

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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Apeil 2023

Vol 128 • No 4

The Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland

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The Free Presbyterian Magazine

Published by The Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland (Scottish Charity Number SC003545). Subscriptions and changes of address to be sent to the General Treasurer, Mr W Campbell, 133 Woodlands Road, Glasgow, G3 6LE; tel: 0141 332 9283. The subscription year begins in January. Prices are on back cover. One month's notice is required for change of address. Queries about delivery of the magazines should be sent to the General Treasurer, not the printer.

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Deadline for sending material to the Editor: The beginning of the month previous to publication.

The Gaelic Supplement (quarterly): Editor: Rev A W MacColl MA PhD, 10 Achany Road, Dingwall, IV15 9JB; tel: 01349 866546. Available free on request.

Youth Magazine: *The Young People's Magazine*. Editor: Rev K D Macleod BSc.

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, Uig; **Third:** Auckland, Shildaig, 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, Staffin; **Third:** Leverburgh, London, Odessa; **Fourth:** Edinburgh, Gisborne; **Fifth:** Dornoch, Mbuma.

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

December: Third Sabbath: Bulawayo, Santa Fe.

The Free Presbyterian Magazine

Volume 128

April 2023

Number 4

Settled in Heaven

God has spoken. He has given to mankind a revelation of Himself and of all we need to know about spiritual things. And that revelation is “settled”, which is the word we find in Psalm 119:89, where the Psalmist addresses the Most High: “For ever, O Lord, Thy Word is settled in heaven”. J A Alexander notes that *settled* means “literally, made to stand”, that is, “unalterably fixed”. He notes further that the phrase, “in heaven”, teaches us that God’s Word is “beyond the reach of all disturbing causes”. So we should be convinced that the Bible is altogether safe from all the attacks of all its enemies. And William S Plumer adds that “there is no better word [than *settled*] to express unchangeable fixedness”.

We live in a world where so much is subject to change: one generation passes away and is succeeded by another; individuals age; buildings decay and crumble, opinions alter; new discoveries are made. Yet, in the Bible, God has given us what is fixed unchangeably for ever. Peter, himself inspired to write two parts of God’s settled Word, states, “All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: *but the word of the Lord endureth for ever*” (1 Pet 1:24,25). He compares human beings to grass, which quickly withers in the absence of rain. Similarly, bright, colourful flowers droop and the petals fall off, when moisture has dried up. So also, even where human glory is at its greatest, it will not last; the most eminent in society will inevitably die, and even before that happens, their status may be reduced to that of the most ordinary of their fellow creatures.

Not so the Bible. It is settled in heaven. It is accurate. It is totally reliable. It is the truth of God, which can never change. But man is fallen; he wants to think his own thoughts, independent of God. In his fallen state, he will not submit to the truth revealed in God’s Word. Yet what man needs is, to use Augustine’s expression, to “think God’s thoughts after Him”, the thoughts He has revealed in Scripture. Probably there have never been so many copies of the Bible in circulation throughout the world. But throughout the world the proportion of those who take heed to God’s Word in our time is limited.

The Bible contains God's account of what He did in bringing the world into existence and everything in it – and everything in all the other parts of the universe. We should consider that account to be settled in heaven, but every effort is made to dismiss it and to promote the foolish idea that everything just happened to come into its present condition by a very long series of chance events.

When people reject the authority of Scripture, they reject God's law in particular. Scripture tells us that "the carnal mind" – the mind in its natural, fallen condition – "is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be". Unconverted sinners have a natural opposition in their hearts to God and cannot submit to the authority of God speaking in Scripture. They do not want to be told what to do, and Satan leads them further and further away from God in their rebellion against His authority.

God says, "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me". His authority as God is settled in heaven; it represents reality. Man would be glad to give himself the first place in everything and thereby make himself a god; apart from God's restraining power, man would indeed give himself that place. And that restraining power prevents individuals from breaking some of God's Commandments, at least outwardly. This power may work through conscience, or through people recognising that a general agreement to respect, for instance, the command, "Thou shalt not kill", makes life easier for everyone. Yet there is no respect for the spirituality of these commands; this inward, spiritual respect is only possible if a new heart is given, through the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit.

All the truths in Scripture are settled in heaven. In particular, God has revealed what should be obvious from the most superficial observation of ourselves and others, that all are sinners. We are all doing wrong, not only against other people, but *against God*. Yet most people ignore this settled truth, a truth that demands a response from each of us. God's settled Word calls on us to "repent . . . and believe the gospel" (Mk 1:15). The idea of turning from sin is unacceptable to rebels against God, apart from the Holy Spirit working graciously and powerfully in their souls. To go on in sin just seems too attractive. This is especially the case when so many reject God's authority in giving His law to tell human beings what they must do and what they must not do.

The idea likewise of believing the gospel, the good news that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners – which is so central to God's revelation in Scripture – is unacceptable to people generally. Even if they recognise that they need to be saved, it is natural for them to want to save themselves, or at least to contribute to that salvation. They do not want to be totally in-

debted to God and the salvation that He has provided through His Son; such is the corruption of the natural heart. How much we need to submit to the emphasis of Scripture on our total need of the Holy Spirit to apply Christ's saving work to our souls, as the Saviour emphasised to Nicodemus: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (Jn 3:5).

We may not need Scripture to make us aware that everyone will die, but we do need Scripture, as applied by the Spirit, to bring us to make a profitable application of that fact to ourselves. We need the Spirit to make us realise our need of being prepared to meet God at death and to understand what that preparation consists in – that we must be born again and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and on Him alone, for salvation. Here again contemporary thinking clashes with scriptural teaching. The latter is settled in heaven, and we on earth must wholeheartedly receive that there is no "salvation in any other [than Christ]: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). God has revealed one Saviour, one true religion, and only one. This generation claims to believe that all religions point in the same direction, and therefore that multi-faith worship is acceptable. But it is most certainly not acceptable to God. What He has revealed in Scripture is truth; whatever contradicts Scripture in any religion or philosophy is therefore false. If we cannot accept that conclusion, our religion has no value.

Plumer remarks on Psalm 119:89: "However fleeting, changeable and unsatisfactory are all things merely temporal . . . the Word of God is stable, unchangeable and everlasting. It depends upon His truth and faithfulness". So we should ask ourselves what use we are making of Scripture, which is the only sure, unchanging guide through life; nowhere else can we find reliable directions for a blessed eternity. This generation may generally wish to believe that there is nothing beyond death – in particular, no judgement and no hell. Yet it is settled in the justice of heaven that there will be a judgement, where we must all appear – whatever our preparedness for it, or lack of it – and that there is an eternity of punishment in hell, where all unbelievers must go.

God *has* spoken on these and so many other matters. It would be good for us to say, "I will hear what God the Lord will speak" (Ps 85:8), and to seek God's grace so that we might indeed be able to fulfill that resolve. It is our duty to listen to Him with the kind of listening that leads on to sincere obedience. To repeat, what God tells us in Scripture is the only reliable guide to getting safely through this world and arriving safely in heaven at last. May we not be swept away by the unbelieving attitudes of today!

Christ's Invitation to the Labouring (4)¹

A Sermon by *Thomas Boston*

Matthew 11:28. *Come unto Me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

Second. *The sort of labour sinners have in the law.* To this most of what has been said already may be applied; besides, it may occur afterwards. I shall only say these two things about it at present.

1. It is *most hard labour*, for it requires most exact obedience, under pain of the curse: "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them" (Gal 3:10). Nothing but perfect obedience is accepted, according to the law, and the least failure dooms the sinner to death. Now, no man can perform this, and yet men are so foolish that they think they can please God with their works. Again, it is hard because the law neither promises strength nor gives it. God gave Adam strength to perform it; he lost it, and the law does not restore it; so that in this case they must make the brick, and no straw is laid to their hands. This makes hard work, and so, by the Spirit, it at length breaks the heart of the elect and makes them die to the law (Gal 2:19).

2. It is *vain and useless labour*. There are great pains and no gain in this labour. It is vain; they that labour in the law sow their seed in the sand, but all they reap is wind, which may puff them up but cannot nourish. Why are there so many barren professors but because they are trading with the law, not with Christ? Men go to duties and rest in them; the pipe is laid short of the fountain. It is vain for acceptance with God. It is thankless work, for it supersedes the command to believe: "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent" (Jn 6:29). It is a sad word: "Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law" (Rom 11:31,32). Turtle doves were accepted on the altar at Jerusalem, when bullocks were rejected on those at Dan and Bethel.

Further, it is vain, *not answering the demands of the law* (Gal 3:10). Our curtailed obedience will not answer the measuring rod of the law; it demands satisfaction for what is past, and perfect obedience for what is to come.

