

The Free Presbyterian Magazine

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

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

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Communions

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

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

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

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

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

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

July: First Sabbath: Beauly; **Second:** Bonar Bridge, 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.

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Will God Take Away His Spirit?

David was a godly man; the Holy Spirit had been at work in his soul. When that work began we do not know, but it must have been early in his life. Through the work of the Spirit, David was born again; spiritual life was breathed into his soul, a soul that had been dead in trespasses and sins up to that point. He at once received God's testimony as to the way of salvation. He could see that every sacrifice offered to God was a substitute for the sinner for whom it was offered; in the light of these sacrifices, David looked by faith on to the promised Messiah as *the* Substitute who could truly take away sin. He could say, "I trusted in Thee, O Lord" (Ps 31:14).

In that particular context, David seems to be speaking about deliverance from temporal trouble, but we can be sure that he would express himself in the same way when thinking about the salvation of his soul. We have the testimony of Scripture that "David did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, and turned not aside from any thing that He commanded him all the days of his life . . ." (1 Ki 15:5). Through the Holy Spirit continuing to work in his soul, David went on desiring to do what was right, desiring to keep God's commands.

Yet the commendation of David just quoted comes with a sad exception: "save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite". David sinned, and sinned grievously, in his adultery with Uriah's wife and in arranging for Uriah to be killed. Given that the Spirit had been at work savingly in David's soul, that work could never come to an end. So David's sin was followed by sincere repentance, which is to be seen clearly in Psalm 51. Among the petitions he sent up to heaven as he wrote that Psalm is this: "Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me" (v 11).

When he prayed like this, was David thinking back to his predecessor, King Saul? Scripture tells us: "The Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him" (1 Sam 16:14). But when the Holy Spirit came upon Saul, it was not to work savingly in his soul, but to bestow upon him gifts which made him more fit to carry out the duties of his office as king. And these non-saving gifts were later withdrawn.

Or did David think of Samson? He was granted the gift of physical strength in a supernatural degree. And he truly was one of God's children; he carried out these unique feats of strength "by faith" (Heb 11:32), no doubt through the power of the Spirit. But when he revealed the secret of his strength to Delilah, he lost it; the Spirit was taken away, no longer continuing that gift of strength, while not withdrawing altogether His saving operations in Samson's soul.

Matthew Henry comments, David "knew he had by his sin grieved the Spirit and provoked Him to withdraw, and that, because he also was flesh, God may justly have said that His Spirit should no more strive with him nor work upon him (Gen 6:3). This he dreads more than anything. We are undone if God [will] take His Holy Spirit from us. Saul was a sad instance of this. How exceedingly sinful, how exceedingly miserable, was he when the Spirit of the Lord had departed from him! David knew it, and therefore [in effect] thus begs earnestly: Lord, whatever Thou take from me, my children, my crown, my life, yet take not Thy Holy Spirit from me, but continue Thy Holy Spirit with me, to perfect the work of my repentance, to prevent my relapse into sin, and to enable me to discharge my duty both as a prince and as a psalmist.

Yes, God might justly have withdrawn His Spirit entirely from David, but that could not happen; it is always true that where He has "begun a good work" in an individual's soul, He will continue it to the end (Phil 1:6). There was a period of time when David "kept silence," and his "bones waxed old through [his] roaring all the day long" (Ps 32:3). We may see, in this, the Lord withdrawing His Spirit – in particular, as the Spirit of prayer – not entirely, but to a large extent. It was a time of winter in David's soul; yet – as in nature, so in grace – winter was followed by a spiritual springtime. It was according to the Psalmist's words: "Thou sendest forth Thy spirit . . . and Thou renewest the face of the earth" (Ps 104:30). There was a spiritual reviving in David's soul; the Spirit of prayer was restored to him. Hence "the sweet Psalmist of Israel" was able to send up to heaven the repeated petitions in Psalm 51 – the petitions of a gracious man in whom the Spirit continued working in many ways.

