

The Free Presbyterian Magazine

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

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

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Communions

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

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

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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

December: Third Sabbath: Bulawayo, Santa Fe.

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The Great King and His Kingdom

When the Lord Jesus began His public ministry, His message was: “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel” (Mark 1:15). Remarkably, His forerunner, John the Baptist, began his ministry using very much the same terms: “Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Mt 3:2). This kingdom was prophesied in Daniel 2, when Daniel was able to interpret King Nebuchadnezzar’s dream of a great image made up of various materials. There were to be four kingdoms, beginning with Nebuchadnezzar’s, the Babylonian Empire, and ending with the Roman Empire.

Daniel further explained, “In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever”. This kingdom, represented by a little stone, was the one which Jesus proclaimed as “at hand”. And He was the King of that kingdom. Daniel had also prophesied of “seventy weeks” – that is, 70 periods of seven years – from the time when the command would go out to rebuild Jerusalem after the Babylonian captivity, until the time when “Messiah the Prince” would come. Jesus was now announcing that this time had been fulfilled and the kingdom was soon to be established.

And He went on to demonstrate His authority when he found a man in the synagogue who was devil-possessed. Jesus said, “Hold thy peace, and come out of him” (Mk 1:25). Such was the authority of the King that the devil did come out of his victim. The people recognised this; they said, “With authority commandeth He even the unclean spirits, and they do obey Him”.

It was one of the first occasions when Christ showed that “for this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil” (1 Jn 3:8). Alexander S Patterson points out that, “in successive victories, [Christ] overcame the temptations of the devil . . . and, on the atoning cross, He spoiled principalities and powers, making a show of them openly, and triumphing over them (Col 2:15)”. Patterson further refers to “the efficacy of His life, death and resurrection, in bringing sinners from under the devil’s

yoke” and speaks of “that predicted era when Christ ‘shall bruise Satan’ under the feet of the Church, and the kingdom of God’s dear Son shall universally prevail”.¹ Christ is the universal King.

That work of delivering souls from the devil’s yoke is, of course, continuing today, though on a much smaller scale than we would wish. We see Satan allowed great power in our time. He goes about deceiving the nations successfully, so that the true God is very largely ignored, despised and rejected. There is, no doubt, a significant amount of outward allegiance to various outward forms of Christianity, but how little comparatively of true heart allegiance to the King of kings! How little we see of sinners turning from their own ways, of listening to the voice of the King and of following Him, as He continues to reveal Himself through the Scriptures!

Satan uses various methods of keeping sinners away from scriptural Christianity. False religions satisfy the needs that large numbers feel for a form of religion; others are satisfied with gross departures from scriptural Christianity, such as Roman Catholicism; others again are content with some nominal form of Protestantism. And there are those who try to follow a secular philosophy, which inevitably denies the existence of God and the authority of Jesus Christ.

Great numbers of people, in the UK for instance, live for the world and for the things of the world, whatever their professed beliefs. They seek for satisfaction from their possessions, from fulfilling their ambitions in life and from vain entertainments. But God says, “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him” (1 John 2:15). If we love the world, we are rejecting the grace of God, who “gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn 3:16). To reject God’s grace is to choose eternal destruction rather than the eternal blessedness that the everlasting King has promised to those who believe in Him, and who follow Him through good report and evil report, and who seek to submit to Him and His authority in all things.

Satan and his temptations are behind the increasing ungodliness and the decreasing morality of our time in the Western world. He provides an impetus to the promotion of anti-scriptural legislation at present before Scotland’s Parliament: one bill to allow assisted suicide and another to make it easier for people so minded to change their gender, in spite of the clear testimony of their body (in almost every case) to what their gender really is. But what does the King say? “He which made them at the beginning made them male and female” (Mt 19:4), and the King was quoting from the already-existing

¹Patterson, *Commentaries on 1 Thessalonians, James and 1 John*, Edinburgh, 1857, p 338-9.

Word of God, which is perfectly reliable in all it says. Yet politicians and others, with their secular mindset, place themselves in opposition to God and to the truth which He has revealed. They reject the authority of the King who came into the world to save sinners.

Yet the King is allowing all this unbelief, ungodliness and rebellion. He has His purposes in doing so; things have not spun out of control as far as He is concerned. Just as surely as He showed His power and authority on earth in sending the devil out of the man in the synagogue, so will He yet exercise His power and authority, on a large scale, in drawing sinners away from their false religion, their secularism and their heretical beliefs. He will also draw to Himself sinners who are ready to listen to sound preaching, yet refuse to repent and believe the gospel which is proclaimed to them.

The Lord may use the reading of the Scriptures to bring sinners to Himself, but especially the preaching of these Scriptures – not least the words which the King Himself used when He began His public ministry: “Repent ye, and believe the gospel”. He is calling sinners today to repent – to turn from their sins, with a sincere sorrow and hatred for them. But if people turn from sin, they cannot remain in some kind of no man’s land – neither in Satan’s kingdom or in Christ’s. They must turn to God, through Christ; they must believe the gospel: the good news that “the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world” – not just accepting the truth of such a statement, but trusting in the One who is revealed in it.

If a sinner is to be brought into the kingdom of God, to believe the gospel and turn to Christ, then he or she should be clear that the work of the Holy Spirit is necessary. He is given for the sake of Christ, to make sinners both willing and able to repent and believe. We should be thankful that the Spirit is even today working in the hearts of sinners, albeit on a relatively small scale. But when we see so many, throughout the world, led as captives by the devil towards a lost eternity, how earnest we should be in prayer to God that He would pour out His Spirit so that multitudes everywhere would turn to the Lord in repentance and believe the glorious gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ! How earnestly we should plead that, in Patterson’s words, “the kingdom of God’s dear Son shall universally prevail”. And at the day of judgement, Satan’s kingdom will be finally destroyed.

Most of 2022 has already passed, and there seems no sign of any improvement in the moral and religious situation in the UK and elsewhere. But God is able to bring about a massive improvement, even in a short period of time. Let us never despair even of this ungodly generation. God is all-powerful, and He is gracious. We can say the same about God the Son, King Jesus. He is all-powerful, and He is gracious.

The Panting Soul¹

A Sermon by R M M'Cheyne

Psalm 42:1. *As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God.*

These words are supposed to be the words of David when he fled from his son Absalom. He seems to have been wandering in some solitary wild district on the side of Mount Hermon, the stream of Jordan flowing at his feet. David seems to have been meditating thoughtfully, for his enemies reproached him daily, saying, "Where is thy God?" Even God seemed to forget him; all God's waves and billows were going over him when, perhaps, a deer suddenly bounded past him. It had been sorely wounded by the archers, or pursued by some wild beast on the mountains of the leopards. Faint and weary, he saw it rushing toward the flowing stream, and quenching its thirst in the brook. David's soul was revived by the sight. Is this not a suitable picture of what I should be? Is my God not to me as the flowing stream is to that wounded deer? "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God."

I do hope that many of you have come here this day with the same panting desire in your bosom. Only gracious souls can pant after God and Jesus Christ, whom He has sent. As a magnet attracts nothing to itself but what is made of steel, so an uplifted Saviour, God manifest in the flesh, draws nothing to Him but what has been awakened by His own Spirit. May God enable me to show you some of the reasons why the believer pants after God.

1. The burden of sin makes the soul pant after God.

(1.) *Unawakened souls* – those who feel no burden – *do not pant after Christ*. [1] "The full soul loatheth an honeycomb." Christ is the honeycomb which God has provided for poor sinners. The sweetest honey is to be found in the clefts of that Rock; but unawakened people are full – full of peace, full of business, full of pleasure. They have no desire after Christ; they loathe the honeycomb.

