

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. **Fifth:** Aberdeen, London, Mbuma.

May: First Sabbath: Donsa, Grafton, Leverburgh; **Second:** Achmore, Scourie; **Third:** Edinburgh; **Fourth:** Chiedza.

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

July: First Sabbath: Beauly; **Second:** Bonar Bridge, Staffin, Uig; **Third:** Auckland, Shialdaig, Fort William; **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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What Do We Really Want in Prayer?

Jesus was departing from Jericho and a large crowd of people was following Him. Two blind men were sitting at the side of the road and cried out to Him: “Have mercy on us, O Lord, Thou Son of David” (Mt 20:30). Jesus stopped and asked them: “What will ye that I shall do unto you?” He was asking about what they *wanted* Him to do for them. Not surprisingly, their wish was that Jesus would give them their eyesight, which He did. We read that “Jesus had compassion on them, and touched their eyes: and immediately their eyes received sight”.

Similarly, when we go before God in prayer, we should be ready to answer the question, What do we really want Him to do for us? Many, if they were prepared to confess it, would have to say that they most want to earn a lot of money, to get on well in the world, to be healthy, to live long, to be happy, or perhaps to be famous, and even to get to heaven at last.

Balaam himself, ungodly man though he was, desired to “die the death of the righteous” (Num 23:10), but he had no desire to live the life of the righteous; he had no wish to live a godly life *now*. And there are many today who have the same kind of outlook.

You may ask others what they most want, and they may be seriously unwell or experiencing other difficulties, but they tell you that, more than anything else, they wish their sins to be forgiven; they desire to trust in Christ Jesus, to be pure and holy, to be kept from sin – not least from heart sin – and that God would bless His Word to them. Very likely they would wish to enjoy better health, to be free from pain and to be delivered from all the other difficulties that they have been experiencing. But they recognise that it would be far better for them to obtain spiritual blessings, especially to have the eyes of their souls opened – or opened further – so that they might see Jesus, by faith, as He is revealed in Scripture – for instance, in the verse: “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn 3:16).

These are people who know to seek “*first* the kingdom of God, and His righteousness” (Mt 6:33); they have begun to experience spiritual desires.

They are learning that the things of this world, however useful many of them are, are not going to last for ever. There is an eternity beyond death, and they must be prepared for it, and so they must be born again; they must have a living, God-given faith in the One who died for sinners. Yes, they will pray for temporal things – and they ought to do so – but the desires that are uppermost in their hearts are spiritual. And they will pray for temporal things with a qualification: that they would be according to God’s will – and also that they would be for their spiritual good. They are learning, slowly, that God knows infinitely better than they do what is good for them.

Such people know to go to God for the supply of their spiritual needs, and indeed for the supply of their needs of every kind. He has control over everything that happens and has unlimited power. So Paul encouraged the believers in Philippi: “My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Phil 4:19). And it is for the sake of Christ that these needs will be supplied. Flowing from the great work He carried out when He was in this world, there is an infinite treasure of blessings, especially spiritual blessings, laid up in heaven for those who pray looking unto Jesus. Let us not think that anything is too hard for the Lord. And let us not think that anything is too great to ask of Him in prayer.

Let us notice further that the believer’s prayers take to do, not only with their own spiritual interests, but also with the spiritual interests of other individuals and even those of the whole world. God’s children look around them and see sin rampant everywhere, not only in their immediate surroundings but, through the media, they see that it is rampant throughout the world. So they pray to God that He would put a restraint on sin. Apart from the restraint that God – more or less – exercises in every part of the world, it would be a far worse place than it is.

Certainly God has generally been withdrawing His restraint on sin over a number of generations, but we have reason to be thankful that conditions are not worse than they are. If God was to allow violence, for instance, to increase drastically, or to allow the immoral to flaunt their immorality even more than they do, or to allow the authorities in various countries to pass legislation prohibiting Christian worship and practice, how much more difficult it would be for believers and how much more dishonour would be done to God. So the people of God should pray that He would increase His restraint on sinners.

Yet God’s restraint will not, of itself, bring about spiritual progress. His children know this, and therefore they pray for a work of grace that would not only affect individuals but also nations. They wish that God would be glorified in each instance of conversion, but also in bringing nations to serve

Him, until the whole earth has been filled with His glory and the kingdom of God has been established everywhere. They desire the spiritual good of people around them and throughout the world. God's kingdom and Satan's both lay claim to the allegiance of every man, woman and child in this world. There can be no truce between these kingdoms, and ultimately one or other of them must have the final victory. And that victory will most certainly be God's.

It is the desire of God's children that His kingdom should advance until its victory is overwhelming and obvious. They are sad in a generation such as this to see the kingdom of darkness making such manifest progress in so many places. So they send up sincere petitions to heaven pleading that the preaching of the Word would be so blessed that sinners would be delivered from Satan's kingdom and brought into the glorious liberty of the kingdom of God. They are glad for every individual who has been, in God's great mercy, brought out of Satan's kingdom, but they would be glad to see vast multitudes so delivered.

To that end, they would pray for many labourers to be sent into God's harvest fields – in other words, for many men to be sent out, in all directions, as ambassadors for Christ to beseech sinners to be reconciled to God. Besides, they are to pray that the pure gospel might be proclaimed everywhere, that accurate translations of Scripture would be made for all parts of the world. And they are to pray further that, not only would these prayers be answered, but also the intercession that is made for for the conversion of sinners everywhere and the building up of God's people in their most holy faith, leading to the prosperity of the entire Church of Christ.

We should believe that, as Jesus had compassion on the blind men at Jericho and healed them, so He listens to the prayers of His children, even today. If the Lord does not answer these prayers instantly, He will answer them at some point in the future; He does not turn away the prayers of those who sigh and cry because of the abominations that are done in the land.

So let us ask ourselves: Have we reason to believe that God is teaching us to desire those things which are most related to His glory and to send up these desires to Him in prayer? Have we the kind of desires that have been mentioned in this article as the desires of God's children? If we never express such desires before God, we have reason to conclude that we are not among God's children. If this, solemnly, is the case, what need to pray in the words of David: "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me" (Ps 51:10)! A right spirit is one from which sincere desires will flow to God for forgiveness, for holiness of heart and life, for others to be brought into Christ's kingdom and for God to be glorified in this world.

“Sinners Shall Be Converted” (2,3)¹

Two Sermons by *John Duncan*

Psalm 51:13. *Sinners shall be converted unto Thee.*

Sermon 2. Sinners are away from God. What they need is to come back. They cannot return to God by the old way of human righteousness, but God has opened up a new way for the sinner’s return. And now all that God wants from the sinner is simply that he come back again. “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.” It is not to do this or that; God is simply asking of you to be converted. That is, as you have been turning your back on God, you now turn your face; that as you have been going away from Him, you now come back; God is simply requiring that. But there is something necessary somehow, and you feel it. Yes, something necessary on your part.

It is plainly indispensable that the sinner must know the God from whom he has departed, that he must know how impossible it is to get back to God by the old way, and that he must know how certain eternal perdition is if he continues in that way. Also he must know what this new and living way is which God has opened up, and he must be made willing to come back by that way.

Now God has made provision for this in the work of His Holy Spirit. For while nothing is required of a sinner but just simply to come back, power is needed for bringing the sinner back – “the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost”. Not that God would refuse the sinner coming back, if he came of himself; but that the sinner will not come. The ignorant sinner must be taught by God that the obstinate and hardened sinner must have the iron sinew taken out of his neck and the brass out of his brazen brow. Notice that conversion, as wrought by the Spirit of God, is God’s act; conversion, as wrought within a sinner, denotes His acting also. The Spirit of God is a moral agent. The work of the Spirit is set forth in this prayer, “Turn Thou us,” and the duty on the sinner’s part is set forth in such commands as these: “Be converted”; “Turn ye at my reproof”.

I would speak a little on the nature of conversion. We tread on delicate ground when we consider conversion as the work of the Holy Ghost; when we come to consider it as wrought in the human soul there is less danger. The danger I speak of is this, whilst God’s active work of converting a sinner

¹The second and third of five sermons on this text; it was preached in Edinburgh in 1857 and is taken, with editing, from Duncan’s *Pulpit and Communion Table*. The first sermon appeared in the February 2022 issue of this *Magazine*.

has an order in it as regards principles and results, there is room for diversity; and consequently, when we set forth the operation of the Spirit of God in conversion in His most common, ordinary method, we are apt to tie up the Spirit of God to that method, and thus to make those who have been taught of God, but not quite in that method, question whether it has been God’s work, because it did not come quite in the order and method set down by their religious teachers. That is one danger; but there is, on the other hand, the danger often arising out of the desire to avoid the former one: of leaving the thing quite vague and indefinite – the greater danger of the two.

