

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, Scourie; **Third:** Edinburgh; **Fifth:** Chiedza.

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

July: First Sabbath: Beaulay; **Second:** Bonar Bridge, Staffin, Uig; **Third:** Shieldaig, Fort William; **Fourth:** Auckland. **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; **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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Spiritual Judgements

Thomas Brooks is today one of the better-known Puritans, because of his writings (six substantial volumes, in the nineteenth-century edition, which the Banner of Truth has reprinted). But little is known about his life. He was born in 1608 and was licensed to preach the gospel in 1640. Before being licensed, he seems to have been some years at sea, possibly as a chaplain. He became a minister in London, but was ejected from his charge in 1662 after the passing of the Act of Uniformity. Yet he seems to have been able to continue preaching within the bounds of his parish. He died in 1680. C H Spurgeon wrote that “he was head and shoulders above all the people . . . in mind and soul and grace”.¹

In one of his books, Brooks wrote, “As there are no mercies equal to spiritual mercies, so there are no judgements equal to spiritual judgements”.² Brooks lived through the English Civil War, and surely a civil war is one of the worst temporal judgements that can befall a nation. It involves such killing and suffering and enmity among people who, even if they had not actually been friends, may at least have been conscious of the bond of unity resulting from belonging to the same country.

But Brooks also experienced the Great Ejection, when close on 2000 ministers were forbidden to preach. It was an act of persecution on the part of the civil and ecclesiastical authorities but, as far as the nation and its people were concerned, it was a judgement from God – a spiritual judgement. And it was one of the most serious of judgements because many people throughout England – and the situation in Scotland was similar – were no longer able to hear scriptural preaching. A few godly preachers did remain in the Church of England, and many who had been ejected did what they could to minister to the spiritual needs of their flocks. We might think of these things as, especially, God’s judgement on the many who did not value their opportunities when the pure gospel was set before them, who continued in unbelief – and then their opportunities were withdrawn.

¹Brooks, *Smooth Stones Taken From Ancient Brooks: Selections From the Writings of Thomas Brooks* by C H Spurgeon, Banner of Truth Trust, 2021 reprint, p v.

²Brooks, *Smooth Stones*, p 23.

Temporal judgements affect people in this life, often very severely indeed, but spiritual judgements have serious implications also for eternity. When God abandons a people or an individual to their own spiritual thinking, or to the entire absence of biblical thinking, they are being left on the way to a lost eternity, and no other judgement can be as awful as that.

The United Kingdom, though it has been spared civil war for most of 300 years, has experienced many judgements, including her involvement in two world wars during the last 120 years. Today, economic prospects are darker than they have been for many years, and that has implications for many aspects of life. And among the other temporal judgements that this and other nations have experienced in the recent past has been the Covid pandemic. But far more serious is the religious situation in such countries as Britain; we are in the midst of a severe spiritual judgement. Yet how few are conscious of the severity of our situation!

Long ago, the Prophet Amos spoke of the Lord sending “a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord” (8:11). Today there is no shortage of God’s Word in printed form; it can be bought on many high streets and shopping centres, for instance, in the United Kingdom. What is lacking is the will to read the Scriptures, to “hear what God the Lord will speak” (Ps 85:8). It is a great mercy when God makes a sinner willing to search the Scriptures, to discover what God’s message is to him or her in particular, and the absence of God’s activity in making sinners willing to search out God’s revelation is itself a judgement on the rebellious attitudes that are so common today.

But Amos used the word *hearing* rather than *reading*. And while a Bible may be easily obtained, the preaching of the Word, in any degree of purity, is often much more difficult to find; many of the candlesticks which once shone brightly in so many British communities have been removed, as happened in Ephesus (see Rev 2:5). For God to remove the preaching of law and gospel from a town or a village is a very serious matter, a judgement following the unwillingness of the local people to take to heart the great privilege of being called to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Saviour whom God has given for the salvation of sinners.

There is a widespread resistance today to the authority of God and to the revelation He has given, a resistance that has its root in hardness of heart. God is very largely leaving sinners to themselves, in His judgement on this generation. He spoke of blessing the Jews after their captivity in Babylon by taking away the stony heart out of their flesh and giving them instead a heart of flesh (Ezek 36:26). No impression can be made on a heart of stone; it is entirely impossible for it to receive any spiritual impression. No matter how

powerfully a preacher might proclaim the Word of God, no impression will be made on hardhearted sinners apart from the accompanying influence of God's Spirit – unless the Spirit will renew their hearts, making those sinners spiritually alive, so that they are able to repent and believe the gospel.

But the Holy Spirit has been very largely withdrawn. He is not, on any large scale, convincing sinners of God's existence; He is leaving them, for instance, to the influence of the theory of evolution, which naturally leads most of those who accept it to deny that God exists.³ Yet for many more, the prevailing motivation for their ungodliness is the philosophy, "Let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we shall die" (Is 22:13). They live for the here and now, without any regard to spiritual realities or to the eternity into which they must inevitably enter. This is the way of life to which God has abandoned so many in this generation.

Yet David could say, "Thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion" (Ps 86:15). Being full of compassion, God is able to look on the needs of sinners, and of a whole generation of sinners, with a view to providing for them spiritually, to bring them in contact with spiritual truth, to bless the truth to them by the Holy Spirit, to take away their hardness and their rejection of Him. How much we need to pray, "Wilt Thou not revive us again?" (Ps 85:6). The Lord is the living God, who is able to fulfill all His purposes. He can give life to dead souls, even as the Saviour told the people of His time: "God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham" (Mt 3:9) – to make spiritually dead sinners into true believers.

If God will in mercy powerfully revive His Church in this world through the widespread, effectual working of His Spirit, there will be many who will be described as the Welsh preacher Thomas Charles (1755-1814) was described: "When he speaks of God, he does so like one who has seen Him who is invisible. When he describes the deceitfulness of the heart and the evil of sin, he does so as one who had known both [these matters] by sad experience, and had found how injurious they are and what misery they bring. When again he delineates the glory and sufficiency of the Saviour, and the value of His word, he does so as one who had seen His glory, experienced His sufficiency, and found how precious He is."⁴ When many such people are raised up – in particular, preachers of the gospel, Brooks' words will be proved true: "There are no mercies equal to spiritual mercies".

³Some do believe in theistic evolution, which claims that God brought everything into existence by a process of evolution. However, the Bible clearly points to God as the Creator, who made all things in six actual days, not by billions of years of evolution. It is "through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God" (Heb 11:3).

⁴The words of Edward Morgan, quoted in John Aaron, *Thomas Charles of Bala*, Banner of Truth, 2022, p 337.

No Room in the Inn¹

A Sermon by Rev Angus Smith

Luke 2:7. *There was no room for them in the inn.*

The man who wrote this Gospel was Luke, a doctor by profession. It would seem that he came under the influence of the gospel through the Apostle Paul. But only the Apostles were enabled to teach and write infallibly. Christ had promised them that He would bring to their remembrance all things that He had ever taught them. And all these things were written under the supervision of the Apostles.

Luke's Gospel is not a story he invented; it is what happened in history. He recorded the greatest event that ever took place – the Lord Jesus came into time. The God of eternity opened the curtain between eternity and time, and came into time. He took our human nature to Himself, so that He would work out salvation. Luke says, "There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zacharias" (Lk 1:5). He is tying Christ's coming to certain times in history. The enemies of the Word of God would say there never was such a person. But Luke makes use of history and says, What I am speaking of truly happened, in the days of a king called Herod.

He begins chapter 2 by saying, "It came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.)" The enemies of the gospel used to say, This Cyrenius never existed. But evidence of his existence appeared. This taxing was really a census of all the people in the Roman Empire to enable taxation. Again those who delved into history found there was this taxing, or census, in the days of Augustus. Christ coming into the world was history. The whole of time revolves around that one incident, but the devil would blind the minds of men so that they would not know these things and would perish for ever.

We should like to think of two things: (1.) The place of Christ's birth; (2.) The sad words: "no room for them in the inn".

1. The place of Christ's birth. Matthew quotes from Micah 5:2, "But thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting". How did He come to be born in Bethlehem? We know it was foreordained, for the Lord foreordains whatsoever comes to pass; nothing is outside God's foreordination. Even the fact of sin in the Fall of man is in the plan of God, although man fell by his own will.

¹A sermon preached in Santa Fe, Texas in 2000.