Clearly the petition, "Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me", is one that every believer needs to use, and not only when they have been guilty of specially serious sins. The desertion that David experienced was part of God's chastisement following his particular sins, but the Lord may hide His face (that is, His favour) by way of trial. George Horne states that "rejection from the presence, and desertion by the Spirit, of God is the most deplorable and irremediable effect of sin, but it is one that in general perhaps is the least

considered and regarded of all others”.¹ How earnestly then every believer ought always to plead that the Lord would not take away His Holy Spirit at any time or to any degree!

The believer should rather seek the continuing work of the Spirit in his soul so that he may make progress on the road to heaven. His growth in grace is the result of the Spirit’s continuing work in his soul, particularly in applying to him the truths of God’s Word. Apart from that work, the believer’s spiritual condition will deteriorate. How necessary for him to go on pleading with God for the Spirit’s blessing on all the means of grace!

There is every encouragement in the Word of God for believers to seek for the continuing work of the Holy Spirit in their souls. Especially we have Christ’s calls: “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you”. Here, with each of the commands – ask, seek, knock – there is an assurance of being heard. Christ further encourages those who ask, seek and knock to expect an answer because of the readiness of human fathers to answer the cries of their children: “For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?” And the Saviour clenches His argument by pointing to the readiness of God to answer prayer for the Holy Spirit, in particular: “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?” (Lk 11:9-13).

But unbelievers also benefit from the common operations of the Holy Spirit – that is, His work that is *common* to both the converted and the unconverted – particularly in restraining them from sin and making them willing to continue making use of the means of grace. What need the unconverted have to pray, “Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me”? What need they have to plead with the Lord that the Spirit would continue to restrain them from going further into sin than they do, and to keep them from turning away from the means of grace, such as public worship, reading the Bible and prayer. These common operations of the Spirit are not saving; therefore the unconverted should also plead for the Holy Spirit so to come upon them that He would apply the truths of God’s Word to them and give them spiritual life in their souls. Then they would believe in the Lord Jesus and be saved.

¹ Quoted in William S Plumer, *Psalms*, Banner of Truth reprint, 1975, p 564. Horne (1730-1792) was a Bishop of Norwich. C H Spurgeon, in his *Commenting and Commentaries*, speaks of Horne’s piety and notes that “he is among the best of our English writers” on the Psalms.

Turning God's Glory into Shame¹

A Sermon by Rev Neil Cameron

Psalm 4:2. *O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn My glory into shame?*

You find in the Book of Psalms how sure David was that God was the hearer of prayer, for he had so many proofs that God heard his prayers. You will notice that, after he declared that the Lord would hear him when he would cry, he confesses that God had enlarged his heart.

He here addresses himself to the sons of men: "How long will ye turn My glory into shame?" We shall notice, first of all, who these sons of men are. The Word of God begins by showing us how man came into existence at first – how God created man and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. So, in one sense, there is no creature like man in existence. He has a body formed out of the dust of the earth, and a soul which God breathed into him; and these two parts, soul and body, make up the person of man. There are people in our day who declare that man came from the ape, and indeed they are more brutish than the apes themselves. Apes have no souls, but man has a soul and a body. The body shall return to the dust from whence it came, and the soul shall return to God who gave it. It is to the sons of Adam that David in the Spirit speaks here, and we know no gospel for people who do not descend from this man.

David addresses himself to the sons of Adam, and anyone who is taught in the least knows very well that there would be no sense in going to preach to the sons of apes, for they have no souls. David had common sense; he was going to preach to the sons of men.

We shall notice a few things concerning what he was going to teach them. He asks first how long they were going to continue to turn the glory of God into shame. They had been doing so long enough, and that was certainly not the proper work of a creature who was created after the image of God and must exist as long as eternity will last.

David was going to teach them about the *glory* of God. This is what man was created for, as you have it in the answer to the first Question in *The Shorter Catechism*: "Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him for ever". That was the very reason why God created man and caused him to have sons in this world. I have pointed out more than once that, not only is it the chief end of man to glorify God, but that God has given us rules how this is to be done, for man is ruined in his nature. Some thought, when they were persecuting the Church in the world, that they were glorifying God.

¹A prayer meeting address delivered on 14 April 1930 in Glasgow.

But God did not leave man to make his own rules; He has given us an infallible rule, as you see in the second answer of the *Catechism*: “The Word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy Him”. This is the *only* rule – not our own imaginations nor the imaginations of others, learned or unlearned. The rule is God’s Word, and we cannot glorify God if we take any rule but the infallible Word of God.