Finally, it is vain, for *it does not save*. The way to heaven by the first covenant is blocked up; the angel with the flaming sword guards it; duties are a sandy foundation, and great will be the fall of those who trust in them.

¹This is the second part of the third sermon on this text. It is reprinted, with editing, from Boston's *Works*, vol 9. The first part appeared in the April 2022 issue, where the preacher spoke on the sort of labour sinners have in their lusts.

4. Why sinners labour in their lusts and in the law for satisfaction and do not come to Christ.

(1.) Because *they have lost God*, the fountain of happiness, and therefore they seek to squeeze it out of the creatures: "Having no hope, and without God in the world" (Eph 2:12). For God says, "They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters" (Jer 2:13). The sun has gone down on them; therefore they light their candles, and compass themselves with their own sparks; for the empty soul must have something to feed on. The prodigal needed bread, and therefore fed on husks. Dove's dung was precious when there was no bread in Samaria.

(2.) By a *strong delusion*, they still expect satisfaction from them. They see them through a magnifying glass, as our first parents did the forbidden fruit (Gen 3:5,6). That delusion is conveyed to their posterity, and they will never be cured till grace does it. Hence, though men meet a thousand disappointments in those things, they still renew the attempt, with new hopes.

(3.) These things are *most suitable to the corrupt nature*: "They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh" (Rom 8:5). Fish swim in the river and do not care for the most pleasant meadow; swine prefer the dung-hill to a palace; because everything seeks its like. Even the way of the law, though just and good in itself, is the way that agrees best with self: "Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? Nay, but by the law of faith" (Rom 3:27).

(4.) *They know no better*. Christ is hidden from men in their natural state, they do not see His glory, fulness and excellency; they say, "What is thy Beloved more than another beloved" (Song 5:9). The fowl scrapes beside the jewels and takes up a grain of corn beside them because it does not know their worth. "Unto you therefore which believe He is precious, but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient" (1 Pet 2:7).

(5.) Men naturally are *enemies to the way of salvation* by Jesus Christ.

5. Application. Let me warn you most earnestly. Why do you spend your labour for what does not satisfy? (Is 55:2). Seeing you wish to labour, will you not labour in God's way, that you may enter into His rest? It is wearisome labour that all out of Christ are engaged in. I wish you to give it over and engage in Christ's service. I come in His name to beseech you. Your labour is one that God never put in your hands; it proceeds from a corrupt heart and the devil, who yoked you to that work of seeking your happiness in created things; in lusts or in the law, and not in God. To this some may plead, Not guilty! "We know (they say) the world is but vain, and we place

our chief happiness in God. God forbid we should labour in any such way!"

For your conviction, however, I must say a few things. You may be deceived; many are as busy as can be at that work, and yet say that they are not. "There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness" (Prov 30:12). I would ask you:

(1.) Who loosed you from this labour? Were you never at it? If you think so, you miserably deceive yourselves. Since Adam went away from God to pluck his happiness off the forbidden tree, all mankind have followed his steps, and abide at the work, till converting grace looses them. What is conversion, but a turning to God, from whom we are naturally turned away? Alas, there are few converts!

(2.) Were you ever heartily wearied of this labour, seeing your folly in abiding so long in it? Was it ever a heavy task that you were made to groan under? All are welcome to Christ that will come, but none will ever give up such labour till God will bring them to a holy despair (Hos 2:6,7). Then the soul can neither get satisfaction in created things nor go to God. Thus it sits down with these words, "Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke; turn Thou me, and I shall be turned, for Thou art the Lord my God" (Jer 31:18). "No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him" (Jn 6:44).

(3.) How are you kept from returning to this labour? If you have left it, it will not be without a struggle. There is a natural bias this way in the hearts of all. Alas, the strong man keeps the house with most people; they have no struggle with the world, nor do they struggle to keep it out of their heart.

(4.) Whence does your greatest dissatisfaction proceed, from the world mistrusting you or God hiding His face from you? From your disappointments in the world or at the throne of grace? Where the disappointment goes deepest, the expectations have been greatest: "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick" – an infallible evidence that most men are at this work.

(5.) Where do you find your greatest satisfaction and pleasure, if we may call it so? In the enjoyment of God or of the world, in getting your lusts satisfied? If worldly joy was turned away from them, many would not have a happy hour. They never found as much sweetness in the benefits of the covenant as in those of the world.

(6.) If you are not labouring thus, what are you doing? There cannot be an idle soul among us. If the devil has us not, God has us at work. These things must bring convictions to our breasts.

Let me still further warn you. Why spend "your labour for that which satisfieth not"? This labour is thankless; God will not thank you for it; He says, "Who hath required this at your hands?" The devil pays you the wages due

to it, which are death (Rom 6:23). He has no better to give. Besides this, your labour is against God. Having forsaken the fountain of living waters, you have hewn out for yourselves broken cisterns that can hold no water" (Jer 2:13). You are thus setting created things in the room of God; accordingly God is against you in this labour, so you can never get what you are seeking from it. Be exhorted then to give it up. I set before you these motives:

(1.) Why will you toil so much to bring from created things what is not in them? Only God can answer the desires of the soul; no one ever saw his desires fully satisfied till they were swallowed up in God. When created things were at their best, there was the forbidden tree in paradise to teach man that his happiness was not in them. How much more now! "The bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it, and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it" (Is 28:20).

(2.) How can you expect to find rest when all things here are unstable as water? Unchangeableness is necessary in what will make one truly happy; otherwise the very fear of losing it mars the happiness. Will we seek our root in vanity or fill our hands with the wind?

(3.) Did you ever meet with any worldly enjoyment that was every way as you would have it? Dissatisfaction will proceed from any defect, however small, as with Haman (Est 5:13); but everything desirable must come together in what will give satisfaction. So Christ "is altogether lovely" (Song 5:16). Let a man turn over the whole creation for satisfaction, yet he will find that "in the fulness of his sufficiency he shall be in straits" (Job 20:22). Who ever got the rose that lacked prickles?

(4.) Are not all hopes disappointed? They promise more when far off than they give when they come near. Mountains afar off become molehills when near. The more closely a ball of snow is held, the smaller it will grow.

(5.) Has not the sap been squeezed out of enjoyments to you between the hand and the mouth? "The floor and the winepress shall not feed them, and the new wine shall fail in her" (Hos 9:2). Have you not had fair prospects blasted in a moment, before you ever tasted them?

(6.) Has not the loss of them often brought greater sorrow than ever the having of them gave joy, when God has taken away your choice comforts? Were you not more grieved then than you were happy before?

(7.) Has not what you expected to be the greatest comfort turned out to be the greatest cross? This was the case with Rachel, who said to Jacob, "Give me children, or else I die". She got children, and death instantly followed.

(8.) Have not special mercies, as well as judgements, brought a sting with them, while conscience was whispering that God was your enemy.

(9.) Was your heart ever truly at rest in these things, so that you could say

you desire no more? But the more one has of them, the more are they desired.

(10.) There is another way to come at your purpose. Come to Christ, and He will give you rest. This is a short way, for all is in Him; whatever perfections are scattered up and down among created things, all is in Him, infinitely more. It is a sure way, for you will not miss happiness if you come to Him.

I would once more warn you. "Wherefore do you spend . . . your labour for that which satisfieth not?" I would beseech you most earnestly, not only to give up your present unpleasant, unprofitable labour, but also to change your labour – not only to depart from evil, but to do good; to serve a new Master, and run in the way of His commandments. You are labouring one way or another; will you not then labour in true religion, real godliness? If we must serve, surely it is better to serve Christ than the devil. Labour in religion frightens the world; but why should it, seeing their labour is so great while they are out of Christ? Consider:

(1.) We are not calling you from idleness to working, but from labour to labour. Even if we were still to be slaves, better to be God's than the devil's. What will men say to Christ at the last day, who will labour in their lusts but not in holiness; that will bear a yoke but not Christ's yoke?

(2.) We call you, not from one base labour to another, but from a base to an honourable work. Should one be called from the stone-barrow to be a king's cupbearer, it cannot be compared to what is proposed. They will have [1] a more honourable master; [2] more honourable fellow labourers, for the angels serve Him; [3] more honourable work, for God is glorious in holiness; [4] a more honourable office; from being slaves to the devil, they are made kings and priests unto God.

(3.) We call you from vain labour to what will be prosperous and successful. You are labouring for happiness where you will never get it, but here are full breasts. You are striking in vain at the flinty rock for water; here is an open fountain, from which no one ever went away disappointed.

(4.) We call you from useless labour, where you will get nothing but sorrow to take away with you, to a labour which will follow you when you have finished it (Rev 14:13). Your present labour is miserable (Is 59:5).