In conversion, there is ordinarily the following method. And even when the Spirit of God goes from this method at the time of conversion, He very much afterwards brings things into this regular order.

(1.) There is *conviction*. God is requiring of you simply that you come back; but will you, can you, come back? No, you must be convinced. God does not need that to commend you to Him; but you will not – and as a rational creature you cannot – turn till you have been convinced that you are all in the wrong, and that God is all in the right. Now, there is nothing bad in God’s moral perfections; there is nothing wrong in God’s being holy, just and good, infinitely and eternally. There is nothing bad in that; it is gloriously good. Again, there is nothing bad in God’s making man in His own image, holy, just and good. Again, there is nothing bad in the holy, just, and good God giving to the holy, just and good, although finite, creature, a holy, just and good law. There is nothing wrong in all that – in what God is, in what He has made, in what He has commanded.

If there is nothing wrong in all that, there is evil in sin; for sin is the only thing that is contrary to all that. Sin is contrary to God’s nature, contrary to man’s original constitution, and contrary to God’s law. And sin, as contrary to God’s law, is crime; as contrary to man’s constitution, it is a monstrous, unnatural thing; as contrary to God’s nature, it is an infinite evil. You must be convinced of this. And as this is necessary in order to your returning to God, call on God for conviction. But do not think you are doing your duty when you call for conviction; do not think that prayer for conviction will stand in place of the thing. If you are to pray for this, it is implied that in converting a sinner, God comes and deals with him; else you pray to nothing; you are only speaking into the air.

Yes, God comes. His law is living. His commandment can come; He can send it. God arrests a man, erects a tribunal in his conscience. God brings home the law – whether the law as written in the conscience, where there are some remnants of it in all men, or the law as written in the Book. God brings it home, shows the equity of it, shows that the commandment is good, that

the breaking of it is bad. The knowledge both of God and of law is presupposed to the knowledge of sin.

Now I prescribe no order to the Spirit of God in dealing with a sinner, but very probably some such order as this may be observed. First of all, individual sins start up. Doubtless as the sinner's life has been all away from God, it has been all sin. Yet there may be some sins that stand out in blacker colours than others, about which memory, hardened though it was, would have spoken, if it dared. These now start up, and stand in all their horrible magnitude before the soul. Then habitual sin starts up. For as in every believer there is a sin that more easily besets, in every sinner there is some foremost, principal, reigning lust. This is seen: I have been feeding, cherishing my darling corruption; I have been giving up my whole mind not only to sin, but to a sin; it has been my business to gratify it.

Then probably some such thought as this arises: What am I that have done, that am doing, all these things? How do I come to break all these commandments? How do I come to forget God, to disobey God, to be proud, passionate, unclean? Why, just because I am a sinner; because I sin just as I breathe. It all proceeds from a corrupt nature.

Then the sinner may be led a step further. He looks around him and sees – what does not lessen his distress – that he belongs to an alienated race: I am a guilty, polluted creature; but I am also one of a guilty, polluted race. When God is not seen, the sinner is concealed among the crowd, hidden among the mass. When God catches him, He individualises him. But then he looks round and sees that he is one of a wicked race. And does that make his wickedness less? No, it magnifies it. Then there is, it may be as yet, a somewhat extorted compliance, but a compliance with what God commanded all the people to do when the curse was pronounced on Mount Ebal: “Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them. And all the people shall say, Amen”. What a thing for a sinner himself to say, “Amen”, when God pronounces the curse on him!

2. There is *compunction*. “They were pricked in their heart.” You may have some conviction of sin without returning to God. Natural conscience by the Word of God may produce some surface conviction, or it may be produced by some remote dealing of the Spirit of God. There must be compunction. The sinner sees his sin – that is conviction. He feels it – that is compunction. The serpent bites, and its bite is felt. He tries to shake off the venomous creature, but it cleaves to him. “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me?” The effect of compunction is that the sinner cannot endure sin; compunction makes sin intolerable. “Know therefore and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that

My fear is not in thee, saith the Lord God of hosts.” And so, sin now being intolerable, the sinner seeks to rid himself of it. He takes to reading and praying, to church-going and to reformation. He tries to tear sin and his soul away from one another – and he fails.

3. There is *humiliation*. I do not mean here evangelical humiliation, the Christian grace of humility, but the soul’s situation when the sinner finds that he cannot save himself and is forced to submit to the fact that another must do this great work for him. When he finds he can do nothing to deliver himself, he looks around for a friend. And that friend must be a Saviour.

Sermon 3. Sinners are away from God; and being so, can neither be holy nor happy. But sinners may be converted. Not all sinful beings may be converted, but sinful men and women may. There is another order of sinners – there is no conversion for them – but sinners of the race of Adam may be converted; which implies, not only that their faces may be turned Godward, but that there is a way of return to God. The provision for this is found in the covenant of grace. There is no covenant of grace for fallen angels; so their conversion is an impossibility. But for sinners of mankind there is a covenant of grace; so their conversion is a possibility.

As we have seen, God asks nothing of sinners but that they be converted – nothing. Men went away from God in the fall; and God is not asking of men anything but that they come back again. Sinners think God is requiring a great deal at their hand. So He is. His law remains unchanged, and the law speaks to them that are under the law. And yet, as regards salvation, God is not asking sinners to do anything in order to return. True, God needs to do a great deal to sinners, in order to turn them; but God is requiring nothing of sinners but that they return. God is requiring nothing but that; but sinners are in such a situation that they will not do that. God says to the sinner, Come back again, and he will not.

Why are sinners unwilling to be converted? One cause is the love of sin, preferring sin to Christ, preferring sin to pardon and salvation. Along with pardon, God says, “A new heart also will I give you”; but the sinner does not want a new heart – he likes the old one better. God says, “From all your idols and filthiness will I cleanse you”; but the sinner does not want to be so cleansed. The love of sin: “This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil”. Light was in the world, and darkness came into it; but light, brighter than the original, shone again into the world. Why is it then that those who have gone away will not come back again? Because they love the darkness better. And that is the condemnation. It is not, if we perish under

the gospel, because of Adam's fall, but because we preferred sin to salvation by Christ. There are other sufficient reasons for it; but this is one reason why we need not complain of Adam's fall, when we prefer to continue in the state into which it brought us rather than be saved by Christ.

Another cause is diabolical darkness. "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not." This darkness obscures, hides all the spiritual objects which it is necessary for a sinner to be fully aware of in order to his conversion – God, law, sin, self; these things it hides. Though every man acknowledges himself a sinner, by nature we have little idea of what sin means. For no one can know sin without the knowledge of the law, and no one can know the law without the knowledge of God and His perfections.

God is only asking sinners to come back, but they are not in a state to obey God's call. So, when God has a purpose of mercy, He sends His Spirit to convince of sin. And the instrument which the Spirit uses is the law, the law seen in the light of the perfections of the Lawgiver, the law seen in its equitable requirements on the nature of man. By the law, the sinner is convinced of a total depravity and an infinite guilt. Before that, sin sat very lightly; but when there is conviction and compunction – when the man has both seen and felt himself to be a sinner, and fears the vengeance that is coming on such people – he seeks to rid himself of sin.

And where does he go to rid himself of sin? He goes to the law for righteousness, and he goes to nature for strength. He sets himself to keep the law, that he may thus rid himself of sin and of the wrath sin brings. Therefore, that a sinner may be converted, he needs to be taught that the old way is blocked up. It is necessary that the convinced and pricked sinner be humbled. I mean here the position in which a man is who was too proud to be indebted to another, when he is at last obliged to stoop.

The sinner then has been convinced, pricked and humbled under a sense of impotence. Under this mighty load of sin and misery, he has put forth his utmost effort to deliver himself, and he finds his utmost effort is just nothing. He needs someone to deliver him; someone must interpose to deliver him from sin and wrath, or he is gone. What he needs is just a Saviour.

The sinner is willing to be saved, but by whom? He has heard of Christ. He had heard of the law before he was convinced by means of it, but now it has taken its real, effectual hold on him. And now the gospel is to him very much what the law was to him. He lived as if he was without law, and yet he had heard of the law; now, convinced of sin by the law, he has heard of Christ. He has found the law, and he has heard by the hearing of the ear – from his fellow-men, from apostles and prophets – of a Saviour. But

the same Spirit who has taught him his sin and misery instructs him in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now he makes many earnest inquiries about this gospel. For the sinner sees thus far that, if the gospel is true, there is help for him; and that if it is not true, there is no help for him but he must perish like the fallen angels. Then there is some discerning, it may be, of mercy in God – that this is His name: “The Lord God merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin”. The Spirit of God sustains the soul, keeps the sinner from sinking into absolute despair, by the consideration that he is in the hands of a merciful God, a God with whom there is forgiveness and plenteous redemption. All these things, which sound unheeded in the ears of others, are matters of deep interest and engrossing thought to such a person. He puts a thousand questions about them: God is merciful; yes, but how can He be just? What is to become of this law of His, which is holy, just and good?