David declared that he was taking God’s Word as a lamp to his feet and a light to his path. Someone going through a dangerous place in the dark requires a lamp and will take good care to take it with him to keep him on the proper path. That is really what the Word of God is in the world – a lamp to show men where to walk and how to walk through the world.

God is the *Creator* of all things: the heavens – the sun, moon and stars – the earth, the sea, and all that they contain. This is God’s work, and He ought to have the glory of doing such an extraordinary work. If we were not so brutish, we would be amazed at His wonderful works. He gave the sons of men this work to do – to glorify God as the Creator. You find this in the prayers of the Church right through the Scriptures. When they approached the adorable God, they spoke to Him as the One who created the heavens, the earth and the sea; they were giving Him this glory.

Second, there is the glory of His *providence* – how He upholds all these things in the heavens that He created. They stand today according to the order God gave them. They are kept there by the power of God’s commands, for He commands all their movements from day to day, and year to year, and men ought to give God the glory and not to be like fools, like most men and women today, who look upon these things as if they were things that nature created.

That reminds me of what I once read of a man in England, who wrote a book trying to prove that God never created the heavens and the earth. He was an able scholar and scientist. However, after the book was finished and ready for the press, he one day took a walk out in his garden with his little granddaughter, and the little girl, as children do, was asking questions about everything: Who made this, and who made that? The answer to each question was, Nature made it. At last the little girl asked, “But who made nature, Grandpa?” “Lassie, be quiet,” was all he could say, and he was three days before they saw him after that. By then he had destroyed the book. The little girl made him see that it was idiotic to give the glory to nature.

All that God created hangs upon the word of God, and He has only to withdraw that word, and everything will return to nothing; they will not be found anywhere. The Church was giving this glory to God right through the

ages – the glory of sustaining them and of providing and caring for them in the world. The Church was not giving that glory to her own wisdom, but looking to God for all the goodness that is in the world.

There is another glory besides His glory as Creator, although that is great, and exceedingly great – so great that no man can comprehend it. That is the glory of His *mercy* in saving guilty men from sinking into hell. This is the glory that excels all other glories. the Son of God Himself came into this world and took our nature – the nature of man – as otherwise man could not be saved. Christ obeyed the law that man transgressed, and died the death that was due to the sinner; He now offers this finished work to guilty men, as a righteousness by which they stand acquitted at the bar of God. This is the glory that excels every other glory – the glory of salvation and redemption. We believe David had this glory in view here, the glory of God in saving the lost out of the hands of His own justice, for God must be just. And when He saves a sinner, He does not do it at the expense of justice.

I desire to notice one other glory, and that is the glory of His *justice*. In our day you would think that God has ceased to be just. Men boldly trample upon every commandment of the Decalogue and have no conscience at all in transgressing God's holy law, whereas they will take good care that they will not break the laws of this country. God has glory as a Judge, and that glory is great, and He gives the assurance that every knee shall bow to Him – your knees and my knees – at the great white throne, and make confession there, if not before.

He is the Judge of all the earth, and no one can escape appearing at His bar, and no one will be acquitted there but those who in the world looked to Christ for mercy through His precious blood. He is just when He acquits them, and He is also just when He condemns all the rest to eternal weeping and gnashing of teeth. God is glorified in all that. He will be glorified, on the last day, in them that believe and in them that perish. "Give unto the Lord the glory due unto His name."

David says here that this glory was turned to shame. *First*, it means that men were trying to turn this glory of God into a thing that men would be ashamed of. They look upon the doctrines of the Bible as old doctrines, as antiquated, and instead they follow lies – science so called. Men are ashamed to acknowledge His Word and to preach it; they must be modern, up to date. Consequently they are ashamed of the glory of God revealed in the ways we mentioned, and many other ways which we did not mention.

