Church, a human expiation – really meant a *transformation* or conversion of the heart! A thick mist suddenly rolled away from his eyes. The two significations given to this word suffice of themselves to characterise the two Churches.

The impulse Melancthon gave to Luther in the translation of the Bible is

one of the most remarkable circumstances of the friendship between these great men. As early as 1517, Luther had made some attempts at translation. He had procured as many Greek and Latin books as were within his reach. And now, with the aid of Philip, he applied himself to his task with fresh energy. Luther compelled Melancthon to share in his researches; consulted him on the difficult passages. And the work, which was destined to be one of Luther's great labours, advanced more safely and more speedily.

Melancthon became acquainted with the new theology. The beautiful and profound doctrine of justification by faith filled him with astonishment and joy; but he received with independence the system taught by Luther and moulded it to the particular form of his mind. Although he was only 21, he was one of those precocious geniuses who attain early to a full possession of all their powers, and who think for themselves from the very first.

Preaching Christ¹

1. Why Is It the Great Duty of Ministers?

Thomas Brooks

Ephesians 3:8. *Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles, the unsearchable riches of Christ.*

I shall, by divine assistance, say something on two observations from these words. The first is: *It is the great duty of preachers to preach Jesus Christ to the people.* I shall prove it, and then open it up to you.

In Acts 5:42, "And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach" what? "Jesus Christ". So in Acts 3:20, "He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you". So in 2 Corinthians 4:5, "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake" (compare 1 Cor 1:23, 24). So in Acts 9:20. As soon as Paul was converted, "straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God" (compare Acts 2:22, 4:2).

Now for the opening up of the point, I shall only attempt two things. (1.) To give you reasons *why* it is the great duty of ministers to preach Christ to the people. (2.) To show you *how* they are to preach Christ to the people. This will be the main point.

I confess this a very useful point in these days, when many men preach

¹Taken, with editing, from Brooks' *Works*, vol 3. Brooks was one of the better-known Puritans.

anything, indeed everything, but a crucified Jesus. Christians, remember this: as it is your duty to take heed *how* you hear, so it is as much your duty to take heed *who* you hear. There are many who count and call themselves ministers of Christ and yet have neither skill nor will to preach Jesus Christ – to exalt and lift up Jesus Christ in lip or life, in word or work. These will have to make a sad reckoning at last.

1. Why it is the great duty of ministers to preach *Christ* to the people.

[1.] *Because that is the only way to save them and win them to Jesus Christ.* There is no other way of winning and saving souls but by preaching Christ to the people: “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:10-12). You may preach this and that, and a thousand things, to the people and yet never better them, never win them. It is only preaching Christ that allures and draws souls to Christ: “This is life eternal, to know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent” (Jn 17:3).

Nothing melts the hearts of sinners, or wins their hearts, like the preaching of the Lord Jesus. It is true that the teaching of this and that opinion may please many a man’s fancy, but it is only the preaching of Christ that changes the heart, that conquers it, that turns it. When Peter preached a crucified Christ, 3000 souls were converted at once (Acts 2:41). If Christ was preached more, men would be more enamoured with Him. He is only precious to them that hear of Him and that believe in Him. Christ is in all respects incomparable; therefore, as you would honour Him, and win others, make Him more and more known to the world (1 Pet 2:7).

[2.] *Because it is the choicest and the chiefest way to endear Christ to poor souls.* This brings Christ and the soul together, and this keeps Christ and the soul together. Nothing endears Christ to the soul like this. We see, by woeful experience, Christ neglected, despised, scorned and trampled on by most; and no wonder, for many preach themselves more than Christ, and they preach men more than Christ, and their own notions and impressions more than Christ. Surely Christ owes but little to such ministers and, I think, the souls of men owe them as little. O that these ministers were so wise as to consider it and lay it to heart! Surely a real Christian does not care for anything that does not have something of Christ in it. There is a strange, strong energy or forcibleness in hearing Christ and His beauties and excellencies displayed and discovered.

The daughters of Jerusalem, by hearing the Church presenting Christ in so high a character, and by describing and painting him in such lively colours, are so enchanted and inflamed that they would be at any pains to seek Him if they might only know where to find Him. When Christ is set forth in His

glories, with much affection and admiration, others fall in love with Him (as you may see by comparing Song 5:10ff with 6:1).

[3.] *Because the preaching up of Christ is the only way to preach down Antichrist, or whatever goes against Christ.* Some would have Antichrist brought down; they would have him brought down root and branch, but there is no such way for his total and final overthrow as the preaching of Christ; for the more the glory, fullness, perfection and excellency of Christ is made known, the more the horrid vileness and matchless wickedness of the man of sin will be discovered and abhorred. “And then shall that Wicked [one] be revealed” (2 Th 2:3,4,7-10). The Greek word properly signifies a lawless, yokeless, masterless monster; one that holds himself subject to no law. Pope Nicholas I said that he was “above law”, because Constantine styled the pope God; and most of the popes were of the same opinion.

“Whom He shall consume.” The Greek word signifies to consume by little and little, till a thing come to nothing.