What he knows about the law by the Spirit’s teaching comes in: Am I to be pardoned at the expense of this law? After there has been some sight of the mercy of God, there are often questions about the congruity of mercy and justice. But here the Mediator of the new covenant comes in; God’s grace is seen to be set forth in the form of a covenant. That is very important as seen at this stage. God’s mercy, grace, compassion, as in the Divine nature, are infinite, unbounded – an infinite ocean. God’s mercy is not distinct from His essence, or being; therefore it is infinite. But, in its outgoing, the quality of mercy does not flow from God by any necessity: “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy”.

Therefore it is not enough for the sinner that God is a merciful God; He must have a merciful purpose. But it is that merciful purpose that is now apprehended. It is seen that it is God’s end and intention to receive into His favour every returning sinner. It is seen that what the sinner was striving to do and could not – to put away sin – God has done. It is seen that salvation is by a Redeemer, who has put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. Then there is the question: The Mediator of the new covenant, through whom a gracious God accomplishes His purpose to save, who is He? Here comes in the Person of Christ, as God and man, in two distinct natures and one Person. Christ asked the man whose eyes had been opened: “Dost thou believe on the Son of God?” If men were in earnest, the question which would oftener be put: “Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him?”

Now, some things are so clearly laid down in Scripture, that some knowledge of them is necessary to a spiritual belief in a Saviour. There is this: that Christ is both very God and very man, and He has these two natures in

one Person. No further proof of the latter point is necessary than that He says always “I”, not “We”. “I came down from heaven.” It was necessary that Christ should be man. A man was our first covenant-head, and a man is our second covenant-head. God never dealt directly with more than two – Adam and Christ. He dealt with all other men mediately, through a covenant-head. Christ must be man; for unless a perfect human obedience was given, there could be no salvation for sinners. If we had a holy human nature (as God gave it and never took it away); a continual keeping of the law and the endurance of the full penalty in the case of any sin – that would be a righteousness, but we do not have it. If we are to be saved, a human righteousness answering all the demands of the law must be found. A Saviour who had wrought out, and who could give a righteousness such as that to you, would be the Saviour for you, sinner!

But it was also necessary that Christ should be God. It was necessary, because sin as an infinite evil, against an infinitely holy God, demands an infinite punishment. The sinner can never endure this; therefore he endures punishment eternally. He must be always, always, always at it, because he can never fully endure it. It was not necessary that an eternal punishment should be endured, else there could have been no salvation, but an infinite punishment. The eternal punishment endured by the sinner can never be finished as the infinite punishment endured by Christ was; it will ever fall short of legal acquittal. Again, it was necessary that Christ should be God, because you need one to teach you infallibly, and infallibility can be found only in God; and because you need one to be subject unto, in whom you can place unbounded confidence and trust, and that can only be God.

The sinner is now convinced that he cannot himself put away his sin. But then he sees that what he could not do, “what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh,” has done. He sees that God is merciful, but that mercy does not flow from God by any necessity of nature – that mercy must ever be sovereign – but he sees that God has a covenant of grace and mercy. And these three things he is called to attend to: the God of the covenant, the provisions of the covenant, the Mediator of the covenant. God is infinitely gracious and merciful, with a certain revealed, gracious purpose. Then the provisions of the covenant, are they ample to meet the sinner’s condition? He can have no hope if the covenant does not contain all that is needful to bring him out of a state of sin and misery into a state of complete blessedness. But it does contain all things needful; and then the Mediator of the covenant is there – Jesus Christ, the Mediator between God and man, the Daysman who is able to lay His hand upon us both.

But why all this? you say, is God not waiting only till we turn? Yes, God is requiring nothing of you but that you turn. You ask again, What is the use of all this then? You will not turn without it. God is not requiring it; but you require all this, in order to turn. You cannot turn unconvinced, unpricked in heart, unhumbled. You cannot turn without Christ, and you cannot come to Christ in ignorance of Him. All these things are necessary in order to conversion, but God may accomplish them in a very short time – in less time than I have taken to speak of them. If I were to describe a landscape to a blind man, it would take some time: I must go over it in order, part by part. But if his eyes were opened, he would see it at a glance. So, if the sinner’s eyes are opened, he might at once see God, law, sin, self, death, hell; he might see at once sin and salvation, himself and Christ.

Well then, seek sound conversion. Do not delay, turn this moment; yet do not too readily judge yourself converted. Turn this moment, but make full proof of having turned. Do it now; but do it well; be in earnest about it.

Luther and the Reformation¹

26. Must Luther Leave Wittenberg?

J H Merle d’Aubigné

Luther imagined he might soon be expelled from Germany. He was working on a report of the Augsburg conference. He wanted a testimony to remain of the struggle between him and Rome. He saw the storm ready to burst but did not fear it. He waited from day to day for the anathemas that were to be sent from Italy; he put everything in order, that he might be prepared when they arrived. “I am ready to depart,” he said, “like Abraham, without knowing whither I go; or rather well knowing, since God is everywhere.” He intended leaving a farewell letter behind him. “Be bold enough”, he wrote to Spalatin, “to read the letter of an accursed and excommunicated man.”

His friends felt great anxiety for him. They entreated him to deliver himself up to the Elector as a prisoner, in order that this prince might keep him somewhere. His enemies could not understand the source of his confidence. One day, at the court of the Bishop of Brandenburg, it was asked what support he

¹This is, meantime, a final edited extract from d’Aubigné’s *The History of the Reformation in the Sixteenth Century*, vol 1, continued from December. In 1518, Luther had been in Augsburg to be examined by Cardinal Cajetan – a legate, or representative, of the Pope. In his appearances before Cajetan, Luther refused to retract his scriptural opinions. He then returned to Wittenberg. It should be noted that he had not yet broken with Rome; he still believed, for instance, that the Pope was God’s vicar upon earth.

could rely on. "On Erasmus", said some; "On Capito and other learned men who are in his confidence." "No, no," replied the Bishop, "the Pope would care very little about those folks. It is in the University of Wittenberg and the Duke of Saxony that he trusts." Thus both parties were ignorant of the stronghold in which the Reformer had taken refuge.

Thoughts of departure passed through Luther's mind. They did not originate in a fear of danger, but he foresaw the continually increasing obstacles that a free confession of the truth would meet in Germany, "If I remain here," he said, "the liberty of speaking and writing many things will be torn from me. If I depart, I shall freely pour forth the thoughts of my heart, and devote my life to Christ."

France was the country where Luther hoped to be free to announce the truth without opposition. The liberty enjoyed by the University of Paris, appeared desirable. Besides, he agreed with them on many points. What would have happened had he removed from Wittenberg to France? Would the Reformation have been established there, as in Germany? Would the power of Rome have been dethroned there; and would France, which was destined to see the hierarchical principles of Rome and the destructive principles of an irreligious philosophy long contend within her borders, have become a great centre of evangelical light? It is useless to indulge in conjectures on this subject, but perhaps Luther at Paris might have changed in some degree the destinies of Europe and of France.

Luther's soul was deeply moved. He used to preach frequently in the city church, in the room of Simon Heyens Pontanus, pastor of Wittenberg, who was almost always sick. He thought it his duty, at all events, to take leave of that congregation, to whom he had frequently announced salvation. He said in the pulpit one day: "I am a very unstable and uncertain preacher. How often already have I left you without bidding you farewell? . . . If this should happen again, and I cannot return, accept my farewell. Then, after adding a few words, he concluded by saying with moderation and gentleness: "Finally, I warn you not to be alarmed if the papal censures are discharged upon me. Do not bear any ill will, either to the Pope or to any other man; but trust all to God."

The moment seemed to have come at last. The Elector informed Luther that he desired him to leave Wittenberg. Luther prepared for his departure, without well knowing where he should direct his steps. He desired, however, to see his friends once more around him and prepared a farewell meal. Seated at the same table with them, he enjoyed their pleasant conversation.