Mary, we are told, was heavy with child. The child was about to be born, and yet a decree had gone out from the Emperor that every name had to be registered. Joseph, as well as Mary, really belonged to Bethlehem. They were descended from David, and Bethlehem was the city of David. For the purposes of this census, everyone had to go to his family town. Although Mary was as she was, Joseph and Mary had to go. That was Caesar's decree. But what Caesar did not know was that the Lord Most High had ordered this so that Joseph would be drawn to Bethlehem, along with Mary. You see the plan of God in all of these things.

Difficult as it was for Mary to travel, they went to Bethlehem, and there the Child was born. God rules in our lives; there is a time to be born and a time to die, and it is the Lord who sets these boundaries in our lives. Men think that they rule in these matters. Men think that they can change these things, but it is the Lord who rules. He gives life and he takes life away. There comes a time when the silver cord must be loosed, when the pitcher must be broken at the well. This was the time that was set, and Christ the Son of God came into the world as a tiny child.

Think of it, a child that could not look after itself. This Child was God-man, but he took the likeness of sinful flesh, yet separate from sinners. He was weak, He had to be cleaned, fed, clothed, kept warm. He could not do these things for himself in His human nature. He had to be lifted; He could not stand on his own feet. Mentally he had to grow. He took His humanity from Mary; He was a real human child, although he was God. He took upon Himself these weaknesses of humanity, because he was there to pay the ransom price, so that His people might be saved from their sin.

All that took place in Bethlehem. Bethlehem means the "house of bread". When you see *Beth* in a name in Scripture, it always means "house". Many names in Scripture begin with *Beth*, but this was the "house of bread" because it was a very fertile area. Yet there was a deeper reason: the Bread of Life, the Bread that came down from heaven, the manna, was to be in Bethlehem. He came into the world as the only bread that can feed a poor, perishing sinner. And if we feed upon Christ, we will never perish; we will never suffer eternal death.

Some would keep him as a babe. But if Christ was only a babe, He could not save our souls. Christ had to grow up; He had to suffer; He had to die; He had to work out a complete redemption. We cannot stop at the cradle. We have to go to the Christ who has finished the work He was given to do and has gone to the Father. "I am the living bread", He said, "which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever." And the great question is, Have we ever fed upon Christ? Did we ever taste the sweet-

ness of this Saviour in our souls? There is nothing sweeter in the world, than tasting of Christ as a personal Saviour, whether you are a boy or girl, or a grown man or woman – whether you are young or old.

He was born, it would seem, during the night. And the shepherds, who were keeping their sheep by night, were informed. The world was in spiritual darkness too. This is a dark world. Young folk tend to think that it is a world full of happiness, and they promise themselves great happiness in the future. They are going to grow up and to have lots of money, a good job, a marriage and children and a home and cars, and everything else they could wish for. But that is not the true picture. The Word of God says that the world lies in sin, or in the evil one.

The devil seeks to call himself the prince of the world. He is a prince of darkness and rules over the minds and hearts of men and women in the world, not only in the places where there is no gospel, but even where the gospel is. We see the devil ruling over the minds and hearts of men and women, and there is a spiritual warfare. The Holy Spirit is blessing the gospel, and He is breaking into the darkness, so that the devil will be driven out of souls, and that Christ will come in and reign there. If you come to know Christ, you will know that you live in a world of darkness, where the devil will war against you and seek to ensnare you in darkness once more. If Christ comes into your life, you become a son or a daughter of light. He is light, and He shines into the soul, and you are in an alien world then. You realise that the world lies in darkness.

Jesus came into that world. We know it is in darkness because, in a very short space of time, Herod had every child of two years and under wiped out in Bethlehem. Up to two years, just to make sure that he would kill Christ, the One who was born the King of the Jews – as well as the rest.

When was this child born? The Word of God told the Jews where He was going to be born. The Jews knew where the Messiah was to be born; they knew too when He was to be cut off, because Daniel had foretold that. So they should have known that it was time to be on the watchtower, seeking for the coming of the Saviour. They should have known that! But when Christ was born, where were the great men of the land? Where were the priests? Where were the teachers of Scripture? They were not to be seen. Does that not show you the darkness of the human heart? These people had the Bible. Yet see the great darkness. They did not come. Yet when the Queen of Britain and Canada had a son, the whole world knew. But when the King of glory came into the world and was born as a child, the world was totally indifferent to what had taken place – even the people of the Jews.

We read here that, “while they were there, the days were accomplished

that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son” (Lk 2:6-7a). He was called her “firstborn son”. He was the eldest son of the family. He grew up in that family, and he had brothers and sisters. This shows the darkness: His very brothers and sisters did not believe in Him as the Messiah – not until He rose from the dead. Only then do we read about them believing in Him. Imagine being with His brothers and sisters, day after day, night after night, sitting on the floor with them, being with them as one who was caring for them as the eldest son, and yet they did not know Him! Does not that tell us much about the darkness of the human heart? Unless the Holy Spirit will open the heart, we will be left in darkness.

He was called the firstborn. The firstborn son had special privileges; he would have a double portion of his parents’ goods. But this firstborn was also the firstborn of God. God says of Him: “I will make Him My firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth” (Ps 89:27); and, “Sit Thou on My right hand, till I make Thine enemies Thy footstool” (Mk 12:36).

“She brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn”. The manger is a feeding-box, where cattle and asses would feed. She laid the babe in that feeding-box. That is all we know. That child was wrapped up in swaddling clothes; that is, wrapping-clothes that went around the Child, and Mary placed Him in the manger. She must have been strong enough to get up and do that, and that was of the Lord.

2. There was “no room for them in the inn” – a most sad matter. When they went to Bethlehem, many others would have gone too, and the accommodation would have been taken up. There was none left. We do not know who owned the stable where the manger was. There was no place in the inn for the One who owned all things, the One who made all things, the Creator of heaven and earth, when He came into the world. That is how it is among men in the world. The inn is full. There is no room for Christ. And when you go through the world, that is how you find it. There is no room on the dance-floor for Christ, there is no room in the concert-hall for Christ, there is no room in the drinking-den for Christ. There is no room in any of these places for Christ. They do not want Christ. They will take others, but they will not take Christ. There is no room for Christ in the inn.

But we should like to come a little closer – to come to our own hearts – in speaking of “no room in the inn”. Is there room for Christ in our hearts? You might say, Well, I have a little room for Him. But when Christ comes into the heart, He demands the throne of the heart. He demands to come in as your Saviour, as your God and as your Lord. We read in Scripture that the Lord Jesus says, “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear

My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me” (Rev 3:20). “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock.” And how long has the Lord Jesus been standing there? His head is wet with the dew of the night. How long has He stood at the door of our hearts, never having entered in?

We have been hearing the gospel; we have been reading the Word of God. We have been surrounded by prayer and teaching. And He has also knocked in other ways – in providence. Things have happened to us in our lives: there might have been sickness; there might have been accidents; death might have come into our homes. The Lord has knocked; He has knocked loudly on our doors, and He has said to us, “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock”. It is not as if He is not knocking. It is not as if our conscience does not tell us that the Lord is speaking to us. It is not as if we never feel condemned in our hearts. It is not as if we have never read the Word of God. No. Then let us try and come as close as we can to the inn that really matters, to the soul of man. What really matters to your soul and to mine?

What about time? Did you ever give any of your time to Christ? You see, the most important thing you can do with time is to use it for the salvation of your soul. Nothing else matters compared to that – that your soul would be saved. There are those who say, Well, I am so busy; I just do not seem to have time to think of these things, to concentrate on these things. I get up so early in the morning, and I go off to work; I work so long; I work so late; I am tired and I go to bed and I sleep. There is just no time. I cannot manage it. My diary is full.

If there is no place in the diary for Christ, and if there never will be, better that we had never been born! Better that it had never been told among the neighbours: A child has been born to this house; that man and woman have had a baby. Better that the day of your birth had been taken from among the days. Better if you had never had an existence. Better had you gone from your mother’s womb, having never seen the sun, if you are never going to believe in the Lord Jesus in this world – if you have no time for Him.

But, strangely enough, people have time for other things. The devil comes and says, Give me your time for this. The world comes and says, Give me time for this. And you say, Granted. Yes, I will do that. Then your heart says, Give me time for this. Your lusts say, Give me time for this. And you say, Granted. And the Lord in Scripture says, “Son, [daughter,] give Me thine heart”. Give Me of your time.