“With the spirit of His mouth”; that is, with the evidence and glory of His word in the mouths of His messengers. The ministers of the Word are as a mouth whereby the Lord breathes out that glorious, mighty and everlasting gospel which shall, by degrees, bruise Antichrist and all his adherents, and break them in sunder like a rod of iron.

When Jesus Christ comes to be lifted up in a nation, in a city, in a town, in a family – indeed, in any heart – then all idols without and within will fall before the power, presence and glory of Jesus. Since Luther began to lift up Christ in the gospel, what a deal of ground has Antichrist lost! And he will lose more and more, as Christ comes to be more and more manifested and lifted up in the chariot of His Word. Many in these days, that speak much against Antichrist, have much of Antichrist within them. And certainly there is no such way to cast him out of men’s hearts, and out of the world, as preaching Christ and making Him known, as exalting or lifting up Christ in the gospel of grace.²

[4.] *Because otherwise they bring upon themselves the blood of souls.* There is no other way for them to avoid bringing the blood of men’s and women’s souls upon themselves but by preaching Christ to them. Now a man would be better to have all the blood of the world upon him than the blood of one soul. The blood of souls cries loudest and wounds deepest. The lowest, darkest and hottest place in hell will be the sad and dreadful portion of those on whose skirts the blood of souls shall be found at last. Hence that

²Bellarmino [the leading Roman Catholic controversialist of the time] confesses, to his great grief, that ever since the Lutherans declared the pope to be antichrist, his kingdom has not only not increased but every day has decreased and decayed more and more.

passage of Paul: “Woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel” (1 Cor 9:16). The motto that should be written on preachers’ study doors, on their walls, on all the books they look at, on the beds they lie on and on the seats they sit on should be this: The blood of souls, the blood of souls.

The soul is the better, the nobler part of man; it bears most of the image of God; it is capable of union and communion with God. Christ sweat for it and bled for it; therefore woe to those merchants that make merchandise of the souls of men. It was a comfort and an honour to Paul that he kept himself from the blood of souls (Acts 20:25-27). He appeals to the elders of Ephesus that they were witnesses that he was “pure from the blood of all men”. Paul had held out Jesus Christ in His natures, in His names, in His offices and in all His excellences and perfections, and so frees himself from the blood of all men. And ministers can no way secure themselves from the blood of souls but by preaching up and living out a crucified Jesus.

[5.] *Because the preaching of Christ contributes most to their comfort here and to their reward hereafter.* When Luther was dying, this was no small joy and comfort to his spirit: “Thee, O Lord, have I known, Thee have I loved, Thee have I taught, Thee have I trusted, and now into Thy hand I commend my spirit”. There can be no greater joy to a minister than, by preaching Christ, to win souls to Christ: “For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming. For ye are our glory and joy” (1 Th 2:19,20). They that by preaching Christ win souls to Him shall shine as the stars in the firmament (Dan 12:3). Every soul won to Christ is a glorious pearl added to a preacher’s crown. “When the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory” (1 Pet 5:4). A crown implies perpetuity, plenty, and dignity, the height of human ambition.

Without doubt, those ministers shall be high in heaven who make it their heaven to hold forth Christ and to win souls to Christ; who are willing to be anything, to be nothing, that Christ may be all in all to poor souls.

Union with Christ¹

1. In the Decree of Election and the Covenant of Grace

Rev I D MacDonald

Introduction. The doctrine of union with Christ is one of the great mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, and blessed indeed are they to whom it is given to know it spiritually and experimentally. Generally speaking, union with Christ may be defined as that close relation which exists between

¹The first part of a paper given at the 2021 Theological Conference.

the Son of God as Mediator and elect sinners, whereby they are joined to Him, and become one with Him as members of His mystical body. The most frequent description of it throughout Scripture is that of marriage union. "This is a great mystery" says Paul, speaking of union between Christ and the Church as comparable to a marriage union. It is an unspeakable blessing in itself, as well as a necessary foundation for the bestowal of all the other blessings of salvation. For sinners to come into so close a relation with the Son of God that they may be described as being "in Him" and He "in them" is more than can be said of holy angels or of man in innocence.

To a great extent, the doctrine was "hid from ages and from generations" (Col 1:26) throughout the Old Testament dispensation, and only with the revelation of the gospel in New Testament light was it then "made manifest to His saints: to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col 1:27). Nevertheless, early rays of this glorious doctrine shone upon the world from the very beginning. To give but one example, the great promise given to Abraham in Genesis 22:18, "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed", where union with Christ is revealed to be the way a sinner comes to participate in the blessings of salvation. It is not merely "by thy seed", but "in thy seed", meaning in union to Him, that sinners were to be blessed. The Church was later taught to sing, "Men shall be blessed in Him, and blessed all nations shall Him call" (Ps 72:17, metrical version).

Yet in comparison with the full light of the New Testament revelation, Scripture tells us that this doctrine was hidden from these ages and generations. There is very little express teaching on it in the three "Synoptic Gospels", but floods of light shine on the doctrine in the Gospel of John, and many of the Epistles.