A letter was brought to him from the court. He opened it and read; his heart sank; it contained a fresh order for his departure. The prince enquired

why he had delayed so long. His soul was overwhelmed with sadness. Yet he resumed his courage and, raising his head, said firmly and joyfully, as he turned his eyes on those about him: "Father and mother abandon me, but the Lord takes me up." Leave he must. His friends were deeply moved. What would become of him? If Luther's protector will reject him, who will receive him? And the gospel, the truth and this admirable work will all doubtless perish with its illustrious witness. The Reformation seemed to hang on a thread and, at the moment Luther would leave Wittenberg, would this thread not break? Luther and his friends said little; tears rolled down their cheeks.

But shortly afterwards, another messenger arrived. Luther opened the letter, assuming that it contained a fresh order. But, through the powerful hand of the Lord, he was delivered. Everything had changed. "Since the Pope's new envoy hopes that all may be arranged by a conference," the message read, "remain for the present." How important this hour was! What would have happened if Luther, ever anxious to obey his sovereign's will, had left Wittenberg immediately on receiving the first letter? Never were Luther and the cause of the Reformation lower than at this moment. It appeared that all was decided, but an instant sufficed to change it. From then on, Luther's influence continued to increase. The Almighty commands (in the language of the Psalmist) and his servants go down to the depths and mount up again to heaven.

By Frederick's order, Spalatin summoned Luther for an interview. They conversed a long time on the situation. "If the censures arrive from Rome," said Luther, "I shall certainly not stay in Wittenberg." "Beware, said Spalatin, "of being too precipitate in going to France!" "Only commend my soul to Christ," said Luther to his friends. "I see that my adversaries are still more determined in their plans to ruin me, but meanwhile Christ strengthens me in my resolution to concede nothing."

Luther now published his report of the Conference at Augsburg. Spalatin had written to him, on behalf of the Elector, not to do so; but the letter came too late. As soon as the report was published, the Elector gave his permission. Luther wrote in his preface, "What a new, what an amazing crime to seek for light and truth! And above all in the Church, that is to say, in the kingdom of truth." He told a friend: "I send you my Report; it is keener, no doubt, than the legate expects. . . . I do not know myself whence these thoughts arise. In my opinion, the work is not yet begun – so far the great ones at Rome are mistaken in looking for the end. I will send you what I have written, in order that you may judge whether I have guessed rightly that the Anti-christ of whom Paul speaks now reigns in the court of Rome. I think I shall be able to show that he is worse nowadays than the Turks themselves."

Sinister reports reached Luther from every side. One of his friends wrote to him that the new envoy from Rome had received an order to lay hold of him and deliver him up to the Pope. Another related, that while travelling he had met with a courtier, and that the conversation turning on the matters that were now occupying all Germany, the latter declared that he had undertaken to deliver Luther into the hands of the sovereign pontiff. "But the more their fury and their violence increase," wrote the reformer, "the less I tremble."

At Rome they were much displeased with Cajetan. They thought they had reason to reproach him for being deficient in prudence and for not having relaxed, on so important an occasion, the strictness of his scholastic theology. Why did he exasperate Luther by insults and threats, instead of alluring him by the promise of a rich bishopric, or even of a cardinal's hat? These mercenaries judged of the Reformer by themselves. Still the failure must be retrieved. On the one hand, Rome must declare herself; on the other, she must conciliate the Elector, who might be very serviceable to her in the choice they would soon have to make of an emperor. As it was impossible for Roman ecclesiastics to suspect where Luther derived his courage and strength, they imagined that the Elector was implicated more deeply in the affair than he really was.

The Pope therefore resolved to pursue another course. He had a bull published in Germany, in which he confirmed the doctrine of indulgences, precisely in the points attacked, but he made no mention either of Luther or the Elector. As the Reformer had always declared that he would submit to the decision of the Roman Church, the Pope imagined that he would now either keep his word, or show himself openly as a disturber of the peace of the Church. But no advantage is derived by obstinately opposing the truth. In vain had the Pope threatened with excommunication anyone who should teach otherwise than he ordained; the light is not stopped by such orders. It would have been wiser to moderate the pretensions of the sellers of indulgences by imposing some restrictions. This decree from Rome was therefore a new fault. By legalising crying abuses, it irritated all wise men and rendered reconciliation with Luther impossible. "It was thought," says a Roman Catholic historian, a great enemy to the Reformation, "that this bull had been issued solely for the benefit of the Pope and the begging friars, who began to find that no one would purchase their indulgences".

Cajetan published the decree at Lintz, in Austria, on 13 December 1518; but Luther had already placed himself beyond its reach. On November 28 he had appealed, in Wittenberg, from the Pope to a general council of the Church. He foresaw the storm that was about to burst upon him; he knew that God alone could disperse it; but he did what it was his duty to do. He

must, no doubt, leave Wittenberg – if only for the sake of the Elector – as soon as the Roman anathemas would arrive; he would not, however, leave Saxony and Germany without a striking protest. He therefore drew one up, and that it might be ready for circulation as soon as the Roman thunders reached him, as he expressed it, he had it printed under the express condition that the bookseller should deposit all the copies with him. But this man, covetous of gain, sold almost every one while Luther was calmly waiting to receive them.

The Reformer was vexed, but the thing was done. This bold protest was soon circulated everywhere. In it Luther declared anew that he had no intention of saying anything against the Church or the authority of the apostolic see, and of the Pope when well advised. “But,” he continued, “seeing the Pope, who is God’s vicar upon earth, may, like any other man, err, sin and lie, and that an appeal to a general council is the only means of safety against that injustice which it is impossible to resist, I am obliged to have recourse to this step.”

Here we see the Reformation launched on a new career. It is no longer dependent on the Pope and on his resolutions, but on a general council. Luther addresses the whole Church, and the voice that proceeds from Wittenberg must be heard throughout the Church. The Reformer does not lack courage; he has just given new proof of this.

The Seaman's Catechism (1)¹

John Flavel

Introduction. The last danger I shall warn you of is your contempt of death. ***I*** It seems you have little reverential fear of this king of terrors. Not only do you speak slightly of it, but you do not make more preparation for it and are no more conscious of your need to be preserved from it.

There is a lawful contempt of death. We freely grant that in two cases a believer may contemn it. First, when it is put to them as a temptation to scare them from Christ and duty, they should slight it, as when “they loved not their lives unto the death” (Rev 12:11). Second, when the natural evil of death is set in competition with the enjoyment of God in glory, then a believer should despise it, as Christ is said to do (Heb 12:2).

¹Taken with editing from Flavel’s *Works*, vol 5. Although it was written with a particular consciousness of the special dangers that seamen faced in the days of sail, this *Catechism* is relevant to everyone, for we must all die. Flavel (1628-91) was a minister in Dartmouth, a seaport in Devon, and so was very much aware of dangers at sea.

Now, I wish you to have right thoughts about death, which may lead you to serious preparation for it. Then, when your time comes – as only the Lord knows how soon it may be – you will escape its sting and taste no other bitterness in death than the natural evil of it. To this end I have drawn up the following questions and answers, which may be called “The Seaman’s Catechism”. O that you would resolve, before you go to sea, to withdraw yourselves for a while from all distractions and calmly and seriously catechise yourselves in this way.

Question 1. What may the outcome of this voyage be?

Answer. Death. “Boast not thyself of tomorrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth” (Prov 27:1). “Go to now, ye that say, Today, or tomorrow, we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow; for what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away” (Jas 4:13,14).

Question 2. What is death?

Answer. Death is a separation of soul and body until the resurrection: “We know that . . . our earthly house of this tabernacle [will] be dissolved” (2 Cor 5:1). “Man dieth, and wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he? As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up: so man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep” (Job 14:10,11,12).

Question 3. Is death to be despised and slighted if it is so?

Answer. O no! It is one of the most serious things that ever a creature can meet. So dreadful does it appear to some, that the fear of it subjects them to bondage all their lives, “who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Heb 2:15). In Scripture it is called, “The king of terrors” (Job 18:14), or *the black prince*, as some translate it. No prince ever had such a title before. To some it has been so terrible, that no one might mention its name before them.

Question 4. What makes it so terrible and frightening to men?

Answer. Several things concur to make it terrible to most men. First, what goes before it: strong pains, conflicts and agonies. Second, its work: to transfer us into the other world. Hence it is set forth as a pale horse (Rev 6:8): a *horse* which is to carry you away from hence into the upper, or lower, region of eternity; and a *pale* horse, for its ghastliness and terror. Third, Above all, it is terrible in its consequences; for it is the door of eternity, the parting point between the present world and the one to come, the boundary of all temporal things. Hence “it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgement” (Heb 9:27). “And I looked, and behold a pale horse, and his name that

sat on him was Death, and hell followed with him" (Rev 6:8). It makes a sudden and strange alteration upon men's conditions, to be plucked out of their house and from among friends and honours and so many delights and hurried in a moment into the land of darkness, to be clothed with flames, and drink the pure wrath of the Almighty for ever. This is what makes it terrible.