(5.) The worst that can be said is that religion is hard labour. But this should not prejudice you against it, seeing, as was said, labour out of Christ is also hard labour. But observe:

[1.] If religion is hard labour, it is worth the pains. Other labour is not: "If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures, then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God" (Prov 2:4,5). There is hard labour in digging stones, as well as in digging for gold; it is hard labour digging disappointments; whereas the gain of labour

in religion is precious and certain. (1) Christ promises to “cause those that love Me to inherit substance, and I will fill their treasures” (Prov 8:21). (2) The experience of all the labourers confirms its certainty: God “said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye Me in vain”.

[2.] If it is hard labour, it is short. You shall soon rest from your labours (Rev 14:13). The spirits of one that is tired with his journey will revive when near the end. The shadow of the evening makes the labourer work heartily, for the end is at hand. The trials, afflictions and weeping of the saints endure but for a moment. On the other hand, the labour of others knows no end; no rest awaits them, but everlasting toil under wrath that never ends.

(6.) We call you from hard to easy labour. Christ has said, “My yoke is easy”; we must believe it. Consider:

[1.] All the difficulties in religion arise from corruption in men, making them labour in their lusts and in the law. “The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force” (Mt 11:12), violence and force, not with God, but with our own corruptions. Only in this sense does Scripture hold out the labour of religion to be hard. But men do not state the matter fairly. Take them separately: labour in religion is easy, the other hard. Men cannot bear Christ's burden. Why? Because they still keep the devil's burden on them, and they cannot bear the one on top of the other. Put aside the one; take up the other; see which is lighter. A meek man and a passionate man, which of them has the hardest task in bearing an affront? A sober man or a drunkard? A worldly man or he that lives above the world? The more power grace has, the easier is the labour; the more power lusts have, the harder.

[2.] There is true help in the one, not in the other. Labour in religion has outward helps; the labourers are not helpless; a cloud of witnesses has gone before them, whom the labourers may see with crowns on their heads (Heb 12:1). Armies of saints have stormed heaven before you and have left behind them the fact that the work is possible and the reward certain. The others do not have this; if they get satisfaction in their lusts, they are the first. They see thousands before them, who have laboured as hard as they, disappointed and lying down in sorrow. This labour has inward helps. Christ bears the heaviest part of His own yoke; He gives strength; He gives a will for the work, and does the work for us when we have the will, “for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure” (Phil 2:13). “Thou also hast wrought all our works in us” (Is 26:12). The others do not have these blessings. True, they have within them what puts them to this labour, but the more of the one, the harder the other, as the wearied beast is goaded by the spur, and worn out by being beaten when it is allowed no straw. But where is the help to work happiness from created things or from the law?

(7.) We call you from wearisome to pleasant labour. I have proved the first; for the last, see Proverbs 3:17: “Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace”. But is there pleasure in sin? In some sins there is none. What pleasure has the passionate man, that kindles a fire in his own bosom? What pleasure has the envious man, that gnaws himself for the good that others enjoy? What pleasure has the discontented man, that is his own executioner? Consider the calm of spirit that the opposite graces bring, and judge who has the better part. As for those sins in which pleasure is found,

[1.] Those things that gratify men’s sensual appetite are common to them with beasts: gluttony, drunkenness, filthiness and so on. A sow can drink, and be as drunk as the greatest drunkard, and they have the advantage that they are under no law; they do it without remorse; they find satisfaction in these things, as they cannot desire greater things. Now, where is the pleasure? Is it not surpassed by the pain?

As to the desires of the mind, these are common to them with devils. The devil can satisfy the greatest swearer, liar and proud opposer of religion better than any; he can reason more closely against religion than any atheist. But mockers and those who obstinately despise reproof surpass the devil, for the devils believe and tremble, whereas for a time rebellious sinners do not.

[2.] The pleasure is momentary; the pain follows hard at its heels and is eternal. What pleasure can be devised for which a man would hold his finger over a burning candle for a quarter of an hour? How much more dreadful to endure eternal burnings!

[3.] The struggle of conscience with corruption brings more torment than that of corruption with grace. Conscience is more dreadfully armed than corruption; there is as much difference here as there is between the hand of God and that of the devil. See now what becomes of the pleasure!

(2.) Labour in religion is truly pleasant. It is truly holy labour; and Scripture testimony proves its pleasantness; see Proverbs 3:17: “Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace”. Ask David and he will tell you, in Psalm 84; Paul, in 2 Corinthians 12:10.

[1.] It is a labour suited to the nature of the soul, the better part. Believers are partakers of a divine nature (2 Pet 1:4). This must create delight; the stream easily flows from the fountain. The reason why many find difficulty in religion is that they are out of their element when engaged in it.

[2.] In it the soul carries on trade with heaven; it has communion with God through the Spirit of Christ – the soul receiving influences from Him and returning them again in duties; as the rain falls on the earth freely, so the waters run again freely toward the sea.

[3.] Great peace of conscience usually attends this; and the more labour,

the more peace: "Great peace have they which love Thy law" (Ps 119:165). Here is a feast which nothing mars except sin, "for 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). Men cannot take it from us (Jn 14:27).

[4.] Sometimes they see much of Christ, evidences of the Lord's love as a high spring-tide of joy in their souls, greater than what the whole world enjoys (Ps 4:6,7). It is joy unspeakable and full of glory (1 Pet 1:8).

[5.] They walk in a way of light, whereas the other is dark; the light of the Lord's word shines in it. Scripture points out duty, as if it were written with a sunbeam.

(8.) We call you from labour against yourselves to labour for your advantage. We must either do the work of God or of the devil. Every sin is a new impediment in your way to heaven, a new stone laid on the wall of separation. How mad to be working out damnation, instead of our salvation!

(9.) We call you not to more, but to other, labour. We are all laborious creatures; the greatest idler is in some sort busy. Paul even calls them busy-bodies who do not work at all (2 Th 3:11). Our life is nothing but a continual succession of actions, even as the rivers are ever running. It is in some ways impossible to do more than we do. Why may we not then keep to the high-way while we are travelling.

(10.) The same pains that men suffer, as they ruin themselves, might possibly serve to save them. There are difficulties in the way of sin as well as in the way of religion. Does not sin often cause men to lose their night's rest? Are they more disturbed when communing with their own souls or with God? Do not men draw sin as with cart ropes (Is 5:18)? Why might not labour be employed in drawing the heart to God? If men would but change, and suck as greedily and incessantly at the breasts of God's consolations, as they do from created things, how happy they would be!

(11.) Labour in religion is not greater than in sin; indeed, it is less, for religion contracts our work to one thing: "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful" (Lk 10:41,42). Sinners have many lusts to please; saints have but one God to please. The work of religion is all of a piece; it is not so with sin. There is a sweet harmony between all the graces and duties of religion. But lusts are quite contrary; as they war against grace, so they fight against one another, "From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?" (Jas 4:1). So the sinner is dragged one way by one lust, and another way by another lust. How hard it is to serve contrary masters!

Points of Christian Experience (4)¹

John Newton

The last question I shall consider is *whether true gospel humility, and an enlarged view of the grace of God in Christ triumphing over all obstacles, can ordinarily be attained without an experience of declensions, backslidings and repeated forgiveness*. I dare say you will do me the justice to believe that I would not advise any one to run into sin in order to get a knowledge of his own heart. David broke his bones by running into sin; he obtained an affecting proof of his inability to stand in his own strength, and of the skill and goodness of his Physician, who healed him. Yet no one in his wits would break his bones for the sake of making experiments, even if he was ever so sure they would be well set again.

You think that a believer is never more humble in his own eyes, or admires Jesus more, than when he is filled with joy and peace. I readily allow that present impressions of Divine love are humbling; however, the direct tendency of gracious consolations in themselves is one thing; what evils they may afterwards produce, through the desperate depravity of our hearts, is another.

We have a memorable case in point to explain my meaning. The Apostle Paul's recollection of his course while in a natural state and the unique manner of his conversion were evidently suited to make him a humble Christian, and he was so. By a special favour of the Lord, he was afterwards taken up into the third heaven. What he saw or heard there he has not told us, but surely he met with nothing that could have a tendency to make him proud. Doubtless he saw Jesus in His glory, and the humble, spiritual worship of heaven – a sight which we might deem sufficient to make him walk in self-abasement all the days of his life. But Paul, though an eminent saint, was still liable to the effects of indwelling sin; he was in danger of being exalted through the abundance of revelations. And in order to prevent it, the Lord, his wise and gracious keeper, saw fit to give him a messenger from Satan to buffet him.