The purpose of this paper is to trace out four distinct phases of the formation of the union between Christ and His people, and to show their connections. Given the constraints of time, the treatment cannot but be rather superficial. The first of these is "election union"; the second is "covenantal union"; the third is "natural union", or the union of Christ to the nature of the elect in His incarnation; and the fourth is "spiritual union", which is the crowning aspect of the union, when the sinner is united to Christ by the Holy Spirit and faith, and the most prominent in how the doctrine is commonly perceived. John Murray emphasises these distinct phases in his treatment of the doctrine of union with Christ, and he says, "It is not simply a step in the application of redemption; when viewed, according to the teaching of Scripture in its broader aspects, it underlies every step of the application of re-

demption. Union with Christ is really the central truth of the whole doctrine of salvation not only in its application but also in its once-for-all accomplishment in the finished work of Christ. Indeed the whole process of salvation has its origin in one phase of union with Christ, and salvation has in view the realisation of other phases of union with Christ.”²

1. Election union: union in the decree of election. Here is the first rising of the union. It may be considered as the love of the Father choosing out a bride for Christ from among the fallen children of Adam. Election is according to grace and who can measure the love which chose sinners to salvation as the bride of Christ? The Father is said to have “chosen us in Him [that is, in Christ] before the foundation of the world”, forming what some call an “election-union” between Christ and His people. The same decree of election which chose sinners to eternal life, also chose their Redeemer who is therefore described as God’s “elect” (Is 42:1), “who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world” (1 Pet 1:20). While it is true that, in a view of the order of the decrees, the provision of a Redeemer may be viewed as distinct from, and indeed flowing from, the decree to save the elect, yet this may not preclude such a view as Thomas Goodwin expresses when he says, “As in the womb, head and members are not conceived apart, but together, as having relation to each other; so were we and Christ (as making up one mystical body to God) formed together in the eternal womb of election”.³

Yet the nature of the union formed in the decree of election is not to be stressed to the neglect of the covenant of grace, and there is much weight in Hugh Martin’s comments on this part of the subject: “It is not enough to consider this oneness [between Christ and His people] as decreed; we must consider it as specially and expressly covenanted: not merely as decreed by the sovereign authority of the Godhead, but covenanted between the eternal Father and the eternal Son”.⁴

The decree is not to be confounded with the covenant of grace in any aspect of theology. For persons of the Trinity to enter into covenant with each other is more than the expression of their eternal purpose in the decree. According to Thomas Halyburton, the oneness of Christ and His people in the decree, although acknowledged, infers little more “but that in time they shall be actually united”.⁵

2. Covenantal (or Federal) Union: union in the covenant of grace. This phase of union may be considered as the Son of God, the Bridegroom, ap-

²Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, Banner of Truth, 1979, p 161.

³Goodwin, *Works*, vol 1, p 74.

⁴Martin, *The Atonement*, Edinburgh, 1877, pp 43,44.

⁵Halyburton, *Faith and Justification*, James Begg Society, 2000, p 86.

proving of and receiving in love the bride which His Father chose out for Him.

(1) *A representative union.* In this covenant, a distinct relation was formed between the Son of God as Mediator and elect sinners, whereby He became one with them as their Covenant Head. This union was formed by His voluntary agreement to become the Covenant Head and representative of those sinners whom the Father chose to eternal life in the decree of election. In an act of infinite love, the Son of God, in becoming the Mediator of the covenant, received this company of poor sinners to be one with Him. The federal union (as it is commonly called) formed in the covenant of grace is comparable to the union which existed in the covenant of works between Adam, as the head of that covenant, and all mankind descending from Him by ordinary generation.

This comparison of the two covenant heads is entirely Scriptural: “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive” (1 Cor 15:22); “For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous” (Rom 5:19). The federal union may firstly be considered as a “representative union” whereby Christ represented the elect in the making of the covenant with His Father, just as the relation between Adam and all mankind in the covenant of works was by way of representation.

(2) *A legal union.* But more specifically, as Christ became the Surety of those whom He represented, the nature of the federal union takes on a “legal” aspect. In this relation elect sinners were contemplated as “guilty and self-ruined debtors and criminals”, to quote John Brown of Haddington.⁶ In this context, John Gill writes: “In this respect Christ and they are one in the eye of the law, as the bondman [that is, the surety] and debtors are one in a legal sense; so that if one of them pays the debt [the surety is] bound for, it is the same as if the other did”.⁷

By virtue of this union, in law and justice, Christ and His people are viewed as one, just as surety and debtor though distinct may be thought of as one in eye of the law. One important consequence of this aspect of the union is that it forms an initial foundation for the imputation of the sins of the elect to Christ. Without this aspect, it would not have been just for God to impute their sin to Christ, nor could His subsequent sufferings and obedience have been treated in justice as performed on their behalf.

(3) *The connection with the doctrine of the atonement.* This leads us to notice that the work of Christ in the fullness of time in purchasing re-

⁶*The Systematic Theology of John Brown of Haddington*, Christian Focus Publications and Reformation Heritage Books, 2002, p 337.