Question 5. If death is so weighty a matter, am I prepared to die?

Answer. I am afraid I lack many things that are necessary to a due preparation for it.

Question 6. What things does a due preparation for death consist in?

Answer. Many things are necessary. First, Special and saving union with Jesus Christ. This is what disarms it of its sting: "O death, where is thy sting? . . . Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor 15:55,57). So "whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die" (Jn 11:26). Whosoever *liveth* (that is, is made alive with a new spiritual life and principle) and so puts forth the principal act of that life – namely, faith – he shall never die, eternally. This hornet, death, shall never leave its sting in his sides.

Second, to entertain death comfortably, the evidence and knowledge of this union is necessary, "for *we know* that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God" (2 Cor 5:1). And then he will not only be content; he will not groan to be unclothed (v 2). A mistake in the first matter will cost me my soul, and a mistake here will lose me my peace and comfort.

Third, in order to have this evidence, it is necessary for me to keep a good conscience in all things, both towards God and man. "Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world" (2 Cor 1:12). This good conscience respects all and every part of our work and duty to be done, and all and every sin to be renounced and denied. He that is early united to Christ by faith has clear evidence of that union; and the evidence fairly gathered from the testimony of a good conscience, witnessing to his faithfulness in all the duties to be done and the sins to be avoided. Then he is fit to die; death can do him no harm. But, alas, these things are not to be found in me.

To trust God in the light is nothing, but to trust Him in the dark, that is faith. To believe that all shall go well when outward providences blow softly is any fool's play, but to believe that it must and shall go well when storms and tempests are round about you, and you are blown farther and farther from the harbour of your desire – this is a work of grace.

C H Spurgeon

Thomas Boston – His Life and Ministry¹

3. Spiritual Growth in Ettrick

F R Daubney

Ettrick parish was approximately 10 miles long by 10 miles broad, surrounded by mountains and deep glens – the church has a mountain rising up at the very back of it. The Statistical Account of 1792 says the parish possessed no advantages, and the roads were impassable and often obstructed by snow, with insufficient bridges to cross the streams to gain access to the various villages.

The parish had been without a minister for four years and there had been no regular public services in that time. Boston recorded that he “did not find the people’s appetite for ordinances to have been sharpened by the long fast they had had; on the contrary, they were cold and indifferent about divine things, but keen about worldly gains to a proverb”. He was deeply shocked at the behaviour of the people during divine worship. It was necessary for him to appoint two of the elders to watch against offenders both inside and outside the church during worship. There was much of what he described as “profane swearing” and “gross sins of impurity”.

Another trial to him was the presence of a group of dissenters, followers of John Macmillan, a deposed minister and leader of the Cameronians². In Boston’s early years in Ettrick they were a constant source of attacks because of points of difference. Malcontents in the congregation and those fleeing from discipline would go over to the Macmillan camp. In all of this he never regretted going to Ettrick though, when he thought of Simprin, he sometimes felt like “a bird shaken out of its nest, or an owl in the desert”.

During his first year in Ettrick, the Bostons lost an infant son, two years old, called Ebenezer (“Hitherto hath the Lord helped us”). This was a great sorrow and shock to Boston, who had called the boy by that name as an act of gratitude and dedication. When another son was born, after much heart searching by Boston, he was called Ebenezer too. Sadly, this child also died, after only two months, and the further bereavement pierced the gentle father’s heart and caused him a great struggle of faith.

In church Boston delivered rousing sermons on the method of salvation and preached through the whole of *The Shorter Catechism* from beginning

¹The previous part, last month, of this Theological Conference paper spoke of Boston being settled in the small parish of Simprin in the Scottish Borders, and the success, under God, of his ministry there. The article closed with Boston’s induction to the parish of Ettrick.

²Those who did not accept the Revolution Settlement of the Scottish Church in 1689; they went on to become the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

to end. In his second year he began to see fruit, with some reporting that he had destroyed their assumptions and discovered the secrets of their hearts. Boston quickly put in place godly elders; men of whom he thought very highly. With their experience and friendly counsel, they helped and supported him in his early struggles.

In July 1710, three years after he went to Ettrick, the first celebration of the Lord's Supper was held. The minister felt obliged to interview all the communicants personally and, as he did this, he began to feel that he had not been, as he recorded, "altogether useless". The sermons on the fourfold state of man, especially, had done good. There were 57 people from his own parish at the Lord's table on that communion Sabbath. "Few indeed", he said, "but more than I expected".

Early in 1712 the British Parliament under Queen Anne passed an Act which re-imposed patronage and required all the ministers of Scotland to take an Oath of Abjuration (abjuring the claims of the Stuart Pretenders to the throne). Refusal would incur a fine of £500 sterling, a ruinous amount, and persistent refusal would result in a minister being compelled to vacate his pastoral charge. This created alarm throughout the whole Church of Scotland. Why was it necessary, they asked, for men to sign this Oath of Abjuration who, on their entrance to the ministry, had taken an oath of allegiance to the crown? Another purpose of the oath was to protect the Protestant Church, but in the Episcopal form of government and worship used in the Church of England. How could Presbyterian ministers pledge themselves to uphold Episcopacy?

The controversy about this Act almost caused a disruption in the Church. Some signed without scruple but approximately 300 faithful ministers, including the minister of Ettrick, refused to take the oath. Boston took steps to pass his worldly goods to his family to prevent the possibility of them being taken by the Government. When, finally, the deadline for signing arrived, the penalties were not implemented for fear of the consequences of such cruel and crippling punishments. Later the oath was watered down, but Boston still refused to sign and was prepared to lose all. He compared the oath to the house of the leper, which could not be cleansed but needed to be taken down. Some in Ettrick gossiped that their minister would not stand firm and waited for him to fall in with the authorities; this talk hurt him deeply. They clearly did not know their minister; Thomas Boston might have come across as a timorous man, but he was solid as a rock when it came to matters of principle. Once again, his diary reveals him agonising in prayer throughout this period. He never did sign the oath.

At a time when Boston was beginning to see some signs of deepening

religious life in Ettrick, another trouble arose. In September 1715 the Earl of Mar raised the Jacobite standard at Braemar, instigating a rising against the Protestant, Hanoverian monarch. With other Highland chiefs, the Earl began to march south to Perth. Here the army divided with the intention of taking different routes to England. One contingent was to pass through the Ettrick area, and this brought total panic to the whole region. For several weeks the people of Ettrick were in fear of their lives and property, as the army of Highlanders passed through, sustaining themselves by confiscating whatever was available.

This was a great distress to Boston and, to make matters worse, the Government required ministers to produce a roll of able-bodied men aged from 16 to 60 to appear in Selkirk and be enrolled in a temporary militia to defend their parish. The men of Ettrick refused to enrol and they became even more resolute when a tax was levied to pay the expense of the expected conflict, as they believed the authorities already had sufficient resources to repel the invaders. It grieved Boston that he was compelled to read these edicts, and it was he, rather than the authorities, who bore the brunt of the people's resentment. Eventually the Jacobites moved on to meet their English counterparts at Kelso, and together they marched south to Preston, where the rebellion was defeated.

In September 1716, Boston was called to the parish of Closeburn, in Dumfries-shire. The commissioners from Closeburn, and its presbytery, urged him to accept the invitation. Boston was deeply upset by the call, because he had given no indication that his desire was anything other than to stay with his people in Ettrick. As always, he was driven to prayer. He felt sure that to leave the parish at this time would undo much of what he had done. The people of Ettrick noticed the visitors to the manse from Closeburn and quickly realised they were at risk of losing their minister. Concern about his possible removal brought them to appreciate the excellence of their pastor. One woman wept as he walked by, for fear of him leaving. One of the wealthy heritors in the parish, who until that time had shown no interest in Boston's ministry, began to attend church regularly and continued to do so for the rest of his life. Many came to plead tearfully with him not to leave them. The elders of the congregation announced a fast and many gathered, desiring that through confession of sins and prayer they might avert the loss of their minister.

The process dragged on for almost a year before it came before the Commission of the General Assembly in 1717, where the majority seemed to favour his translation to Closeburn. Boston asked for permission to speak and, despite his natural timidity, he spoke powerfully and persuasively. His

fear of being separated from the people he had come to love added urgency to what he had to say. He recorded afterwards: "I must say the Lord was with me, giving me in that hour what to speak and courage to speak it, and even when I ran, He left me not to stumble". Finally, by a vast majority, it was agreed that Boston should stay in Ettrick. On the following Sabbath, there was room in the church for only a fraction of those who came. He had won the hearts of his people and had shown his love to them and they to him. He was now preaching to a united and appreciative congregation.