There are some people who speak of killing time. I remember in the army, sometimes when the soldiers would be in the barrack room, they would take out a pack of cards and they would play card games to kill time. Have you

ever heard that? To kill time! What a fearful expression! Just to get through it in some way or other. We have half an hour; we have an hour; we do not know what to do with it; we will just kill it. We will occupy it with something; we will just kill it. Do people not realise how precious time is? If Christ will enter into your time, He will enter into the inn of your soul.

There are people who will tell you that the Lord Jesus has had mercy on their souls; they will say, I remember a time. They may have been on their knees, wondering what was going to happen to their souls. And as they were on their knees praying, the Lord came in. Or they may have been reading the Word of God; they were so confused that they did not know how they were. But then, when they were reading the Word of God, the Lord Himself met them, and the portion they were reading became exceedingly precious to their souls.

There were others who were listening to a sermon being preached, and all of a sudden, something from the sermon went through their hearts. Perhaps they were not listening; perhaps they were counting the panes in the windows, or counting how many people were present, or looking at their watches. And then, maybe they listened for a few moments; maybe they concentrated for a few moments and, during that time, the Lord blessed the preaching of the Word to their souls. It may have been something quoted from the pulpit that went like an arrow into their hearts. "Son, [daughter,] give Me thine heart"! And from then on, they could speak of a time.

Yet there are some people who have come to know the Lord but cannot speak of a time. They say, I do not know when this happened. I just do not know. But that does not matter. If you have come to know the Lord, there was a time. Although you cannot locate that time in your experience, these things will be revealed to the soul in eternity. Then the Lord will teach His own about these matters. And it is all precious.

When the Lord takes a soul from death unto life, it is not a process. It is a creative act. It takes place immediately, just as He created the world by the word of His power out of nothing – the world suddenly appeared. That was not a process. That was an immediate act. But when the soul can understand something about it, you say, There was a time when I came to know that the Lord was my Saviour.

I remember reading about Charles Haddon Spurgeon. He used to say that he was converted when he was about 15. He used to say it was a snowy day, and he could not get to the regular place of worship; so he went to one nearby, and he said the man preaching that day was a deacon. Obviously the man had no great grasp of Scripture, but still he was in charge that day, and he took the text, "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth" (Is

45:22). He kept on repeating the text: “Look unto Me; look unto Me”. He did not seem able to expound it, and so he kept repeating it. But Spurgeon said, “I looked, and I saw, and I was saved”.

But when Spurgeon was an older man, he said to his congregation, “You remember how I often told you about my experience of salvation”. He added, “More than a year before then, I remember lying in my bed and having thoughts in my head and in my heart, which today I do not believe anybody could have unless he has grace in his soul”. So, you see, Spurgeon was not all that sure when the time was. More than a year before he heard that man preach, he had thoughts in his heart. And as a mature Christian he said, “I do not believe I could have had them unless the grace of God was in my heart”. When was the time? It does not matter. Our times are in God’s hands. What is important is the time when the Lord comes into the inn, when the Lord comes into the soul. That is all that matters in this world – that we leave this world as poor sinners saved by grace, looking to Christ, and that we go through the world seeking to glorify Him in our bodies and souls and in our families, in our work or wherever we are.

We now ask, Has the Lord Jesus come into our hearts? Do we love the Lord Jesus? Well, some might say, I love my wife, I love my husband, I love my children, I love my parents. That is not the question, but, Do we love the Lord Jesus? Scripture tells us that, if anyone does not love Christ, he is accursed. That is very, very solemn. Say you love a person and you say, But it is surely not sinful to love my wife or my husband above everyone else – or to love my father or mother above everyone else. Yet it is sinful if you do not love the Lord above them – and above our children. He does say, “Honour thy father and thy mother”. But He also says, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength” – with the totality of your being.

We are commanded to love God. That is the sum of the commandments. Do not speak of keeping the Ten Commandments if you do not love God. You are deceiving yourself. You are sinning constantly against God unless your heart has been given to the Lord. “Son, [daughter,]” He says, “give Me thine heart.” He demands it; He has a right to it. Yet you say, I cannot love Him. God says, That inability to love Me is sinful. And you are accountable for all of your sins, and all the inability that is caused by sin. You are accountable before God. Many would blame God; many would excuse themselves, but God says that He will not take their excuse. It is caused by sin. He commands us to trust in Him with our whole heart. He demands the heart, He demands the chief place. That is how we must understand God. He must have the chief place in your heart. And Christ demands to be our God.

Perhaps you are saying, A day will come when the door of the inn will be opened. The day will come when I will trust in Christ. The day will come when I will find time. That is a promise you give to yourself. It is worthless. The promises God gives are precious, but the promises you give yourself are worthless. There are millions in hell who have promised themselves that one day they would come to Christ. There are millions in hell who have wept under the gospel. They have been afraid of hell, afraid of eternal destruction.

Remember, we harden under the gospel. I know men and women in general do not really believe that, but it is the truth. Although the gospel is the most precious thing you can have, you harden under it. You hear it; you might be softened in your heart; you might say, That is a serious matter; I will have to think of that seriously. But the years pass, the tens of years pass, we become old men and old women and go to our deathbed, where we promised we would seek Him. But I have been preaching since 1955 or so. And I cannot – I dare not – say that I have seen a man or a woman turning to Christ on their deathbed. That is my experience, whatever the experience of others may be, and it is a terrible thing. Yet I have seen some who were Christians before that proclaiming that they knew Christ – who had been keeping their light under a bushel, hiding their light.

Do not promise yourself that you are going to do something. When the Holy Spirit of God begins to work, you are not to say, When I go home, I am going to think of these matters. It does not matter who is present or where you are, it must be now, because this is the most important thing that can ever be: there must be room in the inn for the Lord Jesus Christ.

You might be saying to the Lord, I am sorry, but I cannot think of these matters just now; I have other matters to see to. But are these matters more serious or more important? “No room in the inn.” The inns in hell are full: full of devils, but no Christ. And in this world, the inns are full: full of the lusts of the heart, full of sin, full of the world, but no Christ.

I read of a museum, where a shelf of jars had a notice which said, “These jars make up the chemicals and the gases found in the body of a man of 140 pounds weight”. No, a man is a soul as well as a body. He is going to eternity. The inn of a man’s heart must have an occupant. If you do not have the Lord as your God, you have another god. If you are not ruled by God, you are ruled by the devil. You may deny that, but the apostle Paul, by the Holy Spirit, teaches that those who worship idols were really worshipping the devil without knowing, because man is deceived. Why will you perish? Do not enter eternity saying to the Lord, “No room in the inn”. May you be among those who say, “Come in, Thou blessed of the Lord!” May He dwell in your heart to all eternity! May you know Him as your Saviour!

Christ Incarnate, a Sinner's Only Hope¹

C H Spurgeon

There was no hope for any sinner unless the Son of God should save him. But, as the Apostle Paul wrote to his son Timothy, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners". You may measure the depth of our danger by the glory of the person of Him who undertook to deliver sinners from it. It is the Son of God, whom angels worship, who has come "to save sinners". It must be a deep destruction from which only God Himself could rescue man.

When Christ "came into the world", observe how He had to be equipped for His service, and learn the sternness of His task from His equipping. He must be *Jesus* – a Saviour. And then He must also be *Christ* – anointed for the work. He must come with divine authority, and the Spirit of God must rest upon Him to qualify Him for the great undertaking. For Paul does not simply say that *Jesus* came into the world; but *Christ Jesus*, the anointed Saviour, came that He might save. If this divine equipping was needed, then surely the state of man was grievous.

Note also that Christ Jesus *came into the world* to save sinners. The Fall of man was so terrible that, if he was to be delivered from its effects, Christ Jesus must come right down into the place of our ruin; He must come to the dunghill that He might lift us out of it. God in heaven said, "Let there be light," and the darkness fled before Him; but Christ Jesus must come into the world to save sinners; down into this polluted creation, the eternal Creator must Himself descend. He cannot save us sinners, so great is our ruin, unless He becomes incarnate and takes upon Himself our nature.

And being here, think how dreadful must our ruin be when we see that Christ cannot return to heaven, saying, "It is finished," until first of all He dies. That sacred head must be crowned with thorns; those eyes must be closed in the darkness of death; that body must be pierced even to its heart, and then must lie in the grave a chill, cold corpse before man can be redeemed. And all that shame and suffering and death were but the outer shell of what the Saviour suffered, for He endured the fierceness of His Father's wrath against sin and bore such a load as would have crushed the whole race of men eternally if they had been left to bear it.