⁷John Gill, *Body of Divinity*, London, 1769, p 327.

demption cannot be considered without contemplating this prior federal union. It follows that the extent of the atonement depends upon the extent of the federal union. Christ only engaged to satisfy for the sins of the elect, so that the purchase of redemption is limited to those who were in federal union with Him. Smeaton brings this point to light in his masterly work on the atonement when he says, "I have only to advert to the unity of the Surety and of those whom He represented, to prove the extent of the atonement. It is a unity or oneness so close, that we may affirm of the second man [Christ], as well as of the first [Adam], 'we were all that one man'. The thought that lies at the foundation of our participation of the federal blessings, is union, or oneness."⁸

Trust, Help and Praise¹

John Macfarlane

Psalm 28:7. *The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in Him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise Him.*

Many and great as the necessities of the believer are, he finds in his covenant God a supply for them all. A sense of need, however, expressing itself in importunate supplication, comes before saving grace is given. This expression of exultation and joy is preceded by earnest prayer. It brings before us what God is to the believer, the believer's reliance on God, and the resolution he forms in consequence of the aid he receives.

The Lord is my strength and my shield. It is evident, before such language can be sincerely and intelligently adopted, that he who uses it must have views that are very different to the views of most people, both concerning God and concerning oneself. With the aversion to God which is natural to the fallen heart, His almighty power is regarded with alarm rather than with confidence, because our guilty fears suggest that this power may be exerted in punishing us rather than in protecting us. With the self-confidence which we naturally entertain, we imagine we can ward off danger with our own arm, or that at any rate we have received powers which, when suitably exercised, will serve to ensure our safety.

But when the love of God has been shed abroad in the heart by the Holy

⁸George Smeaton, *The Atonement According to Christ and His Apostles*, Sovereign Grace Publishers, p 179.

¹Taken with editing from *The Christian's Daily Companion*. Macfarlane (1798-1875) was at this time parish minister of Colesie, in Fife.

Ghost given to us – when brought to feel that this God is our God – we rejoice in all His perfections. We rejoice in His justice, because it is satisfied; in His truth, because it is pledged for our well-being; in His power, because He is omnipotent to save. And, when brought to see that in us there “dwelleth no good thing”, that we are at once sinful and helpless, we are glad to betake ourselves to the rock that is higher than we are. The one class look on God with suspicion and on themselves with complacency; the other class regard God with confidence and themselves with self-abasement.

Thrice happy is he who, conscious of his weakness, can truly say, “The Lord is my strength”. He has a prevailing strength, for greater is the Lord, who is for him, than all they that are against him. He has a present strength, for “God is a . . . present help in trouble”. He has a perpetual strength, for the Lord will never leave nor forsake him. God will perfect his strength in weakness. “Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”

Nor less blessed is he who can truly say, “The Lord is . . . my shield”. He has an ample shield which leaves no part of the spiritual warrior unprotected; an impenetrable shield which no weapon can pierce, a changeless shield, the qualities of which remain unaltered by the progress of time, untouched by the hand of decay.

Yet is it to be remembered that the support in the season of weakness and the safety in the hour of conflict which the believer enjoys, correspond with his reliance on God. “*My heart trusted in Him, and I am helped.*” The language is expressive. It denotes a dependence at once sincere and affectionate, the offspring of knowledge and of love.

What is the state of mind of the one whose experience is here recorded? It is not that vague and general reliance which is so often expressed in a time of adversity, or in the prospect of death, by those who conceive of the Almighty as such a one as themselves, and array Him in their imaginations with the qualities of mildness without moral excellence. The heart that trusts in Him has been opened to receive the testimony which Scripture bears to the spiritual character of its Author. This heart does not place its reliance upon an unknown God. The heart that trusts in Him has been brought into a measure of conformity to His image and acquiescence in His will. Its reliance is placed on the God it loves. Its trust is thus so far enlightened, cordial, cheerful, entire. And in proportion as it is so, it finds help. When such scriptural confidence is wrought in the heart, it is the forerunner of safety and repose. “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee; because he trusteth in Thee.”

Thus attuned to the exercise of thanksgiving, the rejoicing heart exclaims,

“*With my song will I praise Him*”. And this is a song which does not consist in the mere language of celebration. It is not the effusion of gratitude which, passing away, leaves no trace behind it – like a dying echo among the munitions of rocks with which divine power has surrounded the soul, or along the mountain sides of the divine benefits. The believer desires that his whole life should become a song of praise to his fortress and deliverer, his buckler and the horn of his salvation. From a heart enlarged and purified by the emotions of grateful love, he desires that there should flow forth the streams of a holy obedience, in all the channels of Christian well-doing.

Jesus and the Woman of Samaria (9)¹

George Hutcheson

John 4:21. *Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe Me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.*

1. It is great wisdom, in discovering of errors and false ways, so to point them out that those who are misled are brought away from them – not to another way not much better, but to the right way. Therefore Christ takes pains, in the first place, not only to draw her off Samaritanism, but from the Jewish way also – which was to be abolished – to Christianity.

2. There was a time wherein it was lawful and ordained that the public worship of God should be at one certain place, at Jerusalem, and that they should find out Christ under shadows. For while He says, “The hour cometh” wherein it shall not be so, He implies that it was so before and that lawfully.