Points of Christian Experience (2)¹

John Newton

2. We seem to differ likewise as to *the marks of a lively, thriving spirit* – at least if any are supposed to be better or surer than those to whom the Lord has promised blessedness (Mt 5:3-9). He has said, "Blessed are they that mourn", but he has not said, More blessed are they that are comforted. They are, to be sure, more happy at present; but their blessedness does not consist in their present comforts, but in those perceptions of gospel truths which form in them that contrite spirit in which God delights (Is 57:18) and which make them capable of divine comforts, and spiritual hungerings and thirstings after them.

Perhaps we do not argue in the same way; we may mean different things. I would not represent myself as a stranger to peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. In the midst of all my conflicts, I have a heartfelt satisfaction from the gospel which nothing else could give. But I mean, though this is with me as an abiding principle, it rarely affords me what I think you intend when you speak of conscious comforts. I cannot feel that warmth of heart, that glowing of love, which the knowledge of such a Saviour should inspire. I account it my sin, and I feel it my burden that I cannot so feel.

And when I truly do this – when I can abhor myself for my stupidity, mourn over it, and humbly look up to the Lord for relief against it – I judge my soul to be at such times as much alive to God as it would be if He saw fit to increase my comfort. Let me always either rejoice in Him, or mourn after Him. I would leave the alternatives to Him, who knows best how to suit His dispensations to my state; and I trust He knows that I do not say this because I set a small value on His presence. As to the experience of the Apostles, I believe they were patterns to all succeeding believers. But God

¹Another part of a letter to a friend, taken with editing from Newton's *Works*, vol 1. In the first part Newton spoke about *what constitutes a believer*.

shows some regard to the various trials and services to which we may be called in this world; He distributes them to all His people according to His own will, yet with a wise and gracious accommodation to the circumstances and situations of each of them.

The Apostle Paul connects the abounding of his consolations with the abounding of his afflictions, and with the state of the people to whom he preached (2 Cor 1:4-7). And if, instead of preaching the gospel from Jerusalem to Illyricum in the face of persecution, he had lived in a land of liberty and been confined to a parish, for aught I know his cup might not have run over so often. Succeeding ministers of the gospel, when called to very laborious and painful services, have, for similar reasons, been often favoured with a double portion of that joy which makes hard things easy and bitter things sweet. In general, all the Lord's people who walk humbly before Him may expect that, in or after times of great trial, and in proportion to their pressures, He will favour them with special comforts.

In this way He in a great measure fulfills His promise of making their strength equal to their day. And I am enabled to trust Him in this matter that, if He should at any time see fit to call me to a more difficult and dangerous sphere of service, or lead me into the furnace of affliction, He would, if He saw it needful, support and refresh me by such manifestations of His glory and love, as I know but little of at present. In a word, a humble, dependent frame of spirit, perseverance in the use of appointed means, care to avoid all occasions of sin, an endeavour to glorify God in our callings, and an eye to Jesus as our all in all; these things are to me sure indications that the soul is right, that the Lord is present, and that grace is thriving and in exercise, whether conscious consolations abound or not.

Why Should We Pray?¹

Ashbel Green

Before explaining this statement about prayer, I think it important to refute certain objections, which the enemies of religion raise against this duty – objections which tend to set it aside altogether. I have reason to know that they have had a bad influence on the minds of some young persons; indeed they have occasionally operated as perplexing temptations, even to the pious. I shall try to state these objections in all their strength, and I hope

¹Taken with editing from Green's *Lectures on the Shorter Catechism*, vol 2. Green (1762-1848) was a Presbyterian minister who became President of the College of New Jersey. This extract comes from a lecture on the answer to, "What is prayer?"

to reply to them in such a manner as will satisfy every candid mind that they are utterly unfounded.

1. Some have said that prayer is unnecessary, because the Supreme Being is so good that we should not suppose that He needs any entreaties to bestow on us what we need, and that He is so wise that we cannot suppose He requires to be told what we lack. I reply that God is indeed both good and wise in an infinite degree, and yet He does require us to make known our requests to Him, for our own benefit. By asking Him in prayer to supply all our needs, we cultivate a sense of our dependence on Him and of our obligations to Him. We are constantly kept mindful that all the good we enjoy proceeds from the hand of God, that we are wholly indebted to Him both for its reception and its continuance, and that we are consequently accountable to Him for making a right use of His gifts.

Now, here is the foundation of all religion and of all moral obligation. The foundation of it all unquestionably is a just sense of our entire dependence on God as our Creator and Benefactor – and also a just sense of our obligation to seek to please Him, by rightly employing our powers and by an obedience to His commands. It is too obvious to need argument that prayer – in which dependence, indebtedness and obligation are constantly and solemnly acknowledged – must have a direct and powerful influence in augmenting the force, and keeping in lively exercise, these fundamental moral feelings and principles.

Indeed I firmly believe it may be asserted, without danger of error, that without prayer, these feelings and principles will for ever remain, if not absolutely inoperative, yet exceedingly weak and partial. It follows then that, although God is disposed to do us good and knows perfectly all that we need, yet without prayer we shall not be prepared to receive His benefits with a suitable disposition. On this very account, these benefits may not be conferred; if we do not have a right disposition, God may foresee that we will abuse His gifts, if they were bestowed, and hence His very goodness, as well as His justice, may be concerned in withholding them from us. Therefore prayer, by preparing us for God's favours, gives us the best reason to expect them and makes them real blessings when they are received.

2. It has been said that we should not suppose that it is agreeable to God to receive those humble acknowledgments of dependence and obligation, and those ardent expressions of praise and thanksgivings, which are usually offered in prayer – since they are not pleasing even to a good man. This is a most insidious and delusive objection, and this will be clear if it is carefully examined. Notice that there is little ground for any comparison between God and man in the point before us. Every good man is made to believe and feel,

by the very goodness which characterises him, that all the benefits or obligations which he confers on anyone entitle him to little praise. In the first place, God must give him the power and means to confer benefits on his fellow creatures. In the second place, the very disposition to confer them must come from the same source.

High praise is therefore not due to him. He has only tried to act the part of a faithful steward, in distributing the good things which the Great Giver of all good has committed to his management and disposal. But that Great Giver is Himself the overflowing fountain of all benevolence; to Him, of course, the highest praise is justly and strictly due. Besides, great and frequent praise, bestowed on the best man in the world, is calculated to endanger his virtue, which is still imperfect. But as the moral excellence of God is both perfect and unchangeable, it can never be endangered by the warmest and most unceasing acknowledgments of indebtedness and expressions of gratitude. Who does not now see that nothing like an exact parallel can be made between a man and his Maker, as is attempted in this objection?

Yet, after all, it is true that, while every good man seeks to avoid all extravagant praise, he does desire to know that one on whom he has conferred favours is suitably grateful for them. A virtuous parent expects this from his children and is always displeased if it is absent. Therefore the Giver of all good may well be supposed to look for suitable gratitude from all His moral creatures and to be displeased when it is absent. As all the conceptions and expressions of our obligation to God, which we can ever form, must fall far short of what is due to Him, we need never fear that the praise and thanksgiving we offer to Him will be too warm or too great. Thus so far as there is any fair reasoning from man to God, in this matter, it is conclusively in favour of the duty of prayer, of which thanksgiving is always an essential part.

3. It is objected that prayer cannot possibly have any influence in obtaining what we request from God, because all His purposes are fixed and unchangeable. This is the most formidable and plausible objection; yet it would be satisfactorily answered, even if we could say no more in reply than what has already been said in responding to the first objection – that prayer has the happiest influence in preparing our minds for the reception and right use of God's blessings. But as the Holy Scriptures abundantly teach the truth that prayer has a direct influence in obtaining the blessings for which we pray, so I am satisfied that it can never be shown how this is any more inconsistent with reason than to believe in the influence of any secondary cause whatever in producing its appropriate effect.

How the unchangeable purpose of God is connected with the result of diligence or negligence in the use of means is, at bottom, beyond our powers

to penetrate and explain. We only know that such a connection exists and that God's purpose always (except in the case of miracles) includes, and never excludes, the use or neglect of the secondary cause. The secondary cause, although it may consist in the voluntary choice of a free agent, is as much the subject of God's purpose or decree as the natural and necessary effect to be produced. Hence it is clear that what the Scriptures teach about the direct influence of prayer, in obtaining what it seeks from God, is just as reasonable, and no more difficult to be understood, than that ploughing and sowing should have an immediate and indispensable influence in producing a crop. In both cases, God's purpose is equally certain and the influence of means, or secondary causes, is precisely the same. In both cases too the means are the objects of voluntary choice, and when rightly used, God's revelation authorises us to expect a favourable result and forbids us to expect such a result when the proper means are neglected.