[2] Unawakened people are "dead in trespasses and sins". They are as dead to Christ and eternal things as the dead in the churchyard are to the things of this world. The dead bodies in the churchyard are at present within reach of the preacher's voice. If they could look up out of their graves, they would see the table spread, with the bread and wine; and yet when we speak they do not hear; they do not weep; their bosoms do not pant; they do not rise and come. Dear friends, the dead souls within the church are just as dead

¹Taken with editing from *The Christian Treasury*. The sermon was preached at a communion season.

as they are. You too are within reach of the preacher's voice; you too can see Christ evidently set forth crucified; yet you have no desires after Christ. Your eyes do not weep; your bosoms do not pant; you have no heart-longings after Christ.

[3] When Israel was in the land of Egypt, they had leeks and onions and garlic; they sat by the fleshpots and did eat bread to the full. They did not cry for manna; they did not seek water out of the flinty rock. So it is with those of you who are unawakened. You have got the leeks and the onions of this world's pleasures and profits and diversions, and you do not care for Christ, the bread of life. You do not pant after forgiveness and a new birth; you have no heart-longings for the living water of which, if a man drink, he shall never thirst again.

(2.) *Many awakened people do not pant after Christ.* There are some who feel like the deer stricken by the archers, but they think they can pull out the arrows and heal their own wounds. [1] When Naaman the Syrian came to Elisha, he felt his loathsome disease and he longed to be cured, but when the prophet told him: "Go and wash in Jordan seven times . . . and thou shalt be clean", he did not believe God's word: "Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage." So do many awakened souls among you. You are made to feel your loathsome disease; you sometimes tremble for fear of hell; but when we tell you of Christ's blood cleansing from all sin, you go away in a rage.

[2] When the flood came upon the earth, when the rain fell for 40 days, and the bowels of the great deep were broken up, I do not doubt there were great pantings of heart. Many fled from the rising water. Some fled to the top of snowy Lebanon, some to the peaks of Ararat; but only Noah believed God's word and entered into the ark. So many of you tremble about your souls, yet you do not believe God's word and are not panting after Christ. He says, "Ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life".

[3] When Christ shall come in the clouds of heaven, it is said that all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. There will not be one unawakened person in earth or in hell. Not the proudest and dearest of you will keep from trembling in that day. But it is only those who believe His Word that will flee under His wings. Dear friends, it is not enough for you to be anxious about your souls; you must flee to Christ; you must be in Christ before you are safe.

(3.) *All who are taught of God long after Christ:* "Every man that . . . hath learned of the Father cometh unto Me"; All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out". When

a sinner is convinced by God that his sins are a burden heavier than he can bear; that if he will die, they will crush him into an eternal hell – when convinced that God has provided a Lamb for a burnt offering and that this Lamb is free to all – he rushes through the crowd. Others may keep back, but he cannot. He places both his hands on the head of the divine Lamb, and says: “My Lord, and my God”; “This God is [my] God for ever and ever; He will be [my] guide even unto death”. “As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God.”

If any of you is convinced that you are perishing, that heaven is like a great city with walls, that you are outside and the storm of wrath is about to fall on you, has God also convinced you that Christ is the only gate into the city, the strait gate, and yet it is wide enough to admit any sinner in all the world? Then I know you will strive to enter in; you will agonise; you will not rest day nor night: “As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God”. If any of you is convinced that sin is a mortal disease, that all other physicians are vain, that Christ is passing through the midst of us full of virtue to heal, then I know you will press forward, whatever others do: “If I may but touch His garment I shall be healed”. “As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God.”

I would now invite panting souls to close with Christ. It is a sad truth that most of you are like the manslayer running toward the city of refuge, rather than sitting down within the gates. If you feel that you are condemned in yourself and that God has provided a free surety, why will you not rest your soul upon His finished work? Why will you go round the city of refuge and not enter in? May God give you light to venture on Christ and say: “This God is [my] God for ever and ever”.

2. A desire for holiness makes the soul pant after God.

(1.) *Unconverted persons have no holiness* and therefore they do not pant after God and Christ. Indeed, this is the chief reason why poor sinners do not come to Christ. They know that, if they would come to Christ, they would bid eternal farewell to their old companions and pleasures, but most people would rather go to hell than this. When a few people from Greenland were brought to this country, they saw no beauty in the rich corn fields and woods and plains; they asked for their fields of snow and the mountains of ice glinting in the sun. When they came into our houses, they could not endure the cleanness; they preferred their own smoky, filthy cabins.

So it is with those of you who are unconverted. You have grown up with hearts frozen to God and to divine things; and when you come to see the heart of a Christian like a garden, with the river of life flowing through it, and beautiful flowers of meekness, love and holiness growing in it, you can-

not bear the sight; you love your own frozen heart better. When you see the clean heart of a child of God, you say, I had rather have my own filthy one. This is the way with most people. You do not long to be made holy; you do not pant after the new birth. You need grace to desire grace. You do not desire to be made a new creature; you would rather remain in the image of the devil than be changed into the image of God. You are like Jerusalem: "Woe unto thee, O Jerusalem! Wilt thou not be made clean? When shall it once be?"

(2.) But *all saved souls pant after holiness*. "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God." [1] When a soul closes with Christ, he is not made perfectly holy all at once: "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day". Just as you have seen the day struggling with the darkness, then with clouds, till the sun shines forth in meridian splendour, so it is with the holiness of a Christian. Just as in the richest ground, after the deepest ploughing, weeds will still grow up among the corn; so many roots of bitterness remain in the believer's heart. Paul thanked God for the grace that was given to the Corinthians, so that they came behind in no gift; yet he said that they had strife, envy and divisions, so that he could not call them spiritual, but carnal. So it is with every Christian heart. Weeds grow up in the best-cultivated gardens. There is enough in Christ to supply all our need. It is our own fault that we are not as holy as God is holy. It is not in Christ, but in ourselves, that we are straitened. The shower of grace is plentiful enough, and more than enough; but we do not open our mouth wide.

[2] But every soul in Christ hates sin and pants after holiness. Nothing makes him pant after God more than corruption striving within. Paul never prayed more earnestly than when he had the thorn in his flesh. The thorn in the flesh makes us pant after God. When a ship is left by the tide lying dry on the sand, it cannot be shifted – it is like an immoveable log. The seamen may try to draw it with ropes, but it only sinks deeper in the sand. They can do nothing but long for the tide, so that the ship may again be lifted up on the waves and sail into the harbour. Thus it is with a Christian. You are often like a ship on the sand. You cannot move. You attempt duties, but it is heavy work. Without Christ you can do nothing. You wait and pant for Christ, for the full tide of the Spirit, to lift your soul above the waves and carry you prosperously on toward the heavenly harbour.

Let me invite weary souls to come to Christ this day. Some of you are feeling the thorn in the flesh and you are praying that it may depart from you. Some of you feel like the criminal who was chained to a dead body. You feel your loathsome body of sin and you cry, "O man!" Some of you are like the deer that has been wounded by the lion and trembles at its roaring. You

have been wounded by Satan and you tremble to hear his roar. Come to Jesus. He will give you rest, O panting soul. Close with Christ; feed upon Christ. Without Him you can do nothing. Through Christ strengthening you, you may do all things. The Lord's Supper is intended to teach you to feed on Jesus. You do not only look on the bread or handle it; you eat; you drink. So come into personal union with Christ, O longing soul, and He will be your strength. "God is our refuge and our strength."

3. Desolation makes the soul pant after God.

(1.) *Believers should never be desolate.* It is contrary to the promise: "None of them that trust in Him shall be desolate". Christ is always the same. His righteousness is as perfect one day as another. If you are clothed in that righteousness, your peace should be like a river. It is very dishonouring to Christ for believers to be going bowed down all the day long. "Rejoice in the Lord alway; and again I say, Rejoice."