3. God may lawfully change the way of His worship when He pleases, seeing it is only because He appoints it that anything is worship and therefore lawful in it. Therefore Christ foretells the Lord’s changing of the Jewish way of worship.

4. After Christ’s coming and death, the public worship of God is no longer ascribed to any certain place or nation, nor to be performed in types and shadows. So much this assertion teaches us: “The hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship” (compared with v 23; see 1 Tim 2:8). It then became lawful to have gospel worship at Jerusalem, as the apostles had, but not there more than in another place; and many Jews were Christians and worshippers of God – not only they but Gentiles also. This partition-wall [between Jew and Gentile] began to be abolished by Christ’s doctrine in His ministry, and was quite abolished of

¹These are the “Doctrines”, or lessons, as edited, that Hutcheson (1626-74) draws from this verse, in his *Exposition of the Gospel of John*. Continued from last month.

right by His death, though the Jews had an indulgence for their way, till the honourable burial of the ceremonies in the destruction of the temple, which was the public place where most of these ceremonies, and the most solemn of them, were acted and gone about, and were restricted to it by divine institution.

5. True worship, as it must have God's command, so it must be performed to Him as a Father, apprehended to be so through Christ, and must flow from a filial affection. Therefore it is called a worshipping of "the Father", implying the interest and affection which worshippers do at least pretend to have.

6. Such is the power of Christ accompanying gospel dispensations, as will not only discover the ill of contrary ways, but actually make them give place to those of the gospel. So much are we taught when Christ assures not only that we should not, but shall not, so worship; and thus we have seen it accomplished.

7. Men are ordinarily so rooted in their opinions and errors which they have drunk in that it is very hard to drive them from them. Therefore must Christ press this: "Woman, believe Me".

8. As the way of salvation must be taken up by faith, and not by sense or reason, so Christ is worthy to be believed, and His word is a sufficient warrant for faith, however little He is credited. For He says, "Woman, believe Me".

9. Christ not only reveals ground sufficient for our faith, but such is His tenderness and respect to our well-being, that He will even entreat us to give Him credence, and plead with us to discharge our duty for our own good. Therefore He entreats, "Woman, believe Me".

Book Reviews¹

The Glorious Feast of the Gospel, Christ's Gracious Invitation and Royal Entertainment of Believers, by Richard Sibbes, published by the Banner of Truth Trust in their Puritan paperback series, 184 pages, £5.50.

Sibbes lived from 1577 to 1635 and was one of the better-known Puritan ministers in England. He had preaching responsibilities in Cambridge and London, as well as being the head of a college at Cambridge University, during a time when a primary responsibility of a university was to prepare men for the ministry.

C H Spurgeon is quoted in praise of Sibbes: "He scatters pearls and diamonds with both hands". And the publishers state that "strong thoughts, simple sentences, the knowledge of the Bible and the human heart, and a

¹The books reviewed here may be obtained from the Free Presbyterian Bookroom.

sure pastoral touch, are here revealed in a sustained concentration on the glory and grace of God in Christ”.

The book contains nine sermons on Isaiah 25:6-9, a passage which begins by referring to “a feast of fat things” which “the Lord of hosts [shall] make unto all people”. In an introductory piece, “To the Reader”, three Puritan ministers who outlived Sibbes, tell those who take up this book that this is “an admirable feast indeed; wherein Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, is the bridegroom, where every believer . . . is not only a guest, but the spouse of Christ, and the bride at this wedding supper. Here Jesus Christ is the master of the feast, and the cheer and provision too.” They are describing the gospel feast, and Sibbes’ sermons reprinted in this book should be a feast for the spiritually-minded reader.

Sibbes points out that God uses earthly things, such as a feast, to be pictures of heavenly things, because “our apprehensions are so weak and narrow, that we cannot be acquainted with spiritual things, but by the inward working of the Spirit of the Almighty”. He explains that “this ‘mountain’”, in the text, “is the place where this feast is made, even ‘Mount Zion’; which is a type and figure of the Church, called in Scripture, ‘the holy mountain’. For as mountains are raised high above the earth, so the Church of God is raised in excellency and dignity above all the sorts of mankind.”

Again, Sibbes states, “Those that are invited to this glorious feast are ‘all people’. None excepted, none excluded, that will come to Christ! . . . Both Jews and Gentiles, all are invited, whosoever they are.” (Acts 10:15 is referenced here, but in common with other scriptures Sibbes has quoted, it is not in the words of the authorised version. He may have been quoting from memory or giving its general sense.) Sibbes says of “the good things in the world: the more one hath of them the less another must have, because they are . . . finite. . . . But in spiritual things all may have the whole It must be the Lord of hosts that can make such a feast as this is, a feast for all people. No other is able to do it.”

Sibbes tells believers: “In a feast all things are of the best; so are the things we have in Christ. Whatsoever favours we have by Christ, they are choice ones. They are the best of everything. Pardon for sin is a pardon of pardons. The title we have for heaven, through Him, is a sure title. The joy we have by Him is the joy of all joys. The liberty and freedom from sin, which He purchased for us by His death, is perfect freedom. The riches of grace we have by Him are the only lasting and durable riches. Take anything that you can, if we have it by Christ, it is of the best.” He goes on to comment on the variety in this feast – a variety that answers all our needs – then he comments on the sufficiency of it. When he speaks of “the fullness of pleasures that are

provided for the Christian”, he insists that “we cannot honour God more than, of His bounty, to receive thankfully what He freely offers”.