O sinner, you are awfully lost; you are infinitely lost, since it needs an infinite Saviour to present the atonement of His own body in order to save sinners from the penalty and power and consequences of their sin. This is the

¹Taken from Spurgeon's "*Good Tidings of Great Joy*": *Christ's Incarnation the Foundation of Christianity*.

truth which is conveyed to us by this faithful saying which is “worthy of all acceptance”. May the Holy Ghost write it on our hearts!

There is one thing which should be sure to hold the attention of every trembling sinner, as if spellbound; it is this: the Christ of God, who appeared in the end of the world, did not come to deny the fact of human sin, or to propagate a philosophy which might make sin seem harmless, or to define it as a mere mistake, or perhaps as a calamity, but by no means as a hell-deserving crime. I am sure that every sensitive conscience would loathe such teaching; but it could yield no comfort whatever to a soul which had felt sin to be exceeding sinful.

Jesus Christ did not come into the world to help you to forget your sin. He has not come to provide you with a cloak with which to cover it. He has not appeared that He may so strengthen your minds (as some men would have you believe) that you may learn to laugh at your iniquities and defy the consequences of them. For no such reason has the Son of God descended from heaven to earth. He has come, not to lull you into a false peace, not to whisper consolation which would turn out to be delusive in the end, but to give you a true peace in which you may safely rejoice.

For if sin is put away, then peace is lawful; then rest of spirit becomes not only a blessing which we may enjoy, but which we must enjoy and which, the more we shall enjoy it, the better we shall please our God. O sinner, the good tidings that we bring to you, in the gospel, are not the mere glitter of a hope that will delude you at the last, not a present palliative for the woe you feel, but a real cure for all your ills, a sure and certain deliverance from all the danger that now hangs over you.

Preaching Christ¹

8. Three Rules for Preaching Christ

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.*

By way of application, let me say that this truth looks very sourly and intently on all those that preach anything rather than Christ. The Lord be merciful to them! How they have forgotten the great work about which their heads and hearts should be most exercised – namely, to bring in souls to

¹Taken, with editing, from Brooks' *Works*, vol 3. Last month's article spoke of ministers preaching Christ acceptably and constantly. This is the final article in the series.

Christ and to build them up in Christ! Where do we find in all the Scripture that Christ, His prophets or apostles, did ever in their preaching meddle with the affairs of state, or things of merely civil concern? “My kingdom is not of this world”; “Who made me a judge?” says Christ.

I hope it will not be counted presumption in me if I shall propound a few rules for ministers to observe that are willing to preach Christ to poor souls. I will only put forward three.

[1.] *If you would preach Christ to the people, according to the rules already mentioned, you must have Christ within you.* Nothing makes a man so able to preach Christ to the people as having Christ within him. It is very noticeable that the great rabbis and scholars that do not have Christ within, they bungle the work of the Lord in preaching a crucified Jesus. Were it not for the help of [the writings of] men such as Augustine, Chrysostom, Ambrose and Tertullian,² what sad, dead and pitiful work they would make! For lack of a Christ within, how little of Christ do they understand! How little of Christ do they make known, notwithstanding all their borrowed helps!

Paul had a Christ within him: “I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live . . . I live by the faith of the Son of God” (Gal 2:20). Compare this with Galatians 4:19, “My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you”. A Christ within makes him travail in birth. The Greek word translated, “I travail in birth”, signifies not only the travail of the woman at the birth of the child, but also the painful bearing of it before the birth. The pains of travail breed not a greater desire to see a man-child born into the world than Paul’s love bred in him, till Christ would be anew formed in them (Gal 4:19). No man did so much for the winning of souls to Christ as Paul, and no man had so much of a Christ within him as Paul.

Nothing will turn a minister’s heart to his work like a Christ within; nothing will make him so wise, so painstaking, so watchful, so careful to win souls, as a Christ within; nothing will make him hold out and hold on in the work of the Lord, in the face of all oppositions, persecutions, dangers and deaths, as a Christ within; nothing will make a man strive with sinners, and weep over sinners, and wait upon sinners for their return, as a Christ within. Those ministers who do not have a Christ within them will find no comfort, and as little success, in their preaching of Christ. Above all getting, get a Christ within, or else after all your preaching, you will yourself be a castaway.

[2.] *They that would preach Christ to the people, must study more the truths and mysteries of Scripture than human histories.* They must study God’s book more than all other books. The truth and antiquity of the book

²Prominent leaders in the early Christian Church.

of God finds no companion either in age or authority. No histories are comparable to the histories of the Scriptures for antiquity, preciousness, variety, brevity, perspicuity, harmony, verity.

Gregory calls the Scriptures the heart and soul of God, for in the Scriptures, as in a glass, we may see how the heart and soul of God stands towards His poor creatures. It was the glory of Apollos that he was “mighty in the Scriptures” (Acts 18:24). “*Search the Scriptures*” (Jn 5:39), says Christ. The Greek word signifies to search as men search for gold in mines. You must search the Scriptures, not superficially but narrowly.

The Scriptures are a great depth, wherein the choicest treasures are hid; therefore you must dig deep if you wish to find. “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly” (Col 3:16). Let the word of Christ indwell you, as an engrafted word, incorporated into your souls. Let the word be so digested by you that you turn it into a part of yourselves. You must be familiarly acquainted with the Word; you must not let it pass by you as a stranger, or lodge and sojourn with you as a wayfaring man; it must continually abide with you and dwell richly in you: “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof; for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim 3:16,17). No books and helps are comparable to the Bible for the completing and perfecting of a man for the work of the ministry.

What a Roman Catholic reports of their sacrament of the mass, that there are as many mysteries in it as there are drops in the sea, dust on the earth, angels in heaven, stars in the sky, atoms in the sunbeams, or sands on the sea-shore, may be truly asserted of the Word of God; no study compares to the study of the Scripture for profit and comfort. Count Anhalt, that princely preacher, was wont to say that “the whole Scriptures are the swaddling bands of the child Jesus”. He is to be found almost in every page, in every verse, in every line.³ Luther would often say that he had rather that all his books should be burned than that they should be a means to hinder people from studying of the Scripture.

[3.] *Such as would preach Christ aright to the people need to dwell much upon the vanity of human doctrines.* The vanity of these doctrines may be thus discovered:

First. They do not discover sin in its ugliness and filthiness as the Scriptures do. They search but to the skin, they do not reach to the heart; they do not do as the master did in Jonah’s ship, when they were in a storm.

Second. Human doctrines have no humbling power in them. They may

³“While they burned us for reading the Scriptures,” said Pierre Du Moulin, a Huguenot minister in France, “we burned with zeal to be reading them.” But where is this spirit now?

tickle you a little, but they can never humble you; they cannot cast down Satan's strongholds; they cannot melt or break the heart of a sinner; they cannot make him cry out with the leper, "Unclean, unclean".

Third. Human doctrines do not nourish the noble part, the soul of man. The prodigal was like to starve before he returned to his father's house. A man may study much, labour much, and lay out much of his time and spirits on human doctrines, and yet after all be like Pharaoh's lean kine. A man that studies human doctrines feeds only on ashes.

Fourth. Human doctrines cannot cure a wound in the conscience. The diseased woman spent all she had on physicians, but was not a penny the better. The remedy is too weak for the disease. Conscience will still lie gnawing notwithstanding all that such doctrines can do.

Fifth. Human doctrines are so far from enriching the soul that they usually impoverish the soul. They weaken the soul; they expose it to the greatest needs and to the greatest weaknesses; they play the harlot with the soul; they impoverish it and bring it to a morsel of bread. Who so poor in spiritual experiences and heavenly enjoyments as those who sit under human doctrines?

Sixth. Human doctrines make men servants to the moods and corruptions of men; they make men to be pleasers of men rather than pleasers of God; indeed they make men set up themselves and others, sometimes in the room of Christ and sometimes above Christ.

I hope these few short hints may prevail with some to fall in with this counsel, that they may preach the Lord Jesus better to the people.

Points of Christian Experience (1)¹

John Newton

I wish you to believe that I would be no advocate for carelessness or formality. I hope my conscience bears me witness that, besides trusting in the letter of the Scripture, I likewise desire an increase of that inward and comforting sense of Divine things in which I believe you are happy. I wish not only to be a subject of the kingdom of Jesus, but likewise to have that kingdom powerfully set up in my heart, which consists of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. Indeed, I do not see how these can be distinguished, or what ground I could have to think that I am a subject of His kingdom, unless I earnestly desired to have that kingdom in all its branches and blessings flourishing in my soul. I do not know that I live in the neglect of any means appointed by God for my growth in these blessings, or willingly allow

¹The first part of a letter to a friend, taken with editing from Newton's *Works*, vol 1.

myself to do what is inconsistent with them. I think my heart is habitually in pursuit of them and that there is seldom an hour in any day when lively communion with my God, in Christ, is not present to my view as the chief good.