(2.) Still I fear that some of you can bear witness that *the believer is sometimes very desolate.* The moon does not always shine in a cloudless sky. The ships do not always sail on a waveless sea. The believer does not always live in the smile of his Father. [1] Outward providences sometimes cause desolation, when they come unexpectedly upon us, when we cannot see God's meaning in them; when we suspect His love and fall into darkness. So Job: "Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man child conceived".

[2] Sin admitted into the heart is the most common cause. God is a jealous God. So Israel: "She said, I will go after my lovers, that give me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, mine oil and my drink".

(3.) The desolate soul pants after God. So it was with Job: "O that I knew where I might find Him, that I might come even to His seat". So it is with the bride: "I will rise now, and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways". So David: "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God". When a child that has been tenderly brought up, that has been warmly clad and comfortably fed, and cared for by a gentle mother's hand, when that child is turned out on the cold world, it is bitter indeed! O for my father's roof! O for my mother's smile! So it is with a child of light walking in darkness.

Let me invite desolate souls to come to God, the living God. Some of you may be feeling like a ship tossed on a stormy sea. Deep calls unto deep, at the noise of God's waterspouts; all the waves and billows are breaking over you. Be persuaded to close with Christ, freely offered to you. Put away entirely, for the moment, the question as to whether you ever believed before. Believe now. The Lord's Supper is specially fitted for you. You say

you cannot realise a Saviour; well, here He is set forth plainly in bread and wine: "This is My body, broken for you". You ask, But how shall I know He is a Saviour to me? See, here the bread is freely offered: "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." You say: But how do I know He is still offered to me? I answer, "Yet there is room". Here is bread enough and to spare. You say: But may I really close with Him? I answer, "Take, eat". O panting soul, come under His wings. "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come."

Luther and the Reformation¹

25. An Insecure Future?

J H Merle d'Aubigné

Luther and his guide continued their flight far from the walls of Augsburg. He spurred his horse and galloped as fast as the poor animal's strength would permit. He called to mind the real or supposed flight of John Hus, the manner in which he was caught, and the assertion of his adversaries, who pretended that they had the right of condemning him to the flames on the ground that he had annulled the Emperor's safe-conduct by his flight. These anxious thoughts did not occupy Luther's mind for long. He had escaped from a city in which he had passed 10 days under the terrible hand of Rome, which had already crushed so many thousand witnesses to the truth, and sprinkled all around it with blood. Now that he was free, he inhaled the fresh breezes of the country, beheld himself wonderfully delivered by the arm of the Lord and, with his whole being, returned thanks to the Almighty. Truly he could now say, "Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers; the snare is broken, and we are escaped. Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth" (Ps 124:7,8).

But his thoughts turned to Cardinal Cajetan: "The Cardinal would have liked to have me in his hands to send me to Rome. He is vexed, no doubt, at my escape. He imagined I was in his power at Augsburg; he thought he had me; but he was holding an eel by the tail. Is it not disgraceful that these people set so high a value on me? They would give a heap of crowns to have me in their clutches, while our Lord Jesus Christ was sold for 30 pieces of silver."

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 told of Luther in Augsburg in 1518, where he had come to be examined by Cardinal Cajetan – a legate, or representative, of the Pope. In his appearances before Cajetan, Luther refused to retract his scriptural opinions and at last left Augsburg; he could not be sure of continued safety if he stayed there any longer. It should be noted that he had not yet broken with Rome.

The first day he travelled 42 miles. When he reached the inn where he was to pass the night, he was so fatigued that, when he dismounted, he could not stand upright and lay down on a bundle of straw. Yet he obtained some rest. The next day he continued his journey and at Nuremberg he met Staupitz. It was in this city that he first saw the letter the Pope sent to Cajetan about him. He was indignant at it, and it is very probable that, if he had seen this letter before leaving Wittenberg, he would never have gone to Augsburg. "It is impossible to believe", he said, "that anything so monstrous could have proceeded from any sovereign pontiff."

All along the road, Luther was an object of general interest. He had not yielded on any point. Such a victory, gained by a monk over Rome's representative, filled every heart with admiration. The eternal Word had received more honour than the word of the Pope. This vast power, which for so many centuries had tyrannised the world, had received a formidable check. Luther's journey was like a triumph. Men rejoiced at the obstinacy of Rome, in the hope that it would lead to her destruction. If she had not insisted on preserving her shameful gains; if she had reformed crying abuses; perhaps, according to human views, all would have returned to that death-like state from which Luther had awakened. But the papacy would not yield; and Luther was to be compelled to bring many other errors to light, and to go forward in the knowledge of the truth.

Luther hastened on, desiring to be at Wittenberg on October 31, under the impression that he should meet the Elector there. The letter which he had read at Nuremberg had disclosed to him all the perils of his situation. In fact, having been condemned already at Rome, he could not hope either to stay at Wittenberg, or to find peace and security anywhere else. The Elector might perhaps be able to defend him, but Luther was far from being sure. He could no longer expect anything from the two friends whom he hitherto had at this prince's court. Staupitz had lost the favour he had so long enjoyed and was leaving Saxony. Spalatin was beloved by Frederick, but had not much influence over him. The Elector himself was not sufficiently acquainted with the doctrine of the gospel to encounter manifest danger for its sake. Luther thought, however, that he could not do better than return to Wittenberg and wait there to see what the eternal, merciful God would do with him. If, as many expected, he were left alone, he resolved to devote himself entirely to study and to the education of young people.

Luther re-entered Wittenberg on October 30. His whole expedition had been to no purpose. Neither the Elector nor Spalatin had come, but his friends were overjoyed at seeing him again among them. He hastened to inform Spalatin of his arrival. "I returned to Wittenberg today safe and sound, by the

grace of God,” said he, “but how long I shall stay here I do not know. . . . I am filled with joy and peace and can hardly conceive that the trial which I endure can appear so great to so many distinguished people.”

Cajetan had not waited long after Luther’s departure to pour forth all his indignation to the Elector. His letter breathed vengeance. He gave Frederick an account of the conference with an air of assurance. “Since brother Martin”, he said in conclusion, “cannot be induced by paternal measures to acknowledge his error and remain faithful to the catholic Church, I beg your highness to send him to Rome, or expel him from your states. Be assured that this difficult, mischievous and envenomed business cannot be protracted much longer, for as soon as I have informed our most holy lord [the Pope] of all this artifice and wickedness, it will be brought to an end.” In a postscript, written with his own hand, the Cardinal entreated the Elector not to tarnish his honour and that of his illustrious ancestors for the sake of a miserable little friar.

Perhaps Luther never felt nobler indignation than when he read the copy of this letter the Elector had forwarded to him. The thought of the sufferings he was to undergo, the value of the truth for which he was contending, contempt inspired by the conduct of the Roman legate – all these agitated his heart. His reply, written in the midst of this agitation, was full of that courage, sublimity and faith which he always displayed in the most trying circumstances of his life. He wrote, “Whatever the people will be among whom I shall dwell in future, I shall ever remember you and pray continually and gratefully for the happiness of yourself and of your family. . . . I am still, thanks be to God, full of joy, and praise Him because Christ, the Son of God, thinks me worthy to suffer in such a cause. May he ever protect your illustrious highness! Amen.”

This letter, so abundant in truth, made a deep impression on the Elector. Never could he have thought of surrendering an innocent man to the hands of Rome; perhaps he would have desired Luther to conceal himself for a time, but he resolved not to appear to yield in any manner to Cajetan’s menaces. He wrote to his councillor Pfeffinger, who was at the Emperor’s court, telling him to inform this prince of the real state of affairs, and to beg him to write to Rome, so that the business might be concluded, or at least that it might be settled in Germany by impartial judges.