We may quote one more of these pearls and diamonds which Sibbes scatters with both his hands: “We cannot honour God more than, of His bounty, to receive thankfully what He freely offers. To taste plentifully in the covenant of grace, of these riches, and joy, and hope of things to come, glorious above all that we are able to think of; I say this is the way to honour God under the gospel of hope. Of all things that are infinite, the more we take, the more we may take, and the more we honour Him that giveth.”

It is to be hoped that this book will have many readers and that they will discover, either for the first time, or even after many years of discovering, how glorious the gospel feast is. The present publishers have, in footnotes, helpfully explained out-of-date words and expressions.

The Works of Thomas Manton (22-volume set), published by the Banner of Truth Trust, hardback, average of approx 500 pages per volume, £330.

Even a few pages of these excellent works are sufficient to incline the reader to agree with Archbishop Ussher’s assessment of Thomas Manton as “one of the best preachers in England”. The 22-volume set of Manton’s works was previously published in 1871, and the Banner of Truth have recently reprinted it. Each of the volumes consists of sermons preached throughout his ministry in the seventeenth century. Some of them are available individually or as part of smaller sets.

Manton must be one of the most accessible of all the Puritans, and his sentences tend to be short and concise. The matter is comparable to “the finest of the wheat”. Christ, and the necessity of saving faith in Him, is a key theme. The lack of true saving faith is shown to be at the root of all sin, and not least because the great “war and conflict in men’s hearts is carried on under these two captains, faith and sense”. Manton demonstrates how fallen man is allured by present pleasures which the natural senses can appreciate, while the unseen and future spiritual blessings of salvation can be comprehended by faith alone. The relation between faith and Christ is compared to that of the bucket to the well, so that our principal care should be to get faith, for “in some sense there is as great a necessity of faith as of Christ. What good would a deep well do us without a bucket? John 4:11, ‘The woman saith unto him, Sir, Thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep;’ so for us to have a deep well and fountain of salvation, when we have nothing to fetch water out of these wells of salvation, what will it stead [advantage] us?”

The author, however, is far from making a Saviour of faith itself, and the

Divine Redeemer Himself is brought to the fore as the great personal object of saving faith. Of His voluntary humiliation as the sinner's Substitute he says, "Our misery cannot hinder us from being glorified with God, since Christ's glory did not hinder him from being abased with men". In addition to being richly doctrinal, the volumes are in parts deeply searching and one cannot help but be struck with the intense piety which these men pressed upon their people, and how they were at great pains to separate the "precious from the vile". Manton says, "We toil for matters of the world, and are never weary; rise up early, go to bed late, eat the bread of sorrow, and all for a little pelf [money]; we make nothing of the hardest labours to accomplish our worldly delights. But now, to pray, read, meditate, perform acts of worship to God, how difficult are these? And how soon do we cry out, What a weariness is it? A little time spent in duty is with a great deal of murmuring; doth not this bewray too much unbelief?"

Our people would do well to immerse themselves in these sorts of works when using up their limited reading time. (Rev) I D MacDonald

The Mystery of Providence, by John J Murray, published by Ettrick Press, paperback, 140 pages, £4.95.

The author describes providence as God "taking care of the future, or rather an ordering of things and events after a predetermined and intelligent plan. It presupposes wisdom to devise and power to execute".

One is not surprised that Mr Murray paid attention to the subject of providence after experiencing hard providences in his own life. He gave four addresses in 2000 on this subject and each address is reproduced as a chapter in this book: (1) the wonder, (2) the working, (3) the beauty and (4) the design of providence. The reader is provided with a straightforward and scriptural discussion of the subject. We may note the subheadings in the second main part of the last chapter: "The design of providence in the life of the Christian". These are: (a) "to make Christ more precious to us", (b) "to make us recognise that God is God", (c) "to make us trusting and contented in our lives", (d) "to prove that our Christianity is genuine", (e) "to prepare us for glory".

The book contains many quotations from other writers and justifiably so, given the many godly men who have written on providence. Not the least of these was John Flavel, whose book on the subject shares the same title as the one under review. When he states that "God's Word and God's works work in harmony", the author uses a quotation from Flavel to back up his statement: "If two men travel along one road, it is agreed that they are likely to go to the same place. Providence and Scripture go all one way and, if they

seem at times to go different or opposite ways, be sure they will meet at the journey's end. There is an agreement between them to do so."

The author cites B B Warfield saying, "A firm faith in the universal providence of God is the solution of all earthly troubles". And the book concludes with a quotation from James Durham: "When the whole contexture and web of providence about the Church and every individual member . . . shall be brought out, and in its full length and breadth spread forth in the midst of all the redeemed – perfected, glorified and triumphant – the company standing around the throne . . . admiring, beholding it, there will not be found one misplaced thread or any wrong-set colour in it all. God's perfect work will be manifested to all at the end of the day."