The prayer of faith is indeed more certainly connected with God's favour than the labours of the husbandman are with the harvest which he hopes for. In the former case, the blessing never fails; in the latter, disappointment sometimes follows.

Thoughts on Justification¹

Thomas Boston

Exhortations to the unconverted. 1. Labour to get your hearts brought to a deep concern for a pardoned state. Therefore believe your miserable state by nature, that you are condemned. Take a view of the holy, righteous law and your innumerable transgressions of it, besides your sinful nature. Look to the flaming justice of God. Behold it in the case of the damned, in the case of Christ suffering, and see what a fearful thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God.

2. Go to God in Christ, confess your sins and condemn yourselves. Lay them out before God with shame and confusion of face, with their several aggravations. Make a full and free confession, insisting most on those sins of yours that have been most dishonouring to God. Acknowledge that you are justly condemned by the law, and that God would be righteous if He should put the sentence into execution.

3. Solemnly and sincerely accept of Christ in the covenant of grace, as held forth in the gospel. Receive Him with His righteousness, and enter under the covert of His blood. And lay all your guilt over on Him, believing

¹An edited extract from Boston's *Works*, vol 1.

His ability and willingness to remove it. And, accepting of Christ for justification and sanctification, you shall be accepted and pardoned.

Exhortation to justified people. This privilege calls you to several duties.

1. Love the Lord, and love Him much, for much is forgiven you. This may be oil to that holy flame, and therefore love will continue in heaven for ever.

2. Be of a forgiving disposition. "Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you" (Eph 4:32). The same Saviour that brought in remission of sins, binds us to love our enemies. And the bitter, revengeful spirit, against those we think have wronged us, is a sad sign that God has not forgiven our own sin. "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors" (Mt 6:12). They who have found what a dreadful weight sin unpardoned is, and have at length got it removed, will thereby be helped to forgive.

3. Walk humbly. You are justified, but it is by the righteousness of Another. You are pardoned, but it was procured to you by the satisfaction of a Saviour. Your debt is paid, your discharge is ready; but it is thanks to free grace, not to you.

4. Bear patiently your troubles and crosses in the world. Your life that was forfeited by sin is safe by grace; therefore take thankfully any troubles you meet with. For why should a living man complain, especially one that deserved to die and yet is adjudged to life?

5. Walk tenderly. God pardoning a sinner, dismisses him as Christ did the penitent adulteress: "Go, and sin no more" (John 8:11). Let not your broken bones be forgotten, but walk softly all your years. If you are pardoned, show it by your holy and tender walk.

The Love of God¹

David Steven

I used to think that the love of God was procured by the work of Christ, but **I**O the view I got that day² of the love of the Father from eternity, and that it was because of that love that the Saviour was sent into the world. My heart was filled and melted with a sense of God's love to lost and guilty sinners in giving His only begotten Son for their salvation.

How I longed, when the congregation broke up, to get home that I might find a secret place in which to give vent to my feelings; and when I did reach

¹Reprinted from *The Free Presbyterian Magazine* for September 1926. Steven was a godly Caithness worthy of the nineteenth century.

²As Steven listened to a sermon by Alexander Gunn, minister of Watten, on John 3:16.

my own dwelling, I could not well contain myself, but felt as if my bodily frame could not hold such a measure as I had received, and went stumbling over what lay in my way into the barn, and there poured out my heart in adoration of the Lord's love and mercy, and I had there a sweet word of promise given me: "Behold I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it" (Rev 3:8). Many a miserable and perplexing time has gone over my head since then, but that was a time I can never forget.

Book Review

Dialogue Between a Catholic Priest and a Protestant, by Matthew Poole, published by Northampton Press, hardback, 168 pages, \$16.00.

The name of the author of this book is already well known. In 1685, he provided for Bible readers a *Commentary*. C H Spurgeon declared that, if in his studies he was restricted to consulting only one commentary, he would choose Poole's. Surely therefore we ought to be interested in the *Dialogue* if we care for our own souls, and if one so learned and so conversant with the Scriptures as Matthew Poole was, wrote it – and he makes use of the Bible to highlight the distinction between what is precious and what is vile. In particular, Poole here examines the doctrines and practices of the apostate Church of Rome and does so by way of a supposed dialogue between a Popish Priest and a Protestant.

Poole seems to have lost no time in refuting and condemning the errors systematised in the canons of the Council of Trent, which had finally completed its deliberations in 1653, only four years before this book was written. Rome's *semper eadem* (always the same) would now apply for all time coming and her anathema was pronounced on any who would dare to alter or differ from what were now the official, authorised doctrines and practices laid down by Trent.

Numerous authors who wrote in support of what this conclave produced are cited by Poole and their arguments demolished. In his letter to the reader, he anticipates being charged with managing the work with partiality and deceit and of making the Romanist say what he wants him to say; Poole's response is, "I do not care what men think. . . . God is my witness that I diligently endeavoured to pick out the strongest arguments I could find in the Romanists' best authors on each point. Nor have I willingly avoided anything of significance in the questions here debated; if any Romanist thinks otherwise, let him search for arguments of greater strength, and I hope he shall find that the issues have been fairly examined."

If Poole was writing in 2023 he would surely note that Rome's doctrines remain substantially the same and that any changes made have been only cosmetic. What is on record, condemned and detested in the National Covenant remains unchanged; the Pope is still the "Roman Antichrist" and, among other things, these errors continue: "his devilish mass; his blasphemous priesthood; his profane sacrifice for sins of the dead and quick [living]; his canonisation of men; calling upon angels or saints departed". Add to this what is now public knowledge in regard to the abusing of children by priests and others – estimated to be a third of a million in Europe alone. How gross and strong that delusion must be when so many of our fellow creatures still maintain that we have here a branch of the Christian Church!

The Pope was expected to visit Scotland in November 2021, ostensibly to attend the international conference on climate change, but Scotland was mercifully spared from having the Antichrist and man of sin set foot on her soil again. That he, through one of his minions in Westminster, recently claimed that all marriages not performed, or celebrated, within the Roman Church are invalid reveals that the arrogance of the past still remains. Such apathy prevails that this outrageous claim did not make bold headlines.

This useful, informative book was first published in London in 1667 under the title *Dialogue between a Popish priest and an English Protestant*, and we are very grateful that the Northampton Press have made it available again. We hope and pray that it will receive a wide circulation. It is a pity that the original title was not used and that the claim of Rome to be the catholic, or universal, Church would be, even in this instance, repudiated.

(Rev) J MacLeod

Notes and Comments

Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults (Scotland) Act

Early in 2023 Liam McArthur, MSP for Orkney, will introduce his private member's bill on assisted dying to the Scottish Parliament, having gained cross-party support from 36 MSPs (and the support of 76% of respondents to the public consultation).

The Medical Advisory Group (MAG) was asked to advise on the drafting of an assisted-dying law and recommended that two independent doctors would be required to assess whether the person seeking an assisted death had the mental capacity to make such a decision. The two doctors responsible for co-ordinating the assisted-dying process must be on the register of the General Medical Council and have, at least, successfully completed Foundation Year 1

year of their training, their first year after medical study at university. It seems very onerous to place such a responsibility on inexperienced, and probably young shoulders.

It is understood that there would be no compulsion on doctors to participate in the process; they would have the right to conscientious objection. The patient in that case would have the right to be referred to a participating Health Care Professional (HCP) who has been trained.

The two doctors would need to satisfy themselves that:

- the person is at least 16 years old (legally an adult in Scotland) and is voluntarily requesting an assisted death;
- the person has a diagnosis of a terminal illness; disability alone is not a qualifying criterion; the choice would only be available to a disabled person if they also have a terminal illness and death is foreseeable;
- at the time of the assisted death the person continues to have the mental capacity to make such a decision; if not, they are no longer eligible for assisted death and the procedure must stop;
- the applicant has again confirmed that they wish to proceed.

The applicant must self-administer the assisted dying substance either orally or by a delivery system. It would continue to be a criminal offence to end someone's life directly.

The Medical Advisory Group has reported on how the safeguards should be enacted and what procedures should be followed. When an applicant requests information on assisted dying they must be counselled about the availability of alternative approaches, including palliative care. Throughout the whole process, the patient must be advised that palliative care and other options are still available. The experience in other countries is that many do choose palliative care and not assisted dying. The Group recommend that palliative care should be made more readily available and more financial resources allocated for it.