A few days afterwards, the Elector replied to the legate: “Since Doctor Martin has appeared before you at Augsburg, you should be satisfied. We did not expect that you would endeavour to make him retract, without having convinced him of his errors. None of the learned men in our principality have informed me that Martin’s doctrine is impious, anti-Christian, or heretical.”

The prince refused to send Luther to Rome, or to expel him from his states.

This letter was given to Luther and filled him with joy. He wrote to Spalatin, "With what delight I have read it again and again! I know what confidence may be put in these words, at once so forcible and moderate. I fear that the Romans will not understand their full bearing; but they will at least understand that what they think already finished is as yet hardly begun. Please return my thanks to the prince. It is strange that he [Cajetan] who, a short time ago, was a monk like myself, does not fear to address the mightiest princes disrespectfully, to call them to account, to threaten, to command them, and to treat them with such inconceivable haughtiness. Let him learn that the temporal power is of God, and that its glory may not be trampled underfoot."

What had doubtless encouraged the Elector to reply to the legate in a tone the latter had not expected, was a letter addressed to him by the University of Wittenberg. It had good reason to declare in Luther's favour, for it flourished daily more and more and was eclipsing all the other schools. A crowd of students flocked thither from all parts of Germany to hear this extraordinary man, whose teaching appeared to open a new era to religion and learning. These youths, who came from every province, halted as soon as they saw the steeples of Wittenberg in the distance; they raised their hands to heaven and praised God for having caused the light of truth to shine forth from this city, as from Sion in times of old, and whence it spread even to the most distant countries. A life and activity, till then unknown, animated the University. "Our students here are as busy as ants," wrote Luther.

Christ Seeking Lost Souls¹

John Flavel

There are five particular ways in which Christ's seeking of lost souls differs from you seeking lost cattle.

1. Your cattle sometimes find the way home themselves, and return to you of their own accord; but lost man never did so, nor can he. He was his own destroyer, but he can never be his own saviour; it was possible for him not to have lost his God; but having once lost Him, man can never again find Him of himself. Alas, his heart is bent to backsliding; he has no will to return. Hear how Christ complains, "Ye will not come to Me" (Jn 5:40). Man's recovery begins in God, not in himself.

¹Taken, with editing, from Flavel's *Husbandry Spiritualized, The Heavenly Use of Earthly Things*, in volume 5 of his *Works*. He has been making a spiritual application of farmers seeking lost cattle and now shows how this *differs* from Christ seeking lost souls.

2. Your servants can find, and bring back, your lost cattle as well as you; but Christ's servants cannot do so. Ministers may discover them but cannot recover them; they see them daily but cannot save them; they can lament over them but they cannot help them; they can entreat them and beg them to return and obey, but they cannot prevail with them. Melancthon thought, when he began to preach, that he would persuade all; but old Adam was too hard for young Melancthon.

3. You seek all the cattle that have strayed from you, especially the best; but Jesus Christ only seeks poor lost man. There were other created beings, and such as by nature were more excellent, that lost their God and themselves – I mean the apostate angels – but He did not come to seek them. In this His singular love to man appears.

4. When you have recovered and brought home your lost cattle, you may lose them a second time and never recover them again, but Christ cannot lose them again. Man once recovered is for ever secured by Him. "All that Thou gavest Me, I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition" (John 17:12), and he was never savingly found.

5. Though you prize your cattle, yet you will not venture your life to recover them; you let them go rather than regain them at such a risk; but Jesus Christ not only ventured His life, but actually laid it down, to recover and save lost man. He redeemed them at the price of His own blood; He is that good shepherd that laid down His life for the sheep. O the surpassing love of Christ to lost souls!

Thomas Boston – His Life and Ministry¹

1. His Younger Years

F R Daubney

Thomas Boston lived from 1676 to 1732; the Reformation had taken place 150 years before; the Killing Times of the Covenanters took place when he was a boy. The descendants of the Stuart kings were still hopeful of winning back the throne of the United Kingdom; the country was almost entirely rural, and transport and communication between one part and another was very poor. In the Church many held to a formal religion but there were some who, by the grace of God, lived lives of such outstanding holiness and

¹The first part of a paper given at this year's Theological Conference. In preparing this talk the writer relied heavily on Boston's *Memoirs* (vol 12 of his *Works*, but it has also been printed separately), and on Andrew Thomson's biography, *Thomas Boston: His Life and Times*.

evangelical fervour that they shine as stars in the firmament. One of these was Thomas Boston. Now, 300 years later, he remains an example to us of righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience and meekness (1 Tim 6:11).

Thomas Boston was born in 1676 in Duns, a town in the Scottish Borders, about 50 miles from Edinburgh. He was the youngest of seven children, six of whom survived to adulthood, which was unusual in those days. His mother was thought to be past childbearing age, and a family acquaintance described this late baby, Thomas, as a “God’s send”. This was to be proved true in more ways than one. In his *Memoirs*, Boston describes his father as an intelligent and pious man, and his mother as prudent and virtuous.

These were times of great religious and civil disturbance. The Stuart government endeavoured to impose Episcopalianism on a people who sought to follow Presbyterianism, and John Boston, Thomas’s father, was fined and imprisoned for refusing to attend Episcopal services. In later life Thomas wrote in his memoirs, “When I was a little boy, I lay in the prison of Dunse with him, to keep him company, the which I have often looked on as an earnest of what may be abiding me; but hitherto I have not had that trial”.²

When Thomas was sent to school, he was initially taught reading and spelling from the Song of Solomon and *The Shorter Catechism*. The schoolmistress was very fond of the gentle and attentive boy and would get him to read aloud to her. He in turn listened with wonder and delight to the numerous Bible stories she would tell him.

At eight years of age, Thomas began to attend the grammar school, where he proved to be a clever and hard-working student. He describes himself as of “a sober and harmless deportment and preserved from the common vices of children in towns”. However, he says he was “living without God in the world, unconcerned about the state of my soul”.

In 1687, King James VI and II gave Presbyterians the liberty to hold their own services in private houses and chapels. Very soon afterwards, the Presbyterians of the parish of Whitsome, four miles south-east of Duns, called Rev Henry Erskine, the father of the well-known Ebenezer and Ralph Erskine, to be their minister. Immediately John Boston and others from Duns started to attend the services and Thomas went with his father to hear the new minister. By his means, he says, “it pleased the Lord to awaken me, and bring me under exercise about my soul’s state; being then in the twelfth year of my age”.

There were two sermons in particular which touched him. One was from Matthew 3:7, “O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?” and the second, “Behold the Lamb of God”, from John

²This was a reference to his future difficulties with the civil law concerning the Oath of Abjuration, which we shall come to later.

1:29. "By these", he says, "I was touched quickly after the first hearing, wherein I was like one amazed with some new and strange thing. Sure I am I was, in good earnest, concerned for a saving interest in Jesus Christ. My soul went out after Him, and the place of His feet was glorious in mine eyes."

Many of the company travelling to and from Whitsome were men of deep religious experience and Christian knowledge, and Boston very much benefited from their conversation. He found it so edifying and cheering that he says he did not even feel tired as they walked to and fro in all weathers.