Pride is so subtle that it can gather strength even from those gracious manifestations which seem directly calculated to mortify it; so dangerous that a messenger from Satan himself may be esteemed a mercy, if overruled and sanctified by the Lord to make or keep us more humble. Therefore I apprehend that they who appear most to adorn the gospel, in their outward lives, are conscious of many things between the Lord and their own souls

¹A final part of a letter to a friend, taken with editing from Newton's *Works*, vol 1. In last month's article, Newton discussed the degree of faithfulness to light received from God that is consistent with the remnants of a depraved nature.

which cover them with shame, and that His tenderness and mercy to them, notwithstanding their perverseness, constrain them with admiration to adopt the language of Micah, “Who is a God like unto Thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of His heritage?” Yet we can never be too earnest in striving against sin or too watchful in abstaining from all appearance of evil, and they who wait upon the Lord may have the comfort of hoping that He will preserve them from such things as would dishonour their profession in the sight of men.

Believe likewise that, without such striking and repeated proofs of what is in their hearts, believers would not so feelingly enter into the spirit of Job’s confession, “Behold, I am vile!” Nor would they have such a lively sense of their obligations to the merciful care and faithfulness of their great Shepherd, or of their entire and absolute dependence upon Him for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. I find these considerations useful and necessary to reconcile me to my lot. The Lord knows what I need and what I can bear; gladly would I receive, and earnestly would I desire, more of comfort while here. But if I mourn now, I hope to be comforted in heaven; in the meantime it is more immediately necessary for me, both as a Christian and as a minister, that I should be humble. The Lord’s will be done. I cannot pretend to determine what ministers, or what body of people, come nearest the character of primitive times; but in my judgement they are the happiest who have the lowest thoughts of themselves, and in whose eyes Jesus is most glorious and precious.

Thomas Boston – His Life and Ministry¹

5. Faithfulness in a Declining Age

F R Daubney

By the mid-1720s, the state of religion in Scotland was declining, partly due to the detrimental influence of the Union with England. After attending the General Assembly in 1726, a minister known as honest Woodrow later commented that he never saw a greater number of young faces in the Assembly. Their dress, habits and gravity were not what one would expect. He questioned what they were being taught in the divinity colleges and feared that the following years would reveal its sad influence. It was not long before this became evident.

In 1729, Professor Simson of Glasgow University, who had been admon-

¹The final part of a paper at last year’s Theological Conference. Last month’s article spoke of some of Boston’s difficulties in his ministry and the Publication of *The Fourfold State*.

ished previously for unsound doctrine, became bolder. He was teaching his Divinity students Arianism, which maintains that the Son of God was created by the Father and was neither co-eternal nor co-substantial with the Father; in so doing it also denies the doctrine of the Trinity. Simpson was subtle and skilful in his arguments and difficult to pin down. Despite this, he was suspended by the General Assembly from preaching and teaching. Several members of the Assembly thought he should be deposed, but they subsequently acquiesced in the Assembly's decision.

Boston could not let this pass. He rose to his feet arguing that Professor Simson should have been deposed from the ministry for the dishonour done to "our glorious Redeemer, the great God and our Saviour". He said, "I cannot help thinking that the cause of Jesus Christ as to the great and essential point of His supreme Deity is at the bar of the Assembly requiring justice; and as I am shortly to answer at His bar for all that I say or do, I cannot give my assent to the decision of this act. On the contrary, I find myself obliged to offer a protest against it. And therefore, in my own name and in the name of all that adhere to me, I crave leave to dissent against the decision of this act." He was alone in his dissent, no other member of the Assembly stood by him. The Moderator persuaded him, for the peace of the Church, to have his dissent simply marked, and it could be raised again at a subsequent meeting if he was still of the same mind. After speaking to friends that evening he did not insist on it being raised again.

Several worthy ministers later deeply regretted that they had not stood with Boston in his dissent. Some went further and said that it was their greatest sorrow that a formal protest had not been entered against the Assembly's decision. It is, however, a matter of record that Professor Simson never preached or taught divinity students again.

As a student of divinity in Edinburgh, Boston had learned Hebrew and, when he was in Simprin, he began to study the Hebrew Bible, which he did for the rest of his life. He became interested in the use of the Hebrew accents, which are dots and other marks added to the letters on the page. The accents are guides to pronunciation and a commentary on the true sense of the text. They were not in the original Hebrew text, and they are not to be found in the Old Testament of the Jewish synagogue, nor did the early Christian Fathers refer to them. It seems that they were an invention of Jewish scholars in the early centuries of our era, which is something known today but was not known to Boston.

In 1713 he began to study the accents and, after three years, he could understand them a little. With persistence he became quite expert in interpreting their use and felt that they opened up difficult passages to him.

Furthermore, he was convinced that the accents were divine in origin and necessary to understanding the genuine sense of Scripture. They became a passion to him, and he worked on a book on the accents which was printed in Amsterdam six years after his death. His conviction that the accents had divine authority was a dream and, sadly, his work never had any influence on Hebrew scholarship.

It was during the last years of his life that he preached the sermons on affliction which were published as *The Crook in the Lot*. It seemed to those who heard him that his preaching had become more fragrant and sweet. The people of his congregation could clearly see that the health of their minister was declining, and they expected that the communion season of 1731 would be his last. People from all around came to be at that solemn and poignant occasion; one of his elders gave hospitality and accommodation to 80 people. Writing in his *Memoirs* of that occasion, Boston tells us that 777 tokens were distributed to communicants. All of this great assembly came together to remember the death of the Saviour and to honour His renowned ambassador, Thomas Boston.

Boston was never a robust man. He suffered from fainting attacks and vomiting from his youth. In later years he suffered from scurvy, caused by a deficiency of vitamin C; this resulted in chronic fatigue and his teeth falling out. He suffered from gravel, which is the formation of small stones in the kidney, which, when passing out of the body, result in extraordinary pain. In addition to all that, he developed a shake in his head and occasionally in his whole body. Apart from his poor health, he had the care of his wife and suffered the death of six of his 10 children, yet never once did he miss an occasion to preach on the Sabbath day. He sat when he was too weak to stand in the pulpit and, in April 1732, when he was even too weak for that, he preached from the manse window. His last two sermons were on the need for self-examination.

On 20 May 1732, he died, at the age of 56, and was buried in the churchyard at Ettrick, where there is now a large monument in his memory. Katherine Boston lived for only a few years after her husband. Their son, Thomas, one of the four surviving children, was 19 and a divinity student when his father died. He was licensed at that young age and, in April, 1733, 11 months after his father's death, he was ordained and inducted into the Ettrick congregation.

How shall we sum up Thomas Boston? He was frail, timid, tired and unwell. His life, walk and conversation were entirely taken up with eternal realities. His preaching and writing were blessed to multitudes of souls in his own day and to succeeding generations. He furthered the cause of truth and

often stood alone against the downgrading of Biblical doctrine. Truly, “we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that . . . the power may be of God, and not of us”.

At the outset of his ministry, when considering his calling, Boston wrote in his *Soliloquy on Man Fishing*, “What an honourable thing it is to be fishers of men! How great an honour shouldst thou esteem it, to be a catcher of souls! We are workers together with God, says the apostle. O my soul, bless thou the Lord. Lord, what am I, or what is my father’s house, that Thou hast brought me to this?”

How can we follow in the footsteps of such a man? Should it not be by following the command of the Saviour, “Seek ye first the Kingdom of God”, and then the injunction of the apostle Paul, “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God? Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth”.

The Patient of Many Physicians¹

2. Her Case Was the Worst

Alexander Moody Stuart

Mark 5:25-34. *And a certain woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years, and had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse, when she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched His garment. For she said, If I may touch but His clothes, I shall be whole. . . .*

2. Her case was the worst of all. 1. She was *the weakest* in all the crowd, yet she pressed through till she reached Jesus. It is not easy for the weak to stand a crowd at all, and hard indeed for them to press through to its very centre. Christ’s brethren sought to find him in the midst of a crowd, young men in the fullness of their strength; but they were baffled in the attempt and had to content themselves with sending a message, through many mouths, that they desired to speak with Him. Yet this woman, worn out with disease and perhaps also weakened by poverty, found her way to Jesus in the centre of all this throng.

Where there is a will, there is a way. Every saved sinner has indeed learned, that “it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy”. The weakness of our will to all good – our inability even

¹Another part of a chapter taken, with editing, from *Capernaum* by Moody Stuart (1809-98). The first section spoke of the woman as “one among many” who were pressing on Jesus, yet she was the only one who touched Christ for healing.

to will what is right – is a humbling but most needful lesson for us all. Yet we are invited, “Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely”; and reproved, “Ye will not come to Me that ye might have life”. It is amazing what a man will do for what his heart is set on; and how he will not stagger at what seems impossible to someone else. So it is, by grace, when the awakened sinner presses to enter in at the strait gate. The weakest with a determined will is far more than equal to the strongest who is but half-hearted.

This woman’s case had become desperate, quite desperate, except for the one bright hope that now dawned on her in Jesus Christ. She said, It will be enough if I may but touch His garment – that is, not if I am allowed to touch, but if by any means I do but touch. Therefore at any cost she must touch it, and she did. Despair of every other resource, with faith in this One, made it impossible for any crowd to keep her back. She was indeed stronger than them all; for she had in that hour the strongest will and the liveliest faith.