Assisted dying is legal in Spain, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, Canada, Switzerland, New Zealand, some states in Australia, and a number of US states. The Medical Advisory Group states that, if their recommended safeguards are in place, no “slippery slope” will follow as the years pass by (see Notes and Comment in this *Magazine* for November 2022, “Canada’s Slippery Slope”).

The Medical Advisory Group report appears to be comprehensive and full of safeguards and their guidance, if adopted, should make any subsequent law as free from abuse as is reasonably foreseeable. However, they have done it on the premise that assisted dying is an acceptable and compassionate end-of-life choice. The fact remains that it is assisted suicide and should

be resisted as a wilful contravention of the Sixth Commandment. We do not say, “Thou shalt not kill”, without compassion; some of us have wept at the bedside of a suffering, dying, loved one, but God’s law is clear and must be obeyed, whatever the circumstances. *FRD*

Historic Legal Cases

The investigation of faults and crimes of the past has become increasingly commonplace in recent times. A 97-year-old German woman has just been convicted of being a secretary in a concentration camp, and thus of being complicit in 10 000 murders between 1943 and 1945. She was given a two-year suspended sentence. A 75-year-old UK man has just been convicted of rape and murder committed in 1975; while another man aged 80 was recently jailed for the “Dalmagarry” murders of 1976. In the last few months, the Australian police have identified the Bondi rapist who committed his crimes between 1985 and 2001, and died in February 2022. In Britain, there is an ongoing “Infected Blood Inquiry” into people, mainly haemophiliacs, who received infected blood in the 1970s and 1980s. An earlier Scottish Penrose Inquiry on the same issue concluded in 2015 but did not give satisfaction.

While appreciating the desire for justice, even when long-delayed, one does question the resources of time, money, and ability that must have been expended on many such investigations. Human justice is not intended to supplant the Day of Judgement, and the main focus must always be on the active wrong-doers of the present rather than elderly and deceased criminals of the past. It should be sobering to those involved in present-day evils – particularly abortion and transgender – to think that human justice may catch up with them in their old age but it would be more useful to stop them in their evil tracks now. Historic cases can be a convenient diversion from present duty. There is another “judgement seat” before which we must all appear, and many who are active in the pursuit and prosecution of others are themselves far from ready to appear before Christ. *DWBS*

Protestant View

Death of the Former Pope

The death of Joseph Ratzinger, the late Benedict XVI, has been marked by tributes from leading politicians and religious leaders across the world. In this we see a little of the prophecy being fulfilled concerning the papacy, that all the world wonders after the beast (Rev 13:3). In 2013 he became the only

pope in modern times to have resigned from the papal throne. It was widely reported that the key factor in triggering his resignation was his inability to deal with the corruption, which was particularly rife in the Vatican during his period in office. Ratzinger had also been criticised for failing to deal appropriately with cases of immoral abuse perpetrated by priests under his jurisdiction while he was Bishop of Munich. He apologised in 2022 for his failings in this connection.

Not the least of the absurdities and soul-destroying errors of Romanism is the fact that its teachings cannot give assurance of salvation to its own followers. The prayers by Romanist worshippers across the world, for the former pope after his death, show this. Prayer for the dead is harmful for those who remain behind because it tends to confirm them in dreadful error about salvation. It obviously strengthens attachment to the unbiblical figment of purgatory. And it is also utterly useless because the eternal destiny of every soul is fixed at the point of death; “in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be” (Ecc 11:3).

The solemn fact for each occupant of the papal office, however, is that, by taking that position, they put themselves in the awful position described in 2 Thessalonians 2 as the visible head of the whole system of antichrist. The apostle John (1 Jn 5:16) warns us that there is no prayer to be made for those who have sinned “a sin unto death” while they are still alive: “I do not say that he shall pray for it”.

Thus we see that the popish way of salvation cannot even bring its living embodiment surely to eternal life. The gospel according to Rome is a religion of works mixed in with elements of gospel truth. As Rabbi Duncan said, it is wheat laced with arsenic. Like every other version of human self-righteousness, popery presents “another gospel” and thus leaves those who follow its way under the curse of the broken law and covenant of works. It is therefore entirely unable to give a sure salvation even to those who are most devoted to its teachings. *AWM*

Church Information

Meetings of Presbytery (DV)

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

Southern: At Glasgow, on Tuesday, February 7, at 2 pm.

Western: At Lochcarron, on Tuesday, January 31, at 12 noon.

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

Synod Committee Meetings

Synod committees will meet, DV, as follows:

Tuesday, March 21:

- 09.10 - 09.40 Church Interests Committee
- 09.50 - 11.20 Training of the Ministry Committee
- 11.30 - 12.30 Sabbath Observance Committee
- 12.40 - 13.40 Overseas Committee
- 13.50 - 14.50 Outreach Committee
- 15.00 - 17.00 Religion and Morals Committee
- 18.00 - 19.30 Publications and Bookroom Committee
- 19.40 - 20.40 Welfare of Youth Committee

Wednesday, March 22

- 10.00 - 13.00 Finance Committee (Rev) *K M Watkins*, Clerk of Synod

Bookroom Fund

By appointment of Synod, the Special Collection on behalf of the Bookroom Fund, is due to be taken in congregations during February.

W Campbell, General Treasurer

Acknowledgement of Donations

The General Treasurer acknowledges with sincere thanks the following donations:

Eastern Europe Fund: The Barn Chapel, Bury St Edmunds, for Odessa congregation, £2375.

General Fund: Anon, £164.02, Anon, £20.

Jewish & Foreign Missions Fund: Stubbes Precast Commercial Ltd, Canada, for Mbumba Mission Hospital, £7481.25; Providence Chapel, Irthlingborough, for Zimbabwe Mission, £760.

Congregational Treasurers acknowledge with sincere thanks the following donations:

Creich etc: Anon, £500 per WC; Anon, £1000. *Communion Expenses:* Anon, £50, £20. *Door Collection:* Anon, £40.

Edinburgh: Friend, £100 per DC; Friend, Cymru, £140.

Glasgow: Anon, £100 per WC. *Eastern Europe Fund:* Anon £85, £85.

Lochcarron: Friends, Uig, for Lochcarron manse expenses for housing Ukranian friends, £500 per Rev DAR.

North Tolsta: *Communion Expenses:* Anon, £100; £30. *Door Collection:* Anon, £100, £170, £20, £80. *Where Most Needed:* Anon, £40.

Portree: *Bus Fund:* Anon £20.

Raasay: Anon, £240. *Where Most Needed:* Anon £20 per AB.

Staffin: Anon, £1000 for manse oil, gas and electricity; Anon, £300 per WC. *Eastern Europe Fund:* Anon, £30 per Rev JC.

The glory of God is His absolute sovereignty.

One leaves all his temptations for ever, but the other instead of that falls into the hands of the tempter, not to be tempted but to be tormented by him. The one is perfectly delivered from all the remainders of corruption; the other he carries all that vast load of sin, made up of original sin, natural corruption and actual sins, into hell with him, and there the guilt of them breaks forth in the conscience and burns and scorches him as flames of hell within.

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 DPhl, 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. **Stratherrick:** Sabbath 12 noon. (Each of these services is held once in three weeks as intimated). Contact Mr M J Schouten; tel: 01463 221776.
- Fort William:** Monzie Square, Sabbath 11 am, 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; **Strathy:** 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.
- Kinlochbervie:** Sabbath 6 pm; **Scourie:** Sabbath 11:30 am, Tuesday 7 pm (as intimated). Contact Dr A Ross; tel 01971 502099.
- Kyle of Lochalsh:** Sabbath 6 pm. Manse tel: 01599 534933. Contact Rev D A Ross; tel: 01445 731340.
- Laide** (Ross-shire): Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. Rev D A Ross. F P Manse, Laide, IV22 2NB; tel: 01445 731340.
- Lochcarron:** Sabbath 11 am, 6 pm; Wednesday 7 pm. Manse.
- Lochinver:** Church. No F P services at present.
- Ness:** Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm; Wednesday 7 pm. Manse tel: 01851 810228. Contact Rev K M Watkins; tel: 01859 520271.
- North Tolsta:** Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm; Thursday 7.30 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, F P Manse, Clachan, Staffin, IV51 9HY; tel: 01470 562754.
- 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: graffton@internode.on.net.

Sydney, NSW: Corner of Oxford and Regent Streets, Riverstone. Sabbath 10.30 am, 6 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. Rev G B Macdonald BSc, 60 Hamilton St, Riverstone, NSW 2765; tel: (02) 9627 3408; e-mail: 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.

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

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

New Canaan: Church. Rev T Mwedzi.

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