In 1869, when Thomas was 13, he left the grammar school, and he and his father both felt he should become a minister, but the Church of Scotland required all entrants into the ministry to undergo university training and, when John Boston looked into the cost of sending his son to university, he discovered it was beyond his means. He tried several ways of funding Thomas's education at college but to no avail. At this point Thomas became discouraged and thought of going into a trade, but his father would not hear of it. Eventually the young Boston was employed in a notary's office (probably as a kind of clerk) which he looked back on as a favourable providence. It taught him the discipline of working and, in addition, he acquired an orderly way of working and a style of writing papers which would prove to be useful to him in later years. Later, as a young minister, he was made Clerk to the Synod of Merse and Teviotdale, and one of the members, who was a judge, said he was the best clerk he had ever known in any court, civil or ecclesiastical.

He looked back on this period of his life as one in which he was tried with many disappointments, including the death of his mother, but in all his difficulties he was brought to lean upon the Lord. Two years later, when his father's circumstances changed for the better, he was able to begin his university studies clear of any debt.

Boston enrolled in Edinburgh University in 1691, aged 15. He studied classical literature, philosophy and science but, other than that, very little has been recorded about his time there. He was constantly concerned about his father's lack of money and lived so frugally that, in his second year, he became liable to fainting fits, which continued to trouble him for several years. Once, when he was at home in June 1693 and he took one of his fits, the family thought that he was likely to die. He was so careful about money that, by the time he graduated, the total cost for his four years' tuition fees, college dues and maintenance amounted to only £11 sterling (£1220 in today's money). Apart from his university classes he studied music so he could improve his singing of the psalms, and also shorthand so that he could write out his sermons, although in the end he found it "marred the frame of his spirit".

In the summer of 1694 Boston received a bursary from the Presbytery of Duns to become a student of theology and, the following January, he returned to Edinburgh to the School of Divinity. He only remained for one session but speaks very highly of his professor of theology, who he describes as “the great Mr George Campbell”. At that time students who had taken one session of theology with credit were allowed to earn a living by teaching and to complete their studies under the supervision of their presbytery. Because of the ongoing financial difficulties, Boston decided to follow this course of action, though with a great deal of reluctance.

His first job was teaching in the parish school of Glencairn in Dumfriesshire, where he found the pupils and people of the area unsympathetic to religion. Even the minister, though he was kind to him, he found to be vain and “untender”. The minister would go to the local “alehouse” and take Boston with him, much against his inclination, on the pretext of speaking with an old gentleman. They would be provided with a mixture of warm ale and brandy, which Thomas refused to drink. All of this gave Boston much cause for prayer that he would be delivered from the evil influences around him. His prayers were answered when, shortly afterwards, he was invited to become tutor in a family in Clackmannan. He took up these duties in February 1696. His young pupil, Andrew Fletcher of Aberlady, was already attending grammar school, and Boston’s duties were light.

The lord and lady of the house were away for considerable periods of time after Boston arrived, and he felt responsible for the spiritual good of the family. He therefore kept family worship, catechised the servants and encouraged them to pray alone. He also warned them against sinful practices, and this was resented by some who felt he was overstepping his authority. He was learning, as he said, “in some measure what it was to have [the] charge of souls; and being naturally bashful, timorous and much subject to the fear of man, I attained, by what I met with there, some boldness and not regarding the persons of men when they were out of God’s way”. On the whole he found his time there to be “a thriving time for his soul”. He set time aside for fasting, prayer and self-examination.

He was now approaching the end of his period of theological training when students would present themselves to one of the presbyteries where they had lived, for trials and examinations, with a view to becoming a probationer. Boston, having become known for his piety and blossoming gifts, was invited for trial by several presbyteries. After much prayer he decided to enter on trials in the combined presbytery of Duns and Chirside. This was in March 1697, when he was 21 years of age. After an exhaustive series of examinations, including essays in theology, and a sermon at Chirside on

John 1:16, “And of His fullness have all we received, and grace for grace”, he was licensed to preach the gospel as a probationer on June 15.

His preaching soon began to attract attention, and little wonder! It was preaching that only a man who knew his own heart could attain to. At first, he was very much a preacher of the law; he said himself that “he hoped to set fire to the devil’s nest”. However, a kindly older minister helped him by saying to him, “If you began preaching Christ, you would find it very pleasant”. From that day there was no lack of the loving call of Jesus in his preaching. “I have often” said Boston, “remembered that word of Mr Dysart as the first hint given me by the good hand of God towards the doctrine of the gospel”.

“A Time to Die”¹

Charles Bridges

How did this time come about? Immortality was our original being (Gen 1:26). “By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin” (Rom 5:12). Ever since, “it is appointed unto men once to die” (Heb 9:27, Gen 3:19). No one can evade the law. Voltaire² could not purchase a reprieve with half his fortune. “His days are determined, the number of his months are with Thee, Thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass” (Job 14:5). The sentence of death may be revoked, but the time predetermined is unchanged (Is 38:1-5). The time to die can never be premature. God’s time must be right and best. God’s work must be done; and man is immortal till it is done.

If our steps “are ordered by the Lord” (Ps 37:23), much more is the last step of all – the step out of one world into another, out of time into eternity. But if that step were taken tonight, would it be a cheerful or a forced leaving of all? O to realise our solemn concern with this great moment! Death the gate of heaven or of hell? O my soul, which to thee? “Man giveth up the ghost, and” – awesome question – “where is he?” (Job 14:10). We may leave all the circumstances of death to the Lord – whether we shall die in pain or in peace. But our safety, our readiness, is everything. This readiness for death is the energy of life. Then comes the sunbeam upon the valley. Is this dying?” said Thomas Goodwin. “How have I dreaded as an enemy this smiling friend!” O world, produce something good like this, we may boldly say; and then it shall have our best affections. Till then may we be only for the Lord!

¹An edited extract from Bridges’ *Commentary on Ecclesiastes* (on 3:2), which is available from the Free Presbyterian Bookroom.

²Eighteenth-century French philosopher who opposed Christianity.

The time to die! What is it but the entrance into the Kingdom? (2 Pet 1:11). There may be indeed a special purpose. It is the father caring for his delicate child, sending his messenger to bring him home before the threatening tempest rages. Thus he is “taken away from the evil to come. He shall enter into peace.” His Father rests in His love, and joys over him with singing (Is 57:1,2; Zeph 3:17).

Not only the two great points of birth and death, but every atom of life has its relative importance. To everything there is a season and a purpose. Within the boundary of life there is therefore a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted. Planting had been to Solomon a matter of primary interest (Ecc 2:4,5). But how soon might the season come to undo his own work and to pluck up that which was planted! Often is a garden or estate laid out with plantations – whether for present pleasure or future advantage. Yet change of mind or of taste, withering winds, over-luxuriant growth, financial necessity or profit may induce the owner to pluck up. Thus the most ordinary course of life gives evidence of a changing world; it is therefore no centre of rest.

Parents, Children and Bible Promises¹

J C Ryle

Train your children remembering continually the promises of Scripture. I mention this briefly, in order to guard you against discouragement. You have a plain promise on your side, “Train up your child in the way he should go, and when he is old he shall not depart from it” (Prov 22:6). Think what it is to have a promise like this. Promises were the only lamp of hope which cheered the hearts of the patriarchs before the Bible was written. Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph all lived on a few promises and prospered in their souls. Promises are the cordials which in every age have supported and strengthened the believer. He that has a plain text upon his side need never be cast down. Fathers and mothers, when your hearts are failing and ready to halt, look at the word of this text and take comfort.

Think *who it is that promises*. It is not the word of a man, who may lie or repent; it is the word of the King of kings, who never changes. Has He said a thing, and shall He not do it? Or has He spoken, and shall He not make it good? Neither is anything too hard for Him to perform. The things that are impossible with men are possible with God. Reader, if we do not get the

¹An edited extract from Ryle’s *The Upper Room*, reviewed below. It comes from the chapter, “The Duties of Parents”.

benefit of the promise we are dwelling upon, the fault is not in Him but in ourselves.