Protestant View

The Merit of Good Works?

The idea that good works can merit God's blessing is one of the most dangerous errors taught by the Church of Rome. The Council of Trent stated, "If any one shall say that the good works of a justified man are the gift of God, in such a sense that they are not also the good merits of the justified man himself . . . let him be accursed".¹ Rome's position therefore is that God's grace is needed to perform good works but that those works themselves actually merit increase of grace and eternal life. This apparently plausible but erroneous teaching is one of the "doctrines of devils" which is used by Satan to pervert the gospel of salvation in order to ruin souls for eternity. It appeals to our native self-righteousness and takes away from the preciousness of Divine grace and the merit of Christ's righteousness alone for acceptance with God. In so doing, it confounds justification and sanctification and makes salvation dependent on a mixture of the works and grace.

Edward Stillingfleet (1635-99) pointed out the absurdities involved in the Popish teaching. For a work to be truly meritorious, he shows that it must be without defect in order to deserve such a great blessing. But which of the people of God can point to perfection in their obedience, even in their best acts? "Whatever is faulty must be forgiven; whatever needs forgiveness cannot be truly meritorious."² Again, there must be an equality between the good work and the reward it deserves. But this can never be: "Let the acts

¹See "The Canons and Dogmatic Decrees of the Council of Trent", Session 6, Canon 23, in P Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, vol 2, Grand Rapids, 1985 edn, pp 117-18.

²E Stillingfleet, *The Doctrines and Practices of the Church of Rome*, Edinburgh, 1845, p 130.

be of what person soever, or from what principle soever, as long as they are the acts of finite, imperfect creatures, it is impossible there should be any equality, or exact proportion, between them and the eternal favour of God, which is the reward promised". Furthermore, there must be an obligation in justice to give that reward. "But what strict justice can there be", Stillingfleet asks, "between the Creator and His creatures, to recompense the service they are bound to perform, when their very being, power to act, assistance in acting, and recompense for it, are all from His bounty and goodness?"³

Good works are indeed important and necessary, for they bear witness to the presence of saving grace in the heart and bring glory to God. But we must never forget that they are only acceptable to God through the merit of Christ alone, when they are wrought in the strength of His grace, in faith and love, and in accordance with His will revealed in the Word. As the Saviour Himself taught the disciples: "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do" (Lk 17:10). *AWM*

Notes and Comments

Ultrasound scans in pregnancy

A friend has drawn attention to the significance of ultrasound scans in pregnancy, introduced and developed by the Scottish physician Ian Donald in Glasgow from the late 1950s onwards. In some cases, the baby's heart-beat can now be detected by ultrasound as early as the fifth week of pregnancy. Ultrasound can be put to good uses in detecting difficulties in pregnancy which may then be addressed, or to evil uses in identifying disabled children, or children of the "wrong" sex, who can then be killed.

One consequence of the widespread use of ultrasound scans is that multitudes of people nowadays have a clear idea of what is happening in abortion. They can no longer hide behind a veil of ignorance. It is obvious from the marvellously detailed scans that what is being killed is a living human being. Yet fallen man is a murderer by nature, and the killing goes on. There are outcries over the brutalities of Russian troops in the Ukraine, but no outcry over the brutality of doctors and parents killing 20 000 defenceless unborn children a month in Britain. The Russians devise more effective weapons for killing people, but our politicians have recently approved legislation for the easier killing of our own unborn children. If the Lord should bring appalling slaughter upon our land, it is only what we have

³Stillingfleet, *The Doctrines and Practices of the Church of Rome*, p 131.

done to a total of nearly ten million of our children, and what we manifestly deserve ourselves. *DWBS*

DIY Abortion

It was reported in the April 2022 edition of this *Magazine* that the temporary regulations, brought in during the pandemic, to permit abortions to be carried out at home were to be extended in England and Scotland until the end of August this year. (The regulations allow for pills to be prescribed by telephone or video consultation, not by a face-to-face appointment, to women and girls who think they are less than ten weeks pregnant.) The Welsh Assembly had, however, decided to make the provision permanent. We ended the report by saying, “We should pray that the Scottish and Westminster governments do not do another about turn and follow the example of the Welsh Assembly”.

We must now report that when the Health and Care Bill was presented to the House of Lords for scrutiny, an amendment was proposed by Baroness Sugg calling for the permanent continuance of the scheme. Sadly, when the Bill was returned to the House of Commons this amendment was agreed and carried on a free vote of 215 to 188.

In the House of Commons debate, Sir Edward Leigh, Conservative, said, “More than 10 000 women who took at least one abortion pill at home provided by the NHS in 2020 needed hospital treatment”. Carla Lockhart, DUP, said, “The changes to allow abortions at home were introduced without parliamentary scrutiny or public consultation. As it stands, abortion providers are unable to guarantee that they know who takes the pills, when or where they are taken, or whether an adult is present, given the risk of complications such as the delivery of live babies”. She added, “Abortion harms the voiceless, the vulnerable in our society, and it harms women and girls”.

Voice for Justice UK say, “One in 17 women who take the pills will subsequently require hospital treatment, including surgery for things such as incomplete abortion, haemorrhage, and infection or sepsis”.