To this purpose, through grace, I can venture to express myself to man. Yet, notwithstanding the diligence and care I would aim at, it is still true that, when I come before the Lord, I see myself a poor inconsistent creature, my strength is perfect weakness, and all I have is sin. I confess I am afraid of fixing the criterion of a work of grace too high, lest the mourners in Zion should be discouraged, because I find it is the will of God that such people should not be discouraged but comforted, and because it appears to me that the Scriptural marks relate rather to desires, if real, than to attainments, or at least to those attainments which those often possess who are kept very short of conscious comforts (Mt 5:3-9, Lk 18:12,13, 1 Pet 2:7).

The points between you and me seem chiefly the following: (1.) When may a person be properly denominated a believer? (2.) What are the proper evidences that necessarily accompany a lively, thriving frame of spirit? (3.) Will such a degree of faithfulness to light received, as is consistent with the remnant of a depraved nature in our present state, certainly and always preserve our souls from declensions and winter seasons? (4.) Is that gracious humility, which arises from a due sense of our own vileness and of the riches of Divine grace, ordinarily attainable without some mortifying experience of the deceitfulness and desperate wickedness of our own hearts? A few lines on each of these particulars, will, I think, take in the chief parts of your letter.

1. We differ somewhat about *what constitutes a believer*. I own nothing has surprised me more, in the course of our friendly debate, than that you suppose a person should date his conversion and the beginning of his believing, from the time he receives the truths of the gospel with that clearness and power as to produce in him an abiding assurance. By the experience and observation of many years, I have been more and more persuaded that to represent assurance as of the essence of faith, does not agree with Scripture, which in many places either expressly asserts, or strongly intimates, the contrary (Jn 1:50, 20:29; Rom 10:9; 1 Jn 5:1).

Whoever is not a believer must be an unbeliever; there can be no middle ground. Either there are many believers who do not have assurance, or else there are many unbelievers who love the Lord Jesus, hate sin, are poor in spirit, and adorn the doctrine of the gospel by their temper and life. I do not doubt but those who now have assurance had, before they attained it, a something which wrought by love and overcame the world. I do not know any principle capable of these effects but faith, which is the seed of God, though at first it is like a grain of mustard seed; though it is faint, it is genuine,

as the dawning light is of the same nature with the light that flows from the sun at noon. I allow that, while faith is weak, there may be little solid comfort, if that expression means abiding comfort. Faith gives safety and spiritual life; abiding peace and establishment may follow. But though an infant does not have the strength, activity and understanding which he will attain when he arrives to the age of manhood, he is as fully possessed of a principle of life while he is an infant as at any time afterwards.

Mbuma Mission Meeting

Rev D A Ross

After the absence of such meetings for three years due to the Covid pandemic, the return to normality was a great pleasure for the Mbuma Zending Committee as well as for the nearly 3000 people who came to Gorinchem, on 27 April 2022, for the Mbuma Mission Day. It was also a great pleasure for myself as I mingled with the people and addressed the large gathering.

The Chairman, Ds Van Voorden, pastor of the Gereformeerde Gemeente in Nederland in Leerdam, said in his introduction that he had feared that the absence of a Mission Day for three years may well have impacted on the number of those attending as well as the donations. He was overjoyed to see that this was not the case. Despite the long absence of the mission meetings, the enthusiasm of the people was unabated and seemed a token of the Lord's approval for such work as promotes the welfare of those in need, especially when it contributes to the spiritual good of sinners.

The collection that day was €51 000 which did not include money from those who specifically sold off their merchandise for the Mbuma Mission. This was similar, I suppose, to those who sold their lands in the early days of the New Testament Church and laid the sum at the Apostles' feet for the furtherance of mission work (Acts 4:34,35).

It is a remarkable providence, indeed one of many, in the life of our Church work in Africa, that financial and other forms of support from Holland have continued. The first Mbuma Zending Meeting was in 1964, and there was hearty support from friends in Holland before then. In view of this we have reason to keep reminding ourselves that, without this long history of support, we would not be in the position as a Church to maintain our mission in Africa. Moreover, there is a greater giving besides donations of money and other material benefits – people giving their working lives to serve in our Mission, including those parts which serve as handmaids to the gospel.

In reminding ourselves of the vast amount of work our Dutch friends engage in, we in no way forget the ongoing contributions of our own people in the homeland and from other parts of the world to support the Mission. Nor do we forget the greater value of their pleading at a throne of grace for the success of the gospel. It is ultimately the gospel that the Lord, by His Holy Spirit, makes effectual in saving lost sinners.

During my visit, one matter of many which greatly impressed me was the large number of children at the Mission meeting. It was a pleasing sight to see parents with their young children, some little ones in their arms and others in pushchairs. We could not but think of the blessing, “Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord; and the fruit of the womb is His reward” (Ps 127:3). The glorious end we desire is that many of these little ones will yet be among those that Psalm 22:30 speaks of: “A seed shall serve Him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation.” How awful to live in an age when abortionists promote the killing of little babies in the womb. On the other hand, how pleasant to see so many little ones affectionately cared for and brought to a place where the name of Christ is proclaimed! It reminded me of the little children on our Mission in Zimbabwe who are brought up under the good news of the gospel; many of them, we have reason to hope, will be followers of Christ Jesus.

Six speakers in turn addressed the large gathering from a passage of Scripture with the prime intention to promote the spread of the gospel and the other activities associated with the Mission. Five of the speakers were ministers of the gospel, and the other a schoolteacher, who spoke especially for the children.

I wish to emphasise the kindly reception I received from the Mbuma Zending Committee and many of the people, whom I have come to know over the years. The excellent interpreters not only translated my address but also translated from Dutch to English to enable me to follow the Bible-centred addresses of the other speakers.

The time came to disperse after my three days in Holland, during which I was shown much kindness by Mr J Voortman and his family in Rijssen, and our chauffeur, Mr B Koopman, did not spare himself over many miles of travel. Eventually arriving safely at Inverness airport, I was met by Rev N M Ross, who saw me away three days previously, and some hours later, I arrived home safely in Laide. Looking beyond all these caring friends, we have to look higher to the good Lord, from whom every good and perfect gift comes. Above all, we look to the Lord to use these endeavours, at the time of the Mbuma Zending meeting, for the furtherance of His Kingdom. May He graciously hear the petition, “Thy Kingdom come” (Mt 6:10).

Thomas Boston – His Life and Ministry¹

2. The Ministry in Simprin

F R Daubney

Despite his reputation, Thomas Boston was a probationer for over two years before he got a call. These were the days when landowners, the heritors or patrons, had the final say in who should be called to a charge; if a minister did not preach what they wanted to hear, or was too strict for their liking, or would not bow to their requirements in other ways, they would not permit the call to proceed, whatever the congregation might want. In addition, some ministers, who felt rebuked by Boston because of his godliness and the uprightness of his life and character, would have used their influence against him. There were, apparently, seven parishes which, if left to make their own choice, would have given a call to Boston, but the people were thwarted.

During this period Boston was reading Matthew 4:19, where the Saviour says, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men”. He was very anxious to know how he might follow Christ and become a true fisher of men and so, for his own instruction, he wrote what he called a soliloquy on the art of man-fishing. It was addressed as if to his own soul. He himself called it just a scribble, and it was only published after his death. Since then it has been widely admired, and it is a source of astonishment that a 22-year-old probationer could produce a document showing such depth and insight. Once again, we should remember that Boston was a very exercised, praying man.

Although Boston was sometimes depressed by all the disappointments, there were other times when he was greatly encouraged. Often he would be told of blessings received under his preaching, and experienced Christians expressed their amazement that such a young man could open up their most hidden experiences. He was heartened by these tokens of encouragement and thanked God.

After many ups and downs and much agonising at the throne of grace, the Lord’s work of preparation was complete. The people of the parish of Simprin, just a few miles south-east of Duns, were of one mind with their heritor that Thomas Boston should be called to be their minister. And on Thursday, 21 September 1699, he was duly ordained and inducted to the charge. The parish of Simprin was small and the church building tiny. All that remains today is a gable end and broken-down walls which form an outline of the original shape, with a plaque commemorating the fact that it

¹The first part of this Theological Conference paper, last month, dealt with Boston’s young years and conversion, and also his university studies in preparation for the ministry.

was once Boston's church. The location is beautiful, between the slopes of the Lammermuir and Cheviot hills.