Think too *what the promise contains* before you refuse to take comfort from it. It speaks of a certain time when good training shall especially bear fruit – when a child “is old”. Surely there is comfort in this. You may not see with your own eyes the result of careful training, but you do not know what blessed fruits may spring from it, long after you are dead and gone. It is not God’s way to give everything at once. “Afterward” is the time when He often chooses to work, both in the things of nature and in the things of grace. “Afterward” is the season when affliction bears “the peaceable fruit of righteousness” (Heb 12:11). “Afterward” was the time when the son who refused to work in his father’s vineyard repented and went (Mt 21:29). And “afterward” is the time to which parents must look forward if they do not see success at once. You must sow in hope and plant in hope.

“Cast thy bread upon the waters,” says the Spirit, “for thou shalt find it after many days” (Ecc 11:1). Many children, I doubt not, shall rise up in the day of judgement and bless their parents for good training, who never gave any signs of having profited by it during their parents’ lives. Go forward then in faith, and be sure that your labour shall not be altogether thrown away. Elijah stretched himself three times on the widow’s child before it revived. Take your example from him and persevere.

Preaching Christ¹

7. Acceptably and Constantly

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.*

[10.] They must preach the word *acceptably*, as well as rightly: The preacher sought to find out acceptable words”, or words of delight, as the Hebrew has it; “and that which was written was upright, even words of truth” (Ecc 12:10). Ministers’ words should divinely please and divinely profit; they should divinely attract both ear and heart. A minister should be a weighty speaker; he should clothe his doctrine in such a lovely dress that he may slide it imperceptibly into his hearers’ hearts. Ministers should clothe their matter with suitable words, as the leaves give some beauty

¹Taken, with editing, from Brooks’ *Works*, vol 3. The previous article, which appeared in October, spoke of ministers preaching Christ feelingly and rightly.

to the tree. Good matter in unsuitable language, is like a bright taper in a dirty candlestick, or like a fair body in unattractive clothes. Aaron's bells were golden bells, sounding pleasantly, not as sounding brass or tinkling cymbals. Doubtless holy eloquence may prudently be made useful for setting forth divine truth, and catching souls by craft, as Paul speaks (2 Cor 12:16).

Lactantius² has well observed that philosophers, orators and poets were very pernicious, because they easily ensnared incautious minds with their attractive way of speaking. Therefore his advice was, even in delivering the truth of Christ, to sweeten the speech, to win to Christ those who will neither hear or read or value or regard the truth, unless it is polished and clothed in a lovely dress.

[11.] To add no more, as they must preach the word acceptably, so they must preach the Word *constantly*.³ They must not lay down the Bible to take up the sword, as some have done for worldly advantages; they must not leave the Word to serve tables (Acts 6:2), as others have done for the same reason; they must continue in their employments; they must neither change their work or their master: "We will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word" (Acts 6:4). They would not assign their charge to deputies, that they themselves might live at ease. No, they were definitely resolved to continue in these two choice duties, prayer and the ministry of the Word.

Again, "Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come" (Acts 26:22). "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them, [spend thy time in them], that thy profiting may appear to all [or in all things]. Take heed unto thyself, and unto thy doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee" (1 Tim 4:15,16). "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned, and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them" (2 Tim 3:14). "And moreover, because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many proverbs" (Ecc 12:9).

Hosea was for 80 years a prophet in Israel, and yet did not convert them; yet notwithstanding all discouragements, he continued constant, with an abundance of freshness and liveliness. Chrysostom compares good pastors to fountains that always send forth waters, or conduits that are always running, though no pail is put under them.

²An early Christian author.

³The shewbread stood all the week before the Lord, to show that preaching is not out of season on any day.

Book Review

The Upper Room, by J C Ryle, published by the Banner of Truth Trust, hardback, 415 pages, £15.00, obtainable from the Free Presbyterian Bookroom.

The Banner of Truth has recently published a newly re-typeset edition of this book. It was originally published in 1888 and this is the Banner's seventh edition since 1970. Often when books are re-issued, a new Bible translation is used; so it is good to see that the Authorised Version, as used by Ryle, is retained in this edition.

The book is a collection of sermons and addresses which Ryle sent to the press in the last years of his ministry. He says in his preface: "There are many thoughts in this volume which I do not wish to leave behind me in the precarious form of separate single sermons, addresses, lectures and tracts. I have therefore resolved to gather them together in the volume I now send forth, which I heartily pray God to bless, and to make it a permanent blessing to many souls." The blurb tells us that here "reliable advice, grounded in biblical principles, is offered to ministers and congregations, parents and children, young and old, converted and unconverted".

The book begins with a sermon from Acts 1:13, the text from which the title is taken, "They went up into an upper room". Ryle speaks of who was there and of Peter's wonderful address. "This", he says, "was the first place of meeting of Christians for worship of which we have any record. . . . The 'upper room', we should remember, was the forerunner of every church and cathedral which has been reared in Christendom within the last 18 centuries."

The sermons and lectures cover a variety of different subjects, delivered with Ryle's usual clarity and evangelical fervour. There are interesting sections on the duties of parents and the rights and duties of lay Churchmen. There are question and answer sections, one on regeneration and another on the Lord's Supper. He has a particular concern for the well-being of young men, who he feels are particularly at risk, and the section, "Thoughts for Young Men", is extensive and comprehensive.

Some of what Ryle writes could have been written today. He preached a sermon in 1879 on 1 John 5:4,5, "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" In it he says, "The subtle influence of the world, nowadays, seems to infect the very air we breathe. It creeps into families like an angel of light, and leads myriads captive, who never know that they are slaves. The enormous increase of . . . wealth, and consequent power of self-indulgence,

and the immense growth of a passionate taste for recreations and amusements of all kinds; the startling rise and progress of a so-called liberality of opinion, which refuses to say anybody is wrong, whatever he does, and loudly asserts that, as in the days of the Judges, everyone should think and do what is right in his own eyes, and never be checked, all these strange phenomena of our age give the world an amazing additional power, and make it doubly needful for Christ's ministers to cry aloud, Beware of the world!"

The chapter dealing with "The Duties of Parents" is based on Proverbs 22:6: "Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it". In a footnote he says, "I have sometimes been perfectly astonished at the slowness of sensible Christian parents to allow that their own children are at fault or deserve blame. There are not a few persons to whom I would far rather speak about their own sins, than tell them their children had done anything wrong." He warns parents to remember children are born with a decided bias towards evil, and therefore if you let them choose for themselves, they are certain to choose wrong.

Parents should train their children in the way they should go, not the way they would. They should train them with affection and patience, with an awareness of the importance of the task, and that the child's soul is to be considered above all. They should train their children to a knowledge of the Bible, a habit of prayer, habits of diligence and regularity in the public means of grace, a habit of faith (that is, believing what the parent says is correct), habits of obedience, to speak the truth always and to redeem the time. Parents should fear over-indulgence and remember how God trains His children. They should remember continually the influence of their own example, being always aware of the power of sin and the promises of Scripture. Finally, parents should train their children with continual prayer for a blessing on all they do.

In the section dealing with the Lord's Supper, Ryle clearly explains the spiritual significance of the sacrament and outlines and explains a number of misconceptions concerning it. He describes those who should and should not sit at the Lord's Table. In another prescient statement he says that most lay people "think all earnest, eloquent, zealous, hardworking clergymen cannot be far wrong. And when you tell them that there is an avowed determination among many clergymen to unprotestantise the Established Church, to go behind the Reformation, and to bring back the Romish mass and the confessional, you are too often smiled at as an alarmist and are not believed. . . . Too many are crying 'peace, peace', where there is no peace, and insisting that very earnest clergymen should be allowed to do what is right in their own eyes, to break the law, and to be let alone. In short, unless a

change comes soon, our candlestick will be taken away, and our Church will be ruined.”