Inquiring soul, there is always a crowd between you and Christ: a crowd of past sins oppressing your conscience, a crowd of earthly lusts stifling better desires, a crowd of worldly friends opposing your progress, a crowd of evil spirits wrestling against you – all between you and Christ. Yet there is not only a welcome for you in Christ’s bosom, but help for you in His arm; far more to help than all that can hinder; and the moment you touch the border of His garment, you are healed. Strive on; press through; do not yield but wrestle forward; and by His grace you will reach Him, and all will be well for ever.

2. She is the *vilest* of all, the most unfit to touch the Holy One, for her very touch defiles. Being herself ceremonially unclean and shut out from the sanctuary, her hand polluted for that day all whom it touched. Yet she believed that her vileness would not defile the Holy One, but that His purifying holiness would cleanse her. She could not herself cure her disease, nor could any earthly means; yet she was confident that the slightest touch of Christ will heal her altogether. For 12 sad years, she had proved how deeply seated the plague was within her, and how far beyond all human remedy; yet she believed that there was power in Jesus to remove it for ever in one instant. This poor defiled one, shut out from all the holy ones, stood in most complete contrast to this Holy One, undefiled and separate from sinners. But it was their contrast that made Him fit for her – the outcast needing the Saviour, and the Saviour all-sufficient for the outcast.

Sinful soul, there is always a contrast between you and Jesus, for there is nothing unholy in Him and nothing holy in you; nothing common to both. Yet the High and Holy One, becoming flesh for men, was numbered with sinners for their salvation. The sinner needs Him and, when He receives

the sinner, His blood cleanses him from all sin. Do not fear therefore to draw nigh to Him because you are so contrary, since it is the contrast between you that makes you suitable for each other. He is health for the sick, cleansing for the vile, clothing for the naked, and life for the dead.

3. Her coming was the *worst timed* of all applications; no accosting of Christ could have been more unseasonable. He was in the very midst of another case; a case which He had undertaken, and in which he was engaged; a case of life and death, in which every moment was precious. The ruler's daughter was at the very point of dying; but this woman's disease was chronic; and an hour or a day would make no difference. She had been ill for 12 long years, ever since the maiden drew the first breath of life; yet she came to Jesus in the girl's very crisis of life and death; and while she delayed Him, the child was dead. She might surely at least have waited half an hour, till He had finished this pressing call.

It seems, as if earnestness for her own case left her no thought for another; and she came to Jesus for immediate cure more unseasonably than anyone else ever came. But Jesus said, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out"; and even a coming so ill-timed He did not at all refuse. Indeed, He encourages and seeks such a coming; He healed her at once, and so healed her that the other sustained no injury, but only received greater good. Through her intervention, the father received a dead daughter raised again to life, instead of a sick daughter restored to health again.

Come at any time to Christ. Only come; come at the very first opportunity; make an opportunity and come; come in the absence of opportunity; come now. Do not say that it is out of season, for He will instantly receive you; embrace the time and make no tarrying, but come.

4. Her coming seemed to be in the *very worst way*; no one else appears to have come so badly. Nicodemus came to Jesus by night; but this woman came to Jesus by stealth. If anyone coming had ever been rejected, surely she must have been that outcast. But Christ said that He would not in any wise cast out the one who comes, however bad the time of coming and however wrong the way, He promises that He will not cast him out. The truth is that, as there can be no wrong time of coming to Christ, so there can be no wrong way of coming, for Christ has come into the world for the very purpose of putting right all that is wrong.

If there could be wrong coming, hers would certainly have been wrong. But Christ redeems out of all evil, recovers out of all error, rectifies all wrong; and if we come to Him, all is right. Many are so afraid of coming wrongly that they refrain from coming at all; whereas if we only come, all is well. Jesus does not declare that He will not cast out the man that comes

at the right time or in the right manner; but He pledges that He will in no wise cast out him that comes in any way. If the sinner will only come, Christ does not look to, and man need not fear, any ground of rejection.

The Seaman's Catechism (3)¹

John Flavel

Question 12. Will Christ receive me if I go to Him?

Answer. Yes, yes; He is more ready to receive you than you are to come to Him. "He arose, and came to his father. But, when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion on him, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him" (Lk 15:20). The son did but go; the father *ran*. If he had but received him into the house, it had been much; but he fell on his neck and kissed him. He spoke of him much as the Lord expressed Himself to returning Ephraim: "My bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him" (Jer 31:20). There is nothing in all the pages of free grace to exclude a soul that is sincerely willing to come to Christ.

Question 13. How can I know that Christ is willing to receive me?

Answer. Make trial of Him yourself. If you only knew His heart to poor sinners, you would not question it. Believe what He says in the gospel; there you shall find that He is a willing Saviour; for therein you have, firstly, His most serious invitations: "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden" (Mt 11:28); "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters" (Is 55:1). These serious invitations are, secondly, backed and confirmed with an oath: "As I live, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked" (Ezk 33:11). Thirdly, they are amplified with compassionate wishes, sighs and groans: "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day" (Lk 19:42). Fourthly, they are delivered in undissembled tears. He wept over it, and said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem" (Mat 23:37,38). Fifthly, Christ has shed not only tears, but blood, to convince you of His willingness. View Him in His dying posture upon the cross, stretching out His dying arms to gather you, hanging down His blessed head to kiss you; every one of His wounds was a mouth opened to convince you of the abundant willingness of Christ to receive you.

Question 14. But my sins are deep-dyed; I am a sinner of the blackest hue; will He receive and pardon such a person?

Answer. Yes, soul, if you are willing to commit yourself to Him: "Come

¹Taken with editing from Flavel's *Works*, vol 5. Written with a particular consciousness of the dangers seamen faced in the days of sail, the *Catechism* applies to everyone, for we must all die. The previous question was, "What is it to go to Christ?"

now, and let us reason together . . . though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool” (Is 1:18).

Question 15. This is comforting news but may I not delay my closing with Him for a while, and yet not hazard my eternal happiness, seeing I resolve to come to Him at last?

Answer. No, there must be no delays here: “I made haste, and delayed not to keep Thy commandments” (Ps 119:60).

Question 16. Why may I not defer it, at least for a little while?

Answer. For many weighty reasons, this work can bear no delays. First, The offers of grace are made to the present time: “Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts” (Heb 3:15). There may be a few more days of God’s patience, but that is not known to you. Second, your life is uncertain; how many thousands have gone into eternity since last night? If you can say to sickness when it comes, Go, and come again another time, that would be something. Third, sin is not something to be dallied with. Who should be willing to lie down one night under the guilt of all his sins? Fourth, delays increase the difficulty of conversion; sin roots itself still deeper: habits are further strengthened and the heart still more hardened.

Fifth, there are thousands now in hell who perished through delays. Their consciences often urged and pressed hard upon them, and they had many resolutions, as you have now; but they were never put into effect in an appropriate way, and so they perished. Sixth, your way of sinning now is desperate, for you are acting every moment against clear light and conviction; and that is a dreadful way of sinning. Seventh, there can be no solid reason for one hour’s delay, for you cannot be happy too soon. Be sure of it, if ever you come to taste of the sweetness of a Christian life, nothing will more pierce and grieve you than this, that you did not enjoy it sooner.

Question 17. The pleasures of sin attract me to it; how shall I break these cords and snares?

Answer. That snare may be broken by considering solemnly these five things. First, to take pleasure in sin is an argument flowing from a most deplorable and wretched state of soul. What a heart you have! Have you nothing to find pleasure in but what makes the Spirit of Christ sad, and the hearts of saints ache and groan? What dug hell and let in endless miseries upon the world? Second, the misery it involves you in is infinitely beyond the delights it tempts you by: it only delights the senses, but will torment your immortal soul for ever. The pleasure will quickly go off, but the sting will remain behind. “I did but taste a little honey with the end of the rod that was in mine hand”, said Jonathan “and, lo, I must die” (1 Sam 14:43). Third,

this is not all; the Lord proportions wrath according to the pleasures that souls have had in sin. “How much she hath lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her” (Rev 18:7).

Fourth, what do you pay, or at least pawn, for this pleasure? Your soul, your precious soul, is put at risk for it. In effect, this is what you are saying when you defer closing with Christ in order to enjoy the pleasures of sin a little longer: Here, devil, take my soul into your possession and power; if I repent, I will have it back again; if not, it is yours for ever. O dear-bought pleasures! Fifth, It is a gross mistake to think you shall be bereaved of all delights and pleasures by coming under the rule of Christ. One of those things in which His kingdom consists is “joy in the Holy Ghost” (Rom 14:17). Indeed it allows no *sinful* pleasures to its subjects, nor do they need them, but from the day you close in with Christ, all your pure, real and eternal pleasures and delights begin. When the prodigal returned to his father, then “they began to be merry” (Lk 15:24; see also Acts 8:5,6). No, soul, you shall lack no joy, for the Scriptures say, “They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of Thy house, and Thou shalt make them drink of the river of Thy pleasures; for with Thee is the fountain of life” (Ps 36:8,9).