On his first Sabbath in Simprin, Boston preached from the text, "For they watch for your souls as they that must give account" (Heb 13:17). He was able to say, "This is my rest, here will I dwell. I found my heart well content with my lot, and the sense of God's calling me to that work with the promise of His presence. O, it satisfies my soul, and my very heart blesseth Him for it. For really it is the doing of the Lord, and wondrous in my eyes."

At first the manse in Simprin was uninhabitable and it was necessary for him to live with his father in Duns, which was six miles away. The travelling back and forth impeded his work, but he diligently did what he could. He visited every household in the parish and discovered a depth of ignorance which was greatly disappointing; the people were indifferent to everything spiritual and heavenly. He found 88 examinable people in the parish but only one household where family worship was observed. The Lord's Supper had not been kept for several years. Little wonder that the new minister was deeply dejected for long periods.

Anyone who reads Boston's *Memoirs*, which were written for his children and not for publication, must be impressed by his total reliance on the Lord. All his concerns and joys were acknowledged on his knees. He fasted frequently and made it a pattern of life for his family. None of his decisions, certainly those of consequence, were ever made without seeking guidance from above. Like Enoch and Noah, Thomas Boston walked with God.

He held a morning and an afternoon service every Sabbath and on Sabbath evening there was a meeting for the study of *The Shorter Catechism*. In the manse on Tuesday evening there was a gathering for worship, and on Thursday he held a prayer meeting in the church. There was also regular catechising throughout the parish. Following his marriage, the manse was thrown open for any of his congregation to join the family for worship each morning.

In 1697, before he was licensed, Boston met a Katherine Brown in Culross in Fife. He writes, "Whenever I saw her, a thought struck through my heart about her being my wife". They saw nothing of each other for the next year but in the spring of 1698, Boston met Katherine again, and the acquaintance was renewed. In the August of that year, after much prayer, he proposed to her and they agreed to marry. Because of the delay in him finding a charge, and then the low stipend at Simprin, it was two years before they were married, in Culross in 1700. Five children were born to them in Simprin, two of whom died in infancy. Sadly, Katherine was incapacitated from time to time by a mental illness, but the two were devoted to one another through-

out their marriage, and in later years Boston wrote a most touching description of his gracious wife.

In early May 1701, Boston's father died, and this was an enormous blow to him. He had been very fond of his father and always remembered the sacrifices he had made to allow him to go to university.

Soon after John Boston's death, Thomas and Katherine's first child, also Katherine, was born. The child had a double hare lip and could not suck. By the end of the summer, however, the baby began to make progress and her parents felt able to leave her at home when they had to go to Clackmannanshire on business. While they were away, Mrs Boston had a dream in which she saw the child perfectly formed, "the natural defect being made up, and extraordinarily beautiful". The couple hurried home to find that the baby had died and been buried. As far as they could tell, she had died at the very hour of the dream. I know that we should be very wary of placing importance on dreams, but this was recorded by Boston, and he clearly believed it to be significant.

Boston prepared his sermons meticulously throughout the week and endeavoured to keep the Saturday clear for heart preparation and rest. Early in his ministry he began preaching on the state of man's soul, from before the Fall to his final condition in heaven or hell. These sermons were later published as the book, *Human Nature in its Fourfold State*.² It was at this time that Boston began to write out his sermons in full – for his Sabbath preaching on such particular and vital matters. He did not want to say anything that he had not thought through properly beforehand. There were times when he still preached extemporaneously and freely, but he later regarded it as a kind dispensation of providence that he kept on writing out his sermons. We would possibly not have had the *Fourfold State* but for the providence of Boston being able to go back to his written sermons.

There were few books in the Simprin manse. The minister had little money to buy them and, when he did get a new book, he devoured it from cover to cover. There was one occasion when he was hurt to see a brother minister smile at his small collection of books. He came, however, to see a kind providence in this too; his lack of commentaries caused him to go on his knees, and he discovered that "a heavenly frame of mind is the best interpreter of Scripture".

One day, in 1700, he was sitting in a house in Simprin when he saw two books on a shelf above the window. One of these was *The Marrow of Modern Divinity* by Edward Fisher. The man who owned them had been a soldier in England and brought them home with him. He happily lent both

²I will return later to the production of this book.

to his minister who, while not particularly keen on the second book, greatly relished the *Marrow*. This book consists largely of extracts from the writings of the Reformers and Puritans, and it addresses questions connected with the way a sinner finds access to God.

It takes the form of a discussion between four persons – a minister (called Evangelista), a legalist (Nomista), an antinomian (Antinomista), and a young, seeking Christian (Neophystus). The book covers the sovereignty of God in the covenant of grace, the free offer of the gospel, faith in Christ and sanctification by grace. Boston found it enlightening on a number of issues. In his early years at Simprin he had found himself “confused, indistinct and hampered in his proclamation to men of the free, open and universal liberty of access to God in Christ for salvation”. He also tells us that in 1698 he had heard George Mair, minister of Culross, speaking of being divorced from, and dead to, the law. These expressions did not then convey much meaning to Boston. In *The Marrow of Modern Divinity* he had these things opened up and explained to him, so that he saw more clearly God’s wondrous method of mercy.³

The Lord’s cause in Simprin was completely transformed in the few years following Boston’s arrival. In less than seven years, every home in the parish held worship morning and evening, and the singing of psalms could be heard ringing out. Instead of the thorn, there had come up the fir tree; and instead of the briar, there had come up the myrtle tree. The communion seasons, which Boston had reinstated, became occasions of great gatherings, with many coming from neighbouring parishes; such were the success and fame of Boston’s preaching. His sermons were preached to his own heart before he preached them from the pulpit. He said once, “My soul went out in flames of love to the Advocate with the Father”.

Early in 1706 Boston received an unexpected call to be minister of the parish of Ettrick, in Selkirkshire. He wrote in his diary that his health was so broken that he looked more like someone about to be transported to another world rather than to another parish. He had become very fond of his flock in Simprin, and they of him, but he was determined to discover the will of God in the matter. He visited Ettrick and preached there, to find out more about the parish’s moral and religious situation. “The desolation in that parish,” he says, “ever since I saw it, hath great weight on me, and I am convinced I should have more opportunity to do service for God there than here; but success is the Lord’s.” The text, “He that believeth shall not make haste”, was helpful to him. After much prayer he felt moved to accept the call but decided to wait for the Synod’s decision and accept that as the indication of

³I will return to the *Marrow* and its far-reaching effects later.

the Lord's will. In March 1707 the Synod agreed to transfer him to Ettrick. The elders representing Simprin at the Synod wept at the thought of their beloved pastor being taken from them. And Boston confessed that his own eyes had trickled down with tears too.

On 1 May 1707 Thomas Boston was inducted as minister of Ettrick – the same day the union between Scotland and England took place. Thinking back to his time in Simprin, he said, “Thus I parted from a people whose hearts were knit to me, and mine to them, nothing but the sense of God's command that took me there making me to part with them”.

*Thomas Charles of Bala*¹

A Review Article by Roy Middleton

Non-Welsh speakers are already in some considerable debt to John Aaron for his translation into English of two classic Welsh works: John Morgan Jones and William Morgan's two-volume *The Calvinistic Methodist Fathers of Wales* (Banner of Truth Trust, 2008) and Owen Thomas, *The Atonement Controversy: Welsh Theological Literature and Debate 1707-1841* (Banner of Truth Trust, 2002). Particularly valuable is Aaron's discerning 40-page introduction to the latter volume along with the biographical sketches of the participants in the debates. We are now further in his debt for writing this excellent biography of Thomas Charles (1755-1814), the leader of the second generation of Welsh Calvinistic Methodists.

The standard biography of Charles, written in 1908 by D E Jenkins, is a massive three-volume work of almost 2000 pages, which, in Aaron's words, “is a gold-mine of letters, documents and facts but is utterly unreadable as a biography. In all its pages there is not one discussion of Charles's theological position” (p. xi). Iain Murray has noted, “Perhaps no man was the means of bringing more blessing to his native land than Thomas Charles, and yet no books on his life have been available for a long time”. John Aaron now has supplied this lack in a detailed modern biography.