In the chapter on regeneration, Ryle with great clarity refutes the popish doctrine that regeneration accompanies baptism. As one would expect, Ryle’s writings reflect his position as a cleric in the Church of England but, notwithstanding this, in *The Upper Room* Christian doctrines are clearly described in easily understood language. As the publisher states, the material exhibits “the robust evangelical doctrine and down-to-earth application characteristic of Ryle’s style”. His books, sermons and expositions of the Gospels have been popular for generations, and this volume does not disappoint; it is enjoyable, instructive and full of practical religion. We would recommend that those who do not have this book should buy a copy, and that those who do should renew their acquaintance with it.

F R Daubney

Notes and Comments

Funeral of Queen Elizabeth II

The funeral of the late Queen was a solemn and appropriately regal occasion, watched in various ways by millions of people across the nation and the wider world. While some things related to the event should make us thankful, others caused sadness and pain. The funeral service was wholly Christian and the use of the Authorised Version of the Scriptures and the reverential way of addressing the Most High were pleasing aspects. Some psalms were sung. It was fitting that the women wore head coverings and the main female mourners were in female dress.

The longstanding funeral plan had the funeral taking place ten days after the Queen’s death. Because this occurred on a Thursday, it would have meant a Sabbath funeral, but thankfully it was changed to the Monday. However, the moving of the Queen’s remains by hearse from Balmoral to Holyrood Palace, Edinburgh, on Sabbath, October 11, a journey that took six hours – to allow the public to pay their respects en route – was unnecessary; it was a contravention of the Fourth Commandment. The following Sabbath, the queues filed past the coffin in Westminster Hall as on the weekdays. Leading politicians from many countries took the opportunity to hold meetings on the Lord’s Day.

During the funeral service in Westminster Abbey the coffin was the focus of attention, with the main mourners sitting facing it. The Dean of Westminster began with prayer, which included a eulogy about the late Queen’s life, sense of duty, Christian faith and love for her family. The prayers throughout the

service were read, and it was clear that the congregation had copies to read for themselves. One questions whether this was prayer at all. It was certainly not a spontaneous offering up of desires unto God with the confession of sin. It seemed ritualistic, formal and spiritually dead compared to the evangelical prayers we are privileged to hear offered at funerals. Sadly, the readings and prayers were taken by both men and women and one by the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Nichols.

The short sermon by the Archbishop of Canterbury was mainly a eulogy and the service was concluded by the Archbishop commending the Queen's soul to go in peace in the name of the Lord Jesus. This is surely popish. The Queen's soul had passed to eternity at the moment of her death and prayers and commendations for her were no longer required. The service was concluded with a piper's lament.

Although the beauty and grandeur of Westminster Abbey is pleasing and stirring to the eye of sense and the natural heart, we must contrast the Queen's funeral to the simplicity of the family worship of which the Free Presbyterian funeral is comprised. Here there is no extolling of the creature, only the worship of God, the pointing out of death as being the wages of sin and the exaltation of Christ as the way of salvation from sin and the directing of mourners to the Most High as the only source of comfort and help.

We conclude that the state funeral of our late Monarch contained elements for which we are thankful. But was it the worship of God, or simply an occasion of pomp and ceremony to which the worship of God was coincidental?

FRD

Scottish Gender Recognition Reform

A Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC) is a certificate that legally recognises that a person's gender is not the gender they were "assigned" at birth but their "acquired gender". The current process for obtaining a GRC is set out in the Gender Recognition Act 2004. A new bill, the Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill, seeks to amend the 2004 Act and set up a new process, and is currently passing through the Scottish Parliament. On October 27 the Bill cleared its first parliamentary hurdle by a large majority (88 votes to 33) even though a Scottish Government minister resigned and seven Scottish National Party MSPs defied the whip and voted against the bill, with an additional 2 abstentions.

The bill seeks to:

- remove the requirement currently in place in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, for a medical diagnosis of gender dysphoria when seeking a Gender Recognition Certificate;

- reduce the time an applicant must live in their acquired gender from two years to three months, with an additional 3-month period of reflection;
- reduce the minimum age for getting a GRC from 18 to 16.

The leader of the Scottish Liberal Democrats, who support the Bill, described the above changes as simply a technical amendment to the law!

One reads of children much younger than 16 whose lives have been blighted by medical interventions of one kind or another. No one doubts that young people can be confused about sexuality and gender issues but the majority of those who are confused need guidance, help and time for their confusion to clear. They should not be encouraged and enabled to make life-changing decisions at a young age.

Many people have raised concerns that the resultant ease of altering one's gender will put women's and girls' rights at risk even more than they are at the moment. Predatory men could abuse the system in order to enter single-sex spaces. It is argued that women's refuges, changing rooms, single-sex wards and similar spaces would no longer be safe places for women.

In advocating the change, the Social Justice Secretary, Shona Robison, called the current system, "intrusive, medicalised and bureaucratic," and said, "Our support for trans rights does not conflict with our continued strong commitment to uphold the rights and protections that women and girls currently have under the 2010 Equality Act".

In stage two of the process, MSPs are able to propose changes or amendments to the Bill. It has been reported that some of those who voted in support of the first stage of the Bill have serious reservations about some of its proposals. However, having voted for the thrust of the Bill they are not likely to vote against it. There will be another debate and a vote on the updated Bill which, if successful, will see it pass into law.

The mad march down the transgender road continues, and one finds it difficult to believe how far the nation has strayed from its Christian heritage. We should be praying earnestly that the Lord would turn us, rulers and people, to Himself once again and that the Bible would become the nation's guide and rule.

FRD

Pagan Origins of Christmas

The fact that Christmas has pagan origins should be familiar enough to readers of this *Magazine*. However, it is still important to remind ourselves of the true nature of this ungodly festival lest we cease to contend against it as earnestly as previous generations did. The festival of the winter solstice has been widely practised in Asia and Europe over thousands of years. It has been closely associated with giving and receiving gifts, partaking of special

food and drink and, often, with excess in fleshly indulgence. But behind all of this a religious aspect lurks. December 25 was celebrated in the ancient world to mark the passing of the old life, symbolised by the winter, and the beginning of new life. In ancient Roman religion, this feast was celebrated to mark the birth of the unconquered god of the sun.

These widespread, popular festivities were easily adopted by the Christian Church when it began its rapid course of declension in the period from the fourth century AD, when many former heathen idolaters were admitted to the Church through baptism. It was obvious that many of these people had not forsaken their strong attachment to many aspects of heathenism. As a result, the Christian Church became more and more conformed to the practices and superstitions of the ungodly world. The development of apostate Popery – Satan’s great masterpiece – was greatly aided by this policy of accommodating pagan practices within the pale of the Christian Church.

Sadly, the celebration of Christmas is now almost universal in Reformed and Evangelical Churches. As the pure light of the truth has been obscured or lost, so the false light of Christmas has appeared more and more prominently. This stands in stark contrast to the complete repudiation of it which was practised by the Scottish Presbyterians and the English Puritans in the period after the Reformation. They rightly concluded that it had no place in the Church and should have no place in our lives.