The insistence on a woman’s right to choose (to abort her child), is a direct attack on God and His law. We have the morning-after pill, DIY abortion pills and, in some areas of the UK, the right to abort up to the day of birth for babies with certain disabilities. We are “fearfully and wonderfully made” (Ps 139:14). The womb was designed as a place of safety to nurture the unborn child, and yet the speed with which this law has been introduced without proper scrutiny is a shameful witness to the dreadful moral position we are in as a nation. To murder God’s creation in the womb as a “life choice” is a particularly grotesque act of wickedness. *FRD*

Some Sayings of John Newton¹

When some people talk of religion, they mean they have heard so many sermons and performed so many devotions, and thus mistake the *means* for the *end*. But true religion is a habitual recollection of God and intention to serve Him, and this turns everything into gold. We are apt to suppose that we need something splendid to show our devotion, but true devotion makes things equal: washing plates and cleaning shoes is a high office, if performed in a right spirit.

Many have puzzled themselves about the origin of evil. I observe that there is evil, and that there is a way to escape it; and with this I begin and end.

I would not give a straw for that assurance which sin will not damp. If David had come from his adultery and talked of his assurance at that time, I should have despised his speech.

Church Information

Meetings of Synod

The Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland will meet in the Inverness church, on Tuesday, 17 May 2022, at 6.30 pm, DV, when the retiring Moderator, Rev J R Tallach, will conduct public worship.

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

Meetings of Presbytery (DV)

Western: At Lochcarron, on Tuesday, June 7, at 12 noon.

Northern: At Dingwall, on Tuesday, June 21, at 2 pm.

Outer Isles: At Stornoway, on Tuesday, June 28, at 11 am.

Southern: At Glasgow, on Tuesday, June 28, at 6 pm.

Asia Pacific: At Grafton, on Tuesday, July 12, at 11 am.

Home Mission Fund

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

W Campbell, General Treasurer

Acknowledgement of Donations

The General Treasurer acknowledges with sincere thanks the following donation:

Eastern Europe Fund: Anon, for the church in Ukraine, £500.

Congregational Treasurers acknowledge with sincere thanks the following donations:

Achmore: The family of the late Catherine A MacLean, 28A Breasclete, in memoriam, £100.

North Harris: Anon, £80, £25.

North Tolsta: B Mitchell & Shona, £100; Anon, £1000. *Communion Expenses:* Friend of the Cause, £40. *Door Collection:* Anon, £40, £80, £25. *Eastern Europe Fund:* Anon, £120.

¹Taken from Newton's *Works*, vol 1, with minor editing.

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. **Bonar:** Sabbath 6 pm. Wednesday 7.30 pm (alternately in Dornoch and Bonar). **Lairg:** Church and Manse; no F P services. Rev J A Morrison BA, 2 Cherry Grove, Bonar Bridge, IV24 3ER. Tel: 01863 766157.

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 12 noon, 6 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. Contact Rev R MacLeod; tel: 0141 954 3759.

Halkirk: Sabbath 11.30 am, 5.30 pm, second, third and fifth Sabbaths of month; Thursday 7.30 pm. Rev W A Weale, F P Manse, Bridge Street, KW12 6YG; tel: 01847 831758. **Thurso:** Duncan Street no services meantime; **Strathy:** 6 pm, first and third Sabbaths of month.

Harris (North): **Tarbert:** Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm. **Tarbert** and **Stockinish:** Tuesday 7.30 pm alternately. Rev J B Jardine BD, F P Manse, Tarbert, Isle of Harris, HS3 3DF; tel: 01859 502253, e-mail: northharris.fpc@btopenworld.com.

Harris (South): **Leverburgh:** Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm; Wednesday 7 pm. **Sheilebost:** as intimated. Rev 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.

Kinlochervie: 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 7.30 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 Main Road, Luncarty, PH1 3EP; tel: 01738 828762.

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. Manse tel: 519 363 2502.

Vancouver: Burnaby Community Room, 3605 Gilmore Way, Burnaby, BC, V5G 4X5. No services at present. Contact: Mr Hector Ross, tel: 1-647-355-0844; e-mail: hector.ross@outlook.com, or Mr David Kuiper; tel: 1-519 -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:graffton@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: Sabbath 11 am, 6 pm; Thursday 7.15 pm, at Senior Citizens Hall, 33 Maitland street, Greerton, every third week, as intimated). For Sabbath services, contact Rev J D Smith; tel: 09 282 4195.

Singapore

Singapore: 33 Ubi Avenue 3, Vertex Tower A, #05-60, Singapore 408868: Sabbath: 9.30 am and 5.30 pm; Wednesday: 7.30 pm. Contact: Mr Bernard Yong, tel: (65) 9639 3040, 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 Levtytskyi; tel: 00 38 048 785 19 24; e-mail: dlevtytsky@gmail.com; or contact Mr I Zadorozhnyi, P O Box 100, Odessa-91, 65091; e-mail: antipa@eurocom.od.ua.

Zimbabwe

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

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

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

New Canaan: Church.

Zenka: Church.

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