Bread Cast Upon the Waters¹

Charles Bridges

Ecclesiastes 11:1. *Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days.*

Surely the subject admits of a more extensive application. See how it furnishes to the minister of God a valuable rule and encouragement. The sower goes forth to sow the precious bread-corn – the bread of life (Mt 13:3; Mark 4:14). Much of his toil seems to be in vain. Much disappointment arises from the world – often it is more from the Church. The soil is uncongenial; the prospect of harvest is precarious. But “blessed are ye that sow beside all waters” (Is 32:20). The promise is sure: “Thou shalt find it after many days”. He looks around. He sees not his signs. It is as if his prayers would return into his own bosom (Ps 74:9; 35:13). But the promise is sure: “My word . . . shall not return unto Me void” (Is 55:10).

¹Bridges (1794-1869) was an English minister. Here is an edited extract from his *Exposition of Ecclesiastes*. He had already illustrated the verse by pointing to the sowing the seed on the River Nile when the waters are going down, “leaving a loamy bed, in which the seed apparently lost is deposited and produces a most luxuriant harvest”. He has described this as “an encouraging, constraining motive for Christian bountifulness”; before continuing as in the body of this article.

It may be that some wanderer may have been brought back to the fold by the recollection of the minister's teaching, even after his voice was silent in the grave. It may be that the seed has been sown again and again from one heart to another, and that some whom he had never known in the flesh may welcome Him at the presence of the Lord at His coming as his "glory and joy" (1 Th 2:19,20). "He that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal; that both he that soweth, and he that reapeth may rejoice together".

Thus also the after-influence of instruction. To present sight, it seems as if the seed cast upon the waters had perished. How scanty the present practical influence from the instruction of the young! But the promise is above all uncertainty. Thou shalt find it – not the corn, but the harvest. The scoffing world does not understand it. "To what purpose", they cry, "is this waste" – of money, time and pains? But wait a while. God's time is best: after many days. The season of confirmation – some moment of temptation, or the hour of affliction – one or other of these seasons stirs smothered conviction to life and reality. Go on then. Use the means. Generations unborn may reap the fruit (Gal 6:9).

Once more, mark the trials of the Christian life. Outward circumstances are discouraging, as if the seed cast upon the waters had perished upon the wide waste – hindrances from the world without and Satan within. But sow thy seed: whatever may be the discouragements. Though prayer seems as if it died on your lips, continue in it. If you hold on in the weary conflict, you shall find it. "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shalt doubtless" – mark the word – "come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him" (Ps 126:5,6).

The many days between seed-time and harvest are days of special anxiety, hoping for seeming impossibilities, believing paradoxes. But the promise is God's own living truth, and it will be found not the less sure for the delay. And when waiting days have done their work, humbling us in entire dependence upon God, and ripening us for the harvest of blessing in due season, in God's good time. "We shall reap, if we faint not". "The vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie; though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come; it will not tarry" (Gal 6:9; Hab 2:3).

Every sin is a base deprecating of God and this is enough to make the guilt of it infinite – because it is done against an infinite God, and therefore it deserves an infinite punishment. Now a finite creature cannot bear an infinite punishment; therefore God makes it infinite in regard of continuance. The creature cannot pay the whole debt at once; therefore he must be paying it for ever.

Matthew Mead

Sabbath Meditation¹

Thomas Watson

Get upon the mount of meditation and there converse with God. Meditation is when the soul retires within itself, so that the heart may be raised up to divine affections, by a serious and solemn thinking upon God. It is a work fit for the morning of a Sabbath. Meditate on four things:

(1.) On *the works of creation*. This is expressed in the Fourth Commandment. “The Lord made heaven and earth, the sea . . .” The creation is a looking glass, in which we see the wisdom and power of God gloriously represented. God produced this fair structure of the world without any pre-existent matter, and with a word. “By the word of the Lord were the heavens made” (Ps 33:6). The disciples wondered that Christ could, with a word, calm the sea, but it was far more astounding to make the sea with a word (Mt 8: 26).

On the Sabbath let us meditate on the infinity of the Creator. Look up to the sky and see God’s wonders in the deep (Ps 107:24). Look into the earth, where we may behold the nature of minerals, the power of the loadstone, the usefulness of herbs, and the beauty of flowers. By meditating on these works of creation, we shall learn to admire God and praise Him. “O Lord, how manifold are Thy works! In wisdom hast Thou made them all” (Ps 104:24). By meditating on the works of creation, we shall learn to confide in God. He who can create can provide; He that could make us, when we were nothing, can raise us when we are low. “Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth” (Ps 124:8).

(2.) On *God’s holiness*. “Holy and reverend is His name” (Ps 111:9). “Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil” (Hab 1:13). God is essentially, originally and efficiently holy. All the holiness in men and angels is but a crystal stream that runs from this glorious fountain. God loves holiness because it is His own image. A king cannot but love to see his own image stamped on a coin. God counts holiness His glory and the most sparkling jewel of His crown. “Glorious in holiness” (Ex 15:11). Here is meditation fit for the beginning of a Sabbath. To contemplate this would work in us a frame of heart such as suits a holy God; it would make us reverence His name and hallow His day. While musing on the holiness of God’s nature, we shall begin to be transformed into His likeness.

(3.) On *Christ’s love in redeeming sinners* (Rev 1:5). Redemption exceeds creation; the one is a monument of God’s power, the other of His love. Here

¹An extract, edited, from Watson’s *The Ten Commandments*. It comes from his exposition of the Fourth Commandment. He is particularly speaking to God’s people.

is fit work for a Sabbath. O the infinite, stupendous love of Christ in raising poor, fallen creatures from a state of guilt and damnation! That Christ who was God should die! That this glorious Sun of Righteousness should be in an eclipse! We can never admire enough this love; no, not in heaven. That Christ should die for sinners! Not sinful angels, but sinful men. That such clods of earth and sin should be made bright stars of glory! O the amazing love of Christ! That Christ should not only die for sinners, but die *as* a sinner! "He hath made Him to be sin for us" (2 Cor 5:21).

He who was one of the glorious persons of the Trinity "was numbered with the transgressors" (Is 53:12). Not that He had sin, but He was like a sinner, having our sins imputed to Him. Sin did not live in Him, but it was laid upon Him. Here was a hyperbole of love, enough to strike us with astonishment. That Christ should redeem us when He could not expect to gain anything, or to be advantaged at all by us! Men will not lay out their money upon a purchase unless it will turn to their profit; but what benefit could Christ expect in purchasing and redeeming us? We were in such a condition that we could neither deserve Christ's love nor recompense it. We could not deserve it; for we were in our blood (Ezek 16:6). We had no spiritual beauty to tempt Him. Indeed, we were not only in our blood, but we were in arms against Him. "When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son" (Rom 5:10).

When He was shedding His blood, we were spitting out poison. As we could not deserve it, neither could we recompense it. After He had died for us, we could not so much as love Him, till He made us love Him. We could give Him nothing in lieu of his love. "Who hath first given to Him?" (Rom 11:35). We were fallen into poverty. If we have any beauty, it is from Him, "It was perfect through My comeliness, which I had put upon thee" (Ezek 16:14). If we bring forth any good fruit, it is not of our own growth; it comes from Him, the true vine. "From Me is thy fruit found" (Hos 14:8). It was nothing but pure love for Christ to lay out His blood to redeem such as He could not expect to be really bettered by.

That Christ should die so willingly! "I lay down My life" (Jn 10:17). The Jews could not have taken it away if He had not laid it down. He could have called to His Father for legions of angels to be His guard; but what need for even that, when His own Godhead could have defended Himself from all assaults? He laid down His life. The Jews did not so much thirst for His death, as He thirsted for our redemption. "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" (Lk 12:50). He called His sufferings a baptism; He was to be baptized and sprinkled with His own blood; and He thought the time long before He suffered. To show Christ's willing-

ness to die, His sufferings are called an offering. "Through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ" (Heb 10:10). His death was a free-will offering.

That Christ should not grudge or think much of all His sufferings! Though He was scourged and crucified, He was well contented with what He had done and, if it were needful, He would do it again. "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied" (Is 53:11). As the mother who has had hard labour does not repent of her pangs when she sees a child brought forth, but is well contented; so Christ, though He had hard travail on the cross, does not think much of it; He is not troubled but thinks His sweat and blood well bestowed, because He sees the man-child of redemption brought forth into the world.