We must be careful that we do not give place to the culture of the unbelieving world all around us, nor to the downgrade in practice which has infiltrated the Churches in our day. Let us not give way to the blandishments which would soften our opposition to observing Christmas by treating it as a family day or a special day for children. Such an outlook only encourages others to observe a festival which is highly displeasing in the eyes of the Lord. “What communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? Or what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?” (2 Cor 6:14-16). *AWM*

Britain as a Lunatic Asylum

A famous engraving by the satirical artist William Hogarth shows two fashionable ladies visiting the London lunatic asylum known as Bedlam in 1735. It is an open day at the asylum, and visitors can pay to see the inmates. Some of them are confined to their cells, including a naked man with a crown on his head who thinks that he is a king, and a religious fanatic worshipping his cross. Other inmates are allowed into the gallery. Here are found two deranged scientists – one studying the stars through a useless tube of paper; the other calculating the longitude from scribbles on the wall. A mad musician plays

his violin with a stick, wearing the score on his head; a man with a dunce's hat supposes that he is the Pope; and a love-sick man with a dog barking at him has carved the initials of his obsession (a notorious prostitute of the day) on the banister. From outside, the attendants look in through the bars.

Britain must currently present a similar sight to the angels. Here are people pretending that they can change their sex; here are others gluing themselves to the road because of climate-change. Here are people slaughtering hundreds of thousands of beautiful unborn babies; and here is a Parliament passing laws to protect the sensitive feelings of these murderers. Here are thousands of illegal immigrants being helped ashore to enjoy benefits and healthcare that they cannot get elsewhere. Here is a prime minister worshipping an elephant-god. Here are scientists and philosophers, surrounded by evidence of God's Being and wisdom but denying His existence. Here are religious leaders with the Bible in their hands, yet missing the way of salvation themselves and pointing others away from it. Here is Satan, looking on through the bars. And here, underneath it all, are the jaws of hell daily receiving multitudes.

Truly, God has given Britain up to judgement, because of her rejection of Christ. "Because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee" (Hos 4:6). "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools" (Rom 1:22).

DWBS

Church Information

Ordination and Induction of Rev John Campbell

On a calm evening, on August 9 last summer, the Western Presbytery met in the Staffin Church for the Ordination and Induction of Rev John Campbell. A large congregation gathered, with some travelling from the south and north of the country, as well as a good number of Skye people from the other congregations on the Island. The preliminary procedures having been conducted by the Presbytery in the vestry, the Moderator of the Presbytery, Rev Bruce Jardine, and the Clerk, Rev Iain MacDonald, went to the pulpit. As usual, ministers from outside the bounds of the Presbytery were associated with the Court.

The Clerk then conducted Divine worship, and preached from Psalm 126: 5,6. Thereafter, the Clerk gave a brief overview of the steps leading to the call, and the Moderator proceeded to address to Rev John Campbell the relevant questions used on such occasions. Mr Campbell answered these satisfactorily. The formula was then read and signed by him in the presence of the cong-

regation. The Moderator, having asked Mr Campbell to kneel, ordained him to the office of the holy ministry with solemn prayer to the Most High and with the laying on of hands, in which all ministers present joined. Mr Campbell was then admitted to the pastoral charge of the Staffin congregation, and given the right hand of fellowship by the Moderator, other Presbytery members and the ministers present from other presbyteries.

Rev Donald Ross suitably addressed the newly ordained and inducted minister. The Moderator then addressed the congregation as to their duty in relation to their new minister, stressing among other things the importance of regular attendance on the public worship. Brotherly good wishes were expressed in letters received by the Clerk from Revs Wilfred Weale, Keith Watkins, John Morrison, Dmytro Levytskyi, Neil Ross, and George MacDonald, and these were read out. Rev K D Macleod, representing the Northern Presbytery, along with Rev Allan MacColl, spoke of the need for the Holy Spirit to accompany the labours of the new minister. Rev D Campbell, representing the Southern Presbytery, also spoke suitably.

After the benediction, the numerous congregation had the opportunity of shaking hands with the newly ordained and inducted minister on their way out of the church. In view of the prevalence of Covid 19, it was deemed consistent and prudent to withhold the catering arrangements normally made for such occasions.

Great is the need for showers of heavenly blessing to accompany the newly begun ministry in Staffin. For the dry bones to live requires nothing less than Divine power, by the Holy Spirit's working in the hearts of sinners. May the ministry thus begun be blessed to the strengthening of the Lord's people, and the convicting and converting of sinners, so that the Saviour would have a seed to serve Him in this remote corner of the earth!

(Rev) *I D MacDonald*, Clerk of Presbytery

College and Library Fund

By appointment of Synod, the second of the year's two special collections for the College and Library Fund is due to be taken in congregations in December.

W Campbell, General Treasurer

That affliction is both designed and fitted to call us to the exercise of faith is evident, as well from the general scope of Scripture, as from the experience of every believer. Presumption and despair are the two great rocks on which we are ever in danger of making shipwreck. . . . Why should any man *despair* who reads of the thief who was converted on the cross? . . . Who dare *presume* when he reads that there was another thief on another cross who died unconverted there? . . . The one was taken and the other left.

James Buchanan

The Free Presbyterian Magazine

2022

Volume 127

Editor:
Rev Kenneth D Macleod

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

Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland

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FREE PRESBYTERIAN PLACES OF WORSHIP

Scotland

- Aberdeen:** 2 Alford Place, AB10 1YD, Sabbath 11 am, 6 pm; Tuesday, 7.15 pm. Rev D W B Somerset BSc DP Hill, 18 Carlton Place, Aberdeen, AB15 4BQ; tel: 01224 645250.
- Bracadale Duirinish-Strath:** **Struan:** Sabbath 12 noon. **Glendale** and **Vatten:** Sabbath 6pm, alternately. Thursday 7 pm, rotating between Struan, Vatten and Glendale. Contact Rev I D MacDonald; tel: 01478 612110.
- Dingwall:** Church, Hill Street, IV15 9JP: Sabbath 11 am, 6.30 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. **Beauly** (Balblair): Sabbath 6.30 pm, Thursday 7.30 pm. Rev A W MacColl MA PhD, 10 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. **Stratherick:** 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, 5 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 712118. 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; **Strathly:** 6 pm, first and third Sabbaths of month.
- Harris (North): Tarbert:** Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm. **Tarbert** and **Stockinish:** Wednesday 7 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. 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 7.30 pm. Rev J Campbell, Clachan, Staffin, IV51 9HY; tel: 07485 008414; e-mail: johntwin20@btinternet.com.
- 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 Upper Room (second floor), 11 Wilmslow Road, Cheadle SK8 1DW; (entrance is from the car park at the back of the 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 10.30 am, 5.30 pm; Wednesday 7.15 pm. Manse. Contact Mr Hugh Campbell; tel: 01923 442497.

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.

USA

Santa Fe, Texas: Church and Manse, 4031 Jackson St 77517. Sabbath 10.30 am, 5 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. Contact Mr Joseph Smith; tel: 409 927 1564.

Australia

Grafton, NSW: 172 Fitzroy Street. Sabbath 11 am, 6.30 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. Rev G G Hutton BA PhD, 3 Martin Crescent, Junction Hill, NSW 2460; tel: (02) 6644 6174; e-mail: grafton@internode.on.net.

Sydney, NSW: Corner of Oxford and Regent Streets, Riverstone. Sabbath 10.30 am, 6 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. Rev G B Macdonald BSc, 60 Hamilton St, Riverstone, NSW 2765; tel. (02) 9627 3408; e-mail: sydneyfchurch@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, 5 Goldsmith St, Elgin, Gisborne 4010; tel: 06 863 3140; mobile: 022 409 1336.

Tauranga: For 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 Levyskyi; tel: 00 38 048 785 19 24; e-mail: dlevyskyi@gmail.com; or contact Mr I Zadorozhnyi, P O Box 100, Odessa-91, 65091; e-mail: antipa@eurocom.od.ua.

Zimbabwe

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

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

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

New Canaan: Church. Rev T Mwedzi.

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