Thomas Charles was born at Llanfihangel Abercywyn, Carmarthenshire on 14 October 1755. He was educated at a village school in Llanddowror before going on to the Dissenting academy at Carmarthen in 1769. During his time there he visited Llangeitho, Cardiganshire, and in January 1773 was converted as he listened to the preaching of Daniel Rowland. In 1775 he began his studies at Oxford University and attended Jesus College. During

¹*Thomas Charles of Bala*, by John Aaron, published by the Banner of Truth Trust, hard-back, 406 pages, £15.50; available from the Free Presbyterian Bookroom.

his college days he came into contact with several Evangelicals, among them John Newton and William Romaine. He was ordained deacon on June 14 1778, two weeks before leaving Oxford, and was appointed the curate of Sparkford, in Somerset, in September, having preached his first sermon at Llanfihangel Abercywyn on August 16. Whilst a curate in the Church of England he was eager to return to Wales and left Somerset on June 1783.

In August of that year he married Sally Jones, the daughter of a shopkeeper at Bala in north Wales, whom he had met during a visit to the town, with a fellow student, Simon Lloyd, in the summer of 1778. His courtship of Sally Jones was for him a trying affair as she did not seem to be as keen on the union as Charles. She was not prepared to leave Bala and could not see how it was possible for her to marry a clergyman. In the Jenkins biography each step of the courtship is gone into in considerable detail and even in Aaron's a whole chapter of 37 pages is devoted to it.

Making Bala his home, he had very great difficulty in obtaining a living in the Church of England due to his Methodism. Methodism at that time was a term similar to "Evangelical" today and did not refer to a distinct denomination. Though the Methodists formed themselves into societies which held meetings at different times from those of the Church of England, they still viewed themselves as part of the Established Church. In January 1784 he was appointed curate of Llanymawddwy but was dismissed a few months later due to his support for the Methodists. This ended his career as a Church of England clergyman. Having aligned himself fully with the Methodist cause by joining one of their societies in July 1784, Charles went on to make Bala the centre of their activities in north Wales. His wife Sally owned a shop in Bala and was a keen businesswoman. She became the means of her husband's financial support for the rest of his life.

It was from his base in Bala that Charles undertook an extensive itinerant ministry among the Methodist societies. He initiated the important innovation of allowing the societies to choose their own "leaders" (who would eventually be called "elders") They had previously been centrally appointed by the Association meeting of the societies. It was from Bala that he was also active in the agencies that were to be such a blessing to Wales.

Deeply interested in Christian education, he established circulating schools similar to those of Griffith Jones 50 years earlier, and trained teachers to work in them. These schools were, in time, to develop into Sabbath schools, and thus to become central to the development of Calvinistic Methodism. Though not the founder of the Sabbath school movement in Wales, Charles more than anyone, through his firm leadership and gift for organization, secured a reliable foundation for it. Out of his educational activity grew his

literary work, which ranged from catechisms for children (1789) to a four-volume Bible dictionary that provided the Methodist converts with the means to develop their understanding of the Christian faith. To unite the movement he began publishing a periodical in 1799 called *The Spiritual Treasury*. Among Charles's English-language publications were *A Short Evangelical Catechism* (1801) and *Welsh Methodism Vindicated* (1802).

A shortage of Welsh Bibles at the end of the eighteenth century led Charles to investigate the possibility of providing a cheap Welsh edition of the Scriptures. It was as a result of this investigation, and his attendance at the meetings of the Religious Tract Society in London, that the British and Foreign Bible Society was established in 1804. According to tradition, it was the recounting by Charles of the visit to him by Mary Jones that produced such an electrifying effect on the Tract Society Committee and convinced them to establish a Bible society. One of its first achievements was to publish a new edition of the Welsh Bible, and Charles was charged with the responsibility of preparing the text and supervising the printing. Following the death of Daniel Rowlands and William Williams of Pantycelyn, and the expulsion of Nathaniel Rowland (Daniel Rowland's son) for misconduct in 1807, Charles became the foremost Welsh Methodist leader. He was highly regarded by the Countess of Huntingdon and not only supplied her congregations but for the last 20 years of his life, with few exceptions, spent eight weeks each year supplying the Countess's Spa Fields Chapel in London. He was also an active supporter of the fledgling London Missionary Society and was one of its directors.

In Welsh church history Charles is remembered for the part he took in the Methodist ordinations of 1811 and the severance of Welsh Calvinistic Methodism from the Anglican Church. He had long opposed this movement, and the Methodists of Caernarvonshire and Merioneth had supported him. But he gave way and was commissioned by the Association to draw up the form of ordination. The secession occurred when the Calvinistic Methodist movement ordained their own ministers, one of whom was John Elias. Thomas Charles was a key representative of the transitional period during which Welsh Methodism developed from a revival movement into a Dissenting denomination. He died on 5 October 1814 and was buried at Llanycil church near Bala. His wife died just a few weeks later on October 24.

John Aaron's biography is highly recommended to our readers and is produced to the usual high quality that we have come to expect from the Banner of Truth Trust.

The Vine and the Branches¹

J C Ryle

These verses, we must carefully remember, contain a parable. In interpreting it, we must not forget the great rule which applies to all Christ's parables. The general lesson of each parable is the main thing to be noticed. The minor details must not be tortured, strained and pressed to an excess, in order to extract a meaning from them. The mistakes into which Christians have fallen, by neglecting this rule, are neither few nor small.

We are meant to learn *firstly*, from these verses, *that the union between Christ and believers is very close*. He is "the Vine", and they are "the branches". The union between the branch of a vine and the main stem is the closest that can be conceived. It is the whole secret of the branch's life, strength, vigour, beauty and fertility. Separate from the parent stem, it has no life of its own. The sap and juice that flow from the stem are the origin and maintaining power of all its leaves, buds, blossoms and fruit. Cut off from the stem, it must soon wither and die.

The union between Christ and believers is just as close and just as real. In themselves believers have no life, or strength, or spiritual power. All that they have of vital religion comes from Christ. They are what they are, and feel what they feel, and do what they do, because they draw out of Jesus a continual supply of grace, help and ability. Joined to the Lord by faith, and united in mysterious union with Him by the Spirit, they stand and walk and continue and run the Christian race. But every jot of good about them is drawn from their spiritual Head, Jesus Christ.

The thought before us is both comforting and instructive. Believers have no cause to despair of their own salvation, and to think they will never reach heaven. Let them consider that they are not left to themselves and their own strength. Their root is Christ, and all that there is in the root is for the benefit of the branches. Because He lives, they shall live also. Worldly people have no cause to wonder at the continuance and perseverance of believers. Weak as they are in themselves, their Root is in heaven and never dies. "When I am weak," said Paul, "then am I strong" (2 Cor 12:10).

We are meant to learn, *secondly*, from these verses, *that there are false Christians as well as true ones*. There are "branches in the vine" which appear to be joined to the parent stem and yet bear no fruit. There are men and women who *appear* to be members of Christ, and yet will prove finally to have had no vital union with Him.

¹Taken, with editing, from *Expository Thoughts on John*, vol 3. Here are some of Ryle's comments on John 15:1-6.

There are myriads of professing Christians in every Church whose union with Christ is only outward and formal. Some of them are joined to Christ by baptism and Church membership. Some of them go even further than this and are regular communicants and loud talkers about religion. But they all lack the one thing needful. Notwithstanding services and sermons and sacrament, they have no grace in their hearts, no faith, no inward work of the Holy Spirit. They are not one with Christ, and Christ with them. Their union with Him is only nominal, not real. They have a name to live, but in the sight of God they are dead (Rev 3:1).

Christians of this stamp are aptly represented by branches in a vine which bear no fruit. Useless and unsightly, such branches are only fit to be cut off and burned. They draw nothing out of the parent stem and make no return for the place they occupy. Just so will it be at the last day with false professors of religion, nominal Christians. Their end, unless they repent, will be destruction. They will be separated from the company of true believers and cast out as withered, useless branches, into everlasting fire. They will find at last, whatever they thought in this world, that there is a worm that never dies and a fire that is not quenched.

We are meant to learn, *thirdly*, from these verses, that *the fruits of the Spirit are the only satisfactory evidence of a man being a true Christian*. The disciple that abides in Christ, like a branch abiding in the vine, will always bear fruit. He that would know what the word “fruit” means need not wait long for an answer. Repentance toward God, faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, holiness of life and conduct, these are what the New Testament calls “fruit”. These are the distinguishing marks of the man who is a living branch of the true Vine. Where these things are lacking, it is vain to talk of possessing “dormant” grace and spiritual life. Where there is no fruit, there is no life. He that lacketh these things is “dead while [he] liveth” (1 Tim 5:6).