That Christ should make redemption effectual to some, and not to others! Here is surprising love. Though there is sufficient in His merits to save all, yet only some receive their saving virtue; all do not believe. "There are some of you that believe not" (Jn 6:64). Christ does not pray for all (Jn 17:9). Some refuse Him. This is "the stone which the builders refused" (Ps 118:22). Others deride Him (Lk 16:14). Others throw off His yoke. "We will not have this man to reign over us" (Lk 19:14). So all do not have the benefit of salvation by Him. Here appears the distinguishing love of Christ, that the virtue of His death should reach some and not others. "Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called" (1 Cor 1:26). That Christ should pass by many who are nobles and able, and that the lot of free grace should fall upon you; that He should sprinkle His blood on you; O the depth of the love of Christ! That Christ should love us with such a transcendent love! The Apostle calls it love "which passeth knowledge" (Eph 3:19).

That He should love us more than the angels. He loves them as His friends, but believers as His spouse. He loves them with the kind of love that God the Father bears to Him. "As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you" (John 15:9). O what a hyperbole of love does Christ show in redeeming us! That Christ's love in our redemption should be everlasting! "Having loved His own . . . He loved them unto the end" (Jn 13:1). As Christ's love is matchless, so it is endless. The flower of His love is sweet, and what makes it sweeter is that it never dies. His love is eternal (Jer 31:3). He will never divorce His elect spouse. The failings of His people cannot quite take off His love; they may eclipse it, but not wholly remove it; their failings may make Christ angry with them, but not hate them. Every failing does not break the marriage bond.

Christ's love is not like the saint's love. They sometimes have strong affections towards Him; at other times the fit is off and they find little or no love stirring in them. But it is not so with Christ's love to them; it is a love

of eternity. When the sunshine of Christ's electing love has once risen upon the soul, it never finally sets. Death may take away our life from us, but not Christ's love. Behold here a rare subject for meditation on a Sabbath morning. Meditation on Christ's wonderful love in redeeming us would work in us a Sabbath frame of heart.

It would melt us in tears, for our spiritual unkindness, that we should sin against so sweet a Saviour; that we should be no more affected with His love, but requite evil for good. The Athenians, notwithstanding all the good service Aristides had done them, banished him out of their city. We should be sad if we are like them and should banish Christ from our temple – that we should grieve Him with our pride, rash anger, unfruitfulness, animosities and strange factions. Have we none to abuse but our Friend? Have we nothing to kick against but the bowels of our Saviour? Did not Christ suffer enough upon the cross, but we must make Him suffer more? Do we give Him more gall and vinegar to drink?

If anything can dissolve the heart in sorrow, and melt the eyes to tears, it is unkindness offered to Christ. When Peter thought of Christ's love to him, how He had made him an apostle, and revealed His bosom secrets to him, and taken him to the Mount of transfiguration, and yet that he should deny Him; it broke his heart with sorrow; "he went out and wept bitterly" (Mt 26:75). What a blessed thing it is to have the eyes dropping tears on a Sabbath! And nothing should sooner fetch tears than to meditate on Christ's love to us and our unkindness to Him.

Meditating on a Lord's Day morning on Christ's love should kindle love in our hearts to Him. How can we look on His bleeding and dying for us, and our hearts not be warmed with love to Him? Love is the soul of religion, the purest affection. It is not rivers of oil, but sparks of love, that Christ values. And sure, as David said, "While I was musing the fire burned" (Ps 39:3), so, while we are musing of Christ's love in redeeming us, the fire of our love will burn towards Him; then the Christian is in a blessed Sabbath-frame, when, like the seraphim, he is burning in love to Christ.

(4.) On *the glory of heaven*. Heaven is the extract and essence of happiness. It is called a kingdom (Mt 25:34). A kingdom for its riches and magnificence. It is set forth by precious stones and gates of pearl (Rev 21:19,21). There is all that is truly glorious; transparent light, perfect love, unstained honour, unmixed joy; and what crowns the joy of the celestial paradise is eternity. Suppose earthly kingdoms were more glorious than they are, their foundations of gold, their walls of pearl, their windows of sapphire; yet they are corruptible, but the kingdom of heaven is eternal; those rivers of pleasure run "for evermore" (Ps 16:11). What the essence of glory consists in, and

makes heaven to be heaven, is the immediate sight and fruition of the blessed God. "I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness" (Ps 17:15). O think of the Jerusalem above!

This is proper for a Sabbath. The meditation of heaven would raise our hearts above the world. How would earthly things disappear and shrink into nothing if our minds were mounted above visible things, and we had a prospect of glory! How would the meditation of heaven make us heavenly in our Sabbath activities! It would enliven affection, would add wings to devotion, and cause us to be "in the Spirit on the Lord's day" (Rev 1:10). How vigorously does he serve God who has a crown of glory always in his eye!

The Cross¹

W K Tweedie

Colossians 1:20. *Having made peace through the blood of the cross.*

There are more inscriptions on the cross of Jesus than the one which was written in Hebrew and Greek and Latin. One additional inscription read by the eye of faith is, Christ crucified is the wisdom of God. He is the wisdom of God, by making provision at once to punish sin and pardon it, at once to uphold justice in untarnished purity and to let mercy flow forth to man without restraint.

Another inscription which faith can read on the cross is, Christ crucified is the power of God. It is the power of God in bringing those nigh who before were afar off, in lifting souls from the verge of hell to the vestibule of heaven, and replacing enmity to what is holy, by love for what is pure.

Behold what sin is. That is another inscription on the cross that is legible to the eye of faith. Nothing but the blood of Him who was Jehovah's fellow could atone for sin's guilt, or wash away its pollution. How dark then the guilt, and how deep the malignity, of the abominable thing.

Behold, the love of God, is still another inscription. He so loved the world that He gave His Son to die for sinners.

Or finally, See how precious is the soul, is another. Not corruptible things like silver and gold, but the life of One who was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, was the ransom paid. And who will gauge the preciousness of the soul, as it is thus valued by God?

Yet, my soul, I have been undervaluing you; I have been ruining you by sin and regarding you as of less value than some transient enjoyment, some fancied pleasure of an hour, or a breath. And how am I to escape from this

¹Taken with editing from Tweedie's *Glad Tidings of the Gospel of Peace*.

condemnation? Just by clinging to the cross – not to the wooden emblem that superstition presents, or upon which it dotes, but to the crucified One, who made peace through the blood of the cross, who atoned for sin there. He has taught the believer to glory only in the Lord while he exclaims, “I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.”

Book Review

Holy Spirit Now Descend, Thomas Davis and the Evangelical Revival in Georgian Berkshire, by Michael A G Haykin, published by Etrick Press, paperback, 185 pages, £5.95 obtainable from the Free Presbyterian Bookroom.

This is the first volume in a projected series of “Evangelical Lives”. The author believes, correctly, that the stories of men like Thomas Davis, who “is an almost complete unknown today”, are worth retrieving from obscurity. Davis (1734-96) was a Baptist minister in the town of Reading. His ministry there was much blessed.

In his youth, Davis became “a ringleader in all kinds of wickedness” but, one New Year’s Day, out of curiosity, he went to church and was convicted of cumbering the ground (Lk 13:7). Under that same sermon, he was brought to believe in Christ. He later commented that “justice was lifting up the axe” to give a death-blow to him, when “mercy stepped in”.

In 1767 he became a minister in Reading. According to the custom of the times, Davis drew up a confession of faith, which is quoted here and discussed at some length. For instance, the sixteenth article states, “I believe that all those, chosen by the Father, redeemed by the Son, shall be sanctified by the Spirit dwelling in them; sin is subdued, grace is strengthened, faith increased, love inflamed, and all by the continual supplies of the Spirit of God, who worketh in and upon them according to His good pleasure”. We would disagree only with his views on Baptism and on the Millennium.

The revival in the congregation that called Davis to Reading is described in a chapter entitled, “Where a Spirit of Prayer Prevails”. Biographical details are given of some of the converts. Various individuals associated with Davis are also described; one of them was Richard Burnham, best known as a hymn-writer. One would just point out that religious poetry can be profitable but ought in no way to displace the Psalms from public worship.

Little is known about Davis, and therefore this is a short book, even when a great deal of other material, in some way connected with him, is brought in. The book is interestingly written, by an author who spent many years as a seminary professor in America.