True grace, we must not forget, is never idle. It never slumbers and never sleeps. It is a vain notion to suppose that we are living members of Christ, if the example of Christ is not to be seen in our characters and lives. Fruit is the only satisfactory evidence of saving union between Christ and our souls. Where there is no fruit of the Spirit to be seen, there is no vital religion in the heart. The Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus will always make Himself known in the daily conduct of those in whom He dwells. The Master Himself declares, “Every tree is known by his own fruit” (Lk 6:44).

We are meant, *fourthly*, to learn from these verses, that *God will often increase the holiness of true Christians by His providential dealings with them*. “Every branch”, it is written, “that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bear more fruit.” The meaning of this language is clear and plain. Just

as the vine-dresser prunes and cuts back the branches of a fruitful vine, in order to make them more fruitful, so does God purify and sanctify believers by the circumstances of life in which He places them.

Trial, to speak plainly, is the instrument by which God the Father in heaven makes Christians more holy. By trial He calls out their passive graces and proves whether they can suffer His will as well as do it. By trial He weans them from the world, draws them to Christ, drives them to the Bible and prayer, shows them their own hearts, and makes them humble. This is the process by which He purges them and makes them more fruitful. The lives of the saints, in every age, are the best and truest comment on the text. We hardly find an eminent saint, either in the Old Testament or the New, who was not purified by suffering and was not, like His Master, “a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief” (Is 53:3).

Let us learn to be patient in the days of darkness, if we know anything of vital union with Christ. Let us remember the doctrine of the passage before us and not murmur and complain because of trials. Our trials are not meant to do us harm, but good. God chastens us “for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness” (Heb 12:10). Fruit is the thing that our Master desires to see in us, and He will not spare the pruning knife if He sees we need it. In the last day we shall see that all was well done.

The Moral Law¹

Thomas Watson

1. *What is the difference between the moral law and the gospel?* (1) The law requires that we worship God as our Creator; the gospel that we worship Him in and through Christ. God in Christ is propitious; out of Christ we may see God’s power, justice and holiness; in Him we see His mercy displayed.

(2) The moral law requires obedience, but gives no strength (as Pharaoh required brick, but gave no straw), but the gospel gives strength; it bestows faith on the elect; it sweetens the law; it makes us serve God with delight.

2. *What use is the moral law to us?* It is a mirror to show us our sins, so that, seeing our perdition and misery, we may be forced to flee to Christ to satisfy for former guilt and to save from future wrath. “The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ” (Gal 3:24).

3. *Is the moral law still in force to believers? Is it not abolished to them?* In some sense it is abolished to believers. (1) *In respect of justification.* They

¹An extract, slightly edited, from Watson’s *The Ten Commandments*.

are not justified by their obedience to the moral law. Believers are to make great use of the moral law, but they must trust only to Christ's righteousness for justification; as Noah's dove made use of her wings to fly, but trusted to the ark for safety. If the moral law could justify, what need was there of Christ's dying?

(2) The moral law is abolished to believers *in respect of its curse*. They are freed from its curse and condemnatory power. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us" (Gal 3:13).

Protestant View

Shrine of Bishop Chad in Lichfield Cathedral

In the year 672 Bishop Chad, of Lichfield in Staffordshire, died and was buried in Lichfield Cathedral. He was made a saint by the Roman Catholic Church, and his grave became a focal point for pilgrims seeking that he would make intercession for them. In 1538 the shrine was dismantled on the orders of Henry VIII and the bones were destroyed or buried in an unknown location. However, a box of bone fragments survived and was probably hawked around the diocese. This box was rescued and removed to a place of safety; in 1839 it found a resting place in the newly built Roman Catholic Cathedral in Birmingham, which was dedicated in honour of St Chad. Recently this box of relics was gifted by the RC archdiocese of Birmingham to the Anglican Lichfield Cathedral and has been placed in a prominent shrine created for it within the building.

At a service on November 7, the Roman Archbishop of Birmingham, Bernard Longley, said that "his relics will become a focus for prayer in this beautiful, restored shrine, inspired by his witness and strengthened by his prayers interceding for our two diocesan families". Michael Ipgrave, Bishop of the Diocese of Lichfield, embraced these sentiments and responded, "Our remembering of Chad, and particularly our grateful reception of this precious relic of his mortal body, must also point us to the future . . . it is right that a part of Chad's mortal remains should be brought back here to the place where once they were laid. It is good that today we join together not only as Anglicans and Roman Catholics but as brothers and sisters of other churches too."

Why would Anglicans accept such a grotesque gift and go further by setting up a new "altar shrine" for the veneration of these scraps of bones? To countenance this blasphemous nonsense is extraordinary and shameful. Article 22 of the Church of England's Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion states, "The

Romish doctrine concerning purgatory, pardons, worshipping, and adoration, as well of images as of relics, and also invocation of saints, is a fond [foolish] thing vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the Word of God". FRD

St Margaret Declaration

This agreement of “friendship” with the Roman Catholic Church, which was approved last May by the Church of Scotland General Assembly, has now been formally signed by the Moderator of the Assembly, Rev Iain Greenshields, and by Leo Cushley, Archbishop of St Andrews. The other signatory was Princess Anne. The ceremony took place in Dunfermline Abbey on “St Margaret’s Day”, November 16. The Abbey is the burial place of Queen Margaret, the eleventh-century queen who did more than any other individual to increase the influence of Romanism in mediaeval Scotland.

The declaration was condemned by the Synod in May and has already been the subject of a note in *The Free Presbyterian Magazine*. We will not therefore offer any further criticism of its contents here other than to say that it marks a further degree of declension on the part of the national Church. By opening the door to further accommodation with antichristian Romanism, the Church of Scotland is responsible for thickening the appalling darkness which shrouds the Scottish people in spiritual death. The Church of Scotland is walking in the light of its own kindling, and the end for multitudes who are deceived by its false witness will be to lie down in sorrow (Is 50:11). This is the result of departing from the Biblical principles of the Reformation. Though stating that union would not take place at present, Archbishop Cushley remarked that barriers to unity between the two Churches will be removed “in God’s good time”.

A motion was previously agreed in the Scottish Parliament which commended the agreement and complimented the two bodies for “refusing to be bound by the past”. It is sad to read that Murdo Fraser MSP – who grew up in the Free Presbyterian Church – was a signatory of the motion. AWM

Notes and Comments

British Values

The notion of “British values” may date back to the 1990s. It was evidently intended as a secularised version of “Christian values”. It continues to be widely used in official circles in Britain. Most definitions of “British values” come down to something like this: a respect for “democracy, the

rule of law, for individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs”.

The original unspoken target of “British values” was radical Islam in Britain, but more recently other transgressors of “British values” have come to the fore. The climate-change activists who disrupt traffic and damage property disregard “the rule of law” when it pleases them, but rely on the rule of law to protect them from the indignation of those whom they inconvenience or harm. The people who seek to “cancel” unwelcome public meetings by intimidating parties involved, or who secure the dismissal from their jobs of those with whom they disagree, show little “mutual respect and tolerance” for others. The Government should show its own regard for “British values” by bringing the wheel over some of these culprits (Prov 20:26).

The Christian is not wholly wedded to democracy, but he does want to see responsible government, with checks and balances, rather than despotism. He strongly supports the rule of law – always subject to the proviso that “we ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29); and he is the friend of human liberty, except when it is abused for sinful purposes. He has a regard for his fellow men, seeking to “love his neighbour as himself” (Mt 22:39). Where beliefs are false, dangerous, or blasphemous, he hates them “with a perfect (or complete) hatred” (Ps 139:22), but he seeks nevertheless, as much as in him lies, to “live peaceably with all men” (Rom 12:18), and to reclaim them from their errors using gospel weapons (2 Cor 10:4). The definition of “British values” is poorly worded, and puts Christianity on a level with other “faiths and beliefs”, but the Christian would have little to fear from it if it was fairly interpreted and evenly applied. With Satan’s present influence in Britain, however, there is little hope of this.

We look for a day and a government that would not be ashamed to promote and to impose Christian values in Britain. That is what our present government ought to be doing. “For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: for he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil” (Rom 13:3-4). *DWBS*

The meritoriousness of Christ’s obedience depends on the perfection of it. If it had failed in any instance, it could not have been meritorious; for imperfect obedience is not accepted as any obedience at all in the sight of the law of works, to which Christ was subject. That is not accepted as obedience to a law that does not fully answer it. *Jonathan Edwards*

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: 01470 562754; 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@protonmail.com.

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.

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

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

New Canaan: Church. Rev T Mwedzi.

Zenka: Church.

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