Protestant View

Purgatory

The Romanist doctrine of satisfaction is bound up very closely with the unbiblical figment of purgatory and with the pretended power of the papal Church to grant indulgences when certain conditions prescribed by the Church are performed. The sale of indulgences was, of course, the immediate cause of the Reformation and, though Rome has since tried to mitigate the most shameful aspects of this trade in the souls of men (Rev 18:13), the actual teaching which lay behind the practice remains a cornerstone of Popish religion. We must ever bear in mind that Rome remains and will remain, until the time of her downfall, the great enemy of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The notion that sinful men can satisfy God by works of righteousness according to the law is entrenched in our fallen nature, and it is owing to this that Rome's false doctrines obtain their power over men's souls. Teaching that sins committed after baptism must be forgiven by a priest, Romanism holds that the priest has power to prescribe certain temporal punishments, known as "penances", upon those who confess their sins to him. He may prescribe such penances as prayer, fasting and almsgiving and these give satisfaction to God and procure merit for the person. That merit is then joined with the merit of Christ, Mary and the other saints, in a treasury which the Pope controls. If one performs more than is necessary, the overplus of merit (supererogation) may be transferred to another person. Here lies the basis of the doctrine of indulgences, which, according to the Council of Trent, are the "heavenly treasures of the Church". The Pope may authorise a relaxation of the temporal punishment due to sin – which otherwise would only be removed by a period in purgatory – if the person obtaining the indulgence has performed some duty or made some payment.¹

All this soul-destroying falsehood is rooted in man's self-righteousness and unbelief of the doctrines of the gospel. No obedience or suffering of sinful men can satisfy God's justice or meet the claims of His law. The true doctrine of God's Word teaches us that Christ alone has fully satisfied for the sins of all who will believe in Him. God's dealings with those who are justified by faith in Christ no longer have a penal character; for when the guilt of sin is forgiven, the whole punishment due to it is also remitted.

How thankful we should be for the purity of the gospel, which the Reformers so earnestly contended for, at such great cost, and which their successors handed down to us. And how we should pray continually for the complete

¹E Stillingfleet, *The Doctrines and Practices of the Church of Rome*, edited by William Cunningham, Edinburgh, 1845, pp 145-58.

downfall of the Romanist system and the emancipation of multitudes of its deluded followers.

AWM

Notes and Comments

Modern Voluntaryism and Scottish Politics

The so-called “Voluntary” principle, or error, is that Established Churches are wrong and that the state should treat all churches, and perhaps even all religions, as equal. The Free Presbyterian Church holds the opposite position – that it is duty of rulers to recognise and support and “establish” the true religion in their land, both legally and financially. This duty is plainly expressed in Psalm 2:10-11: “Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling.” It is in their capacity as rulers and judges that they are to serve Christ, and they do this by using their God-given authority to promote true Christianity and to discountenance all false religion.

The Voluntary doctrine was widely held in the old Free Church in the 1890s, and in opposing this, the “fathers” of the Free Presbyterian Church summarised the Voluntary error in this way: “A man may be a good Christian at home, but when he appears in society he must forget God, and ignore His cause” (*History of the Free Presbyterian Church*, p 412). A remarkably similar sentiment was recently voiced by the Scottish Secretary for Health and Social Security, Humza Yousaf, in his criticism of the religion of Kate Forbes (Mrs MacLennan), in their rivalry to become Scotland’s new First Minister. Mr Yousaf said that, although he was proud to be a Muslim, “what I don’t do is, I don’t use my faith as a basis of legislation”. Another Scottish politician, Ross Greer, who is a member of the Church of Scotland, commented in much the same way, “I think it is fine if you hold a personal faith; where it becomes relevant [that is, objectionable] in politics is if your faith is influencing how you vote”. But a religion that does not influence how one votes hardly counts as religion at all – its doctrinal content must be minimal and it can be little more than a mass of superstitious observances.

The quotation from the Free Presbyterian *History* continues: “It will be clearly seen that, when the Voluntary principle is carried to its logical issue, it leads not merely to the disestablishment of Churches, but to national forgetfulness of God; in a word, to national atheism”. This is exactly what has happened in Scotland. Practical atheism is now the *de facto* established “religion”, and the attempt is being made to debar Christianity completely from the public arena. The Church of Scotland is tolerated because – in the

main – it is not Christianity at all. Ross Greer, for example, strenuously advocates most of the current abominations in Scotland, and would not be recognised as a Christian in any biblical church. Because Scotland was unthankful for the pure, Established Christianity that she did have, the Lord is allowing her to taste Established Atheism. Atheism is a religion of blood and filth, and has already slaughtered several hundred thousand children in Scotland in the last 50 years. The dangerous politicians are not those who vote according to Christian principles but those who do not vote according to these principles; and the harm that they do to people's lives is immense.

DWBS

The Church of England and Same-Sex Blessings

Following the decision by the Church of England's General Synod to bless same-sex "marriages", the Archbishop of Canterbury has been subjected to a barrage of criticism from the worldwide Anglican Communion. Although same-sex "marriages" are still not permitted in Anglican churches, in February the General Synod voted in favour of prayers of dedication, prayers of thanksgiving and prayers for God's blessing being offered at same-sex civil ceremonies. The bishops voted for this by 36 votes to four, the House of Clergy voted 111 to 85 and the House of Laity voted 103 to 92.

The response of GAFCON (The Global Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans) was that "God does not bless sin". Archbishop Foley Beach, Primate of the Anglican Church in North America and chairman of GAFCON wrote to Archbishops Welby (Canterbury) and Cottrell (York) to say, "I write to you with a heavy heart as we are hearing of the continued crisis of leadership and faith coming out of the Church of England. Once again, our Western Anglican provinces continue to go their own way on matters of faith and practice without consultation or concern for the majority of Anglicans around the global community. Their actions not only deny holy practice, but reject the authority of Scripture, the teaching of the historic church, and the consensus of the Body of Christ from every tribe, tongue, people and nation alive today. . . . The release of the recent statement, 'Bishops propose prayers of thanksgiving, dedication and for God's blessing of same-sex couples' is a clear rejection of Lambeth 1998, 1:10, and one cannot help but ask the question: What is next? We continue to find ourselves disillusioned with the incredible audacity of major unilateral decisions (e.g. changing the nature of what it means to be male and female in His image (Gen 1:27)) that run counter to 'the faith once delivered' (Jude 3)."

In addition, the bishops of the Global South Fellowship of Anglican Churches (GSFA) issued a press statement saying that it was with great sorrow that they learned of the Church of England's intention to incorporate

into the Church's liturgy the blessing of same sex-unions. They said the Church of England had disqualified herself from leading the Anglican Communion as the historic "Mother Church" and had chosen to break communion with those provinces who remained faithful to the historic biblical faith expressed in the Anglican formularies [Thirty-nine Articles, for instance]. They stated that the GSFA no longer recognises the present Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, as the first among equals and leader of the global communion. They went on to say that they wished to reset the Communion on its biblical foundations and looked forward to collaborating with the GAFCON movement and others to keep the priority of proclaiming and witnessing to the gospel of Jesus Christ foremost in their lives.

Clearly the Church of England has, by conforming to the liberal agenda and by its departure from Scripture, alienated itself from the worldwide Anglican community. The Church of J C Ryle and the Thirty-nine Articles has been treading a very boggy path in recent years, a path which has led them to misinterpret Scripture and teach that sodomy is a not sin but a positive thing. It would be good if all false teachers, in the Church of England and elsewhere, would be brought to say, "I delight to do Thy will, O my God: yea, Thy law is within my heart" (Ps 40:8). FRD

Church Information

General Building Fund

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

W Campbell, General Treasurer

Acknowledgement of Donations

The General Treasurer acknowledges with sincere thanks the following donation:

Home Mission Fund: A Reynolds, £90.

Congregational Treasurers acknowledge with sincere thanks the following donations:

Glasgow: Anon, Ps 60:4, £60. *Bus Fund:* Anon, £20, £20. *Eastern Europe Fund:* Anon, £80, £60, £100, £80, £50, £80, £30, £80, £80, £80, £82, £80, £40, £80, £60, £81; Anon, Ps 60:4, In memory of Linda Sharp, £150; Anon, Ps 60:4, £70. *Outreach Fund:* Anon, £40.

Halkirk Anon, In memory of dear MacAskill Aunties, for Strathy Church repairs, £500.

Lochbroom: The estate of the late Mr W G MacLeod, £5000.

North Tolsta: *Door Collection:* Anon, £40, £40. *Sustentation Fund:* Anon, £60. *TBS:* Anon, £150.

Perth: Anon, £2000; Anon, Phil 4:19, £2000.

They will never bear affliction well who have not learned to bear prosperity well, and acknowledged God in the one as well as in the other. The one of them will never be rightly borne when God has not been sought and served in the other. *John Duncan*

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). **Laig:** 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:** Bridge Street; Sabbath 11.30 am, 5.30 pm, second, fourth and fifth Sabbaths of month; Thursday 7 pm. Rev W A Weale, F P Manse, Bridge Street, KW12 6YG; tel: 01847 831758. **Thurso:** Duncan Street; 3 pm; **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.

Zenka: Church.

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