Another way is men turning it to *actual shame*. Creatures created in the image of God have fallen so low that they have such fearful ideas of God and His truth, and consequently turn His glory to shame. David asks here,

How long were men going to do this? How long? I cannot say, but we are not, as a generation, showing any signs at all of turning our hearts to the Lord; we are only going further and further away. How long? Only God knows. But I will give you two answers to that question. You will not turn one moment after your death. But you may turn here, however long or short God may leave you in the world. It may be true of you now that you are turning the glory of God to shame, but you will never do such a thing after you draw your last breath in the world. Never any more.

I am going to give *another answer*, and I hope and pray that it will be true in the case of many, long before they ever reach eternity: that they will be convinced of sin, and this will put an end to their turning the glory of God to shame; for whenever a sinner is awakened and convinced of sin, righteousness and judgement – and whenever he will see how he was turning the glory of God to shame – an end will come to it. He will say then with David: “Too long we have been the workers of iniquity”.

How long will you turn God's glory to shame? If God will have pity on you and show you mercy in the world, your turning of God's glory to shame will cease the day that God turns you to Himself. You will see then the glory of God's law, the glory of His justice, and the glory of His gospel, by which He is glorified in saving the guilty sinner from eternal death, which is the wages of sin.

The Seaman's Catechism (4)¹

John Flavel

Question 18. But how shall I be able to undergo the severities of religion? There are difficult duties to be done, and a heavy cross to be taken up; these are the things that daunt me.

Answer. If pain and suffering daunt you, how is it that you are not more out of love with sin than with religion? For it is most certain that sufferings for Christ are nothing compared with hell, the just reward and certain issue of sin; the pains of mortification are nothing to the pains of damnation; there is no comparison between suffering *for* Christ and suffering *from* Christ. “If thy right hand [or eye] offend thee, cut it off, [or pluck it out] . . . it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should suffer, and not that thy whole

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. This is the last section of the *Catechism*. The previous question was, “The pleasures of sin engage me to it; how shall I break these cords and snares?”

body should be cast into hell” (Mt 5:30). Second, Thou seest the worst, but not the best of Christ. There are joys and comforts in those difficult duties and sufferings that you do not see: “Who now rejoice in my sufferings” (Col 1:24), said Paul. “My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations” (Jas 1:2). Third, great shall be your assistance from Christ: “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Phil 4:13). “The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities” (Rom 8:26), takes the other end of the burden. What do you mean to stand upon such terms, when it is heaven or hell, eternal life or death, that lie before you?

Question 19. But what use will be my endeavours to come to Christ, unless I am elected? All will be to no purpose.

Answer. True, if you are not elected, you cannot obtain Him, or happiness by Him. Yet that should not discourage you from striving; for, in your unconverted state, your election or non-election is a secret to you. The only way to make it sure is by striving, and giving all diligence, in the way of duty (2 Pet 1:10). And if you ponder this text well, you will find that election is not only made sure in the way of diligence and striving, but calling is put before it, and lies in order to it: first make sure of your effectual calling, and then your election.

Question 20. But I have no strength of my own by which to come to Christ; is it not absurd to urge me to do impossible things in order to be saved?

Answer. First, you are certainly most absurd in pleading and pretending that you have no power to carry out your duty. You do think you have a power to come to Christ, or else how do you quiet your conscience with promises and resolves of conversion hereafter? Second, Though it is true that no saving act can be done without the concurrence of special grace; yet this is just as true: your inability to do what is above your power does not excuse you from doing what is in your power to do. Can you not, at least, keep from many outward acts of sin? And can you not perform, at least, the outward acts of duty? If you cannot come to Christ, yet, as the blind man, be in the way of Christ; do what you can do, and confess and bewail your lack of power to do more.

Can you not take your soul aside in secret and thus bemoan it: My poor soul, what will you do? What will become of you, you are Christless, outside the covenant, hopeless and, which is most sad, senseless and heartless? You cannot bear the infinite wrath of the eternal God, whose almighty power will be set working to torment such as you are; and yet you do nothing to prevent it! You see the busy diligence of others, and how the kingdom of heaven suffers violence by them: and are you not as deeply obliged to look to your happiness as any in the world? O that men would do this, even if they can

do no more! Will hell be more tolerable to you than to others? What a combination of stupidity and sloth you are! You live as if there is neither fire in hell to torment you, nor glory in heaven to reward you. If God and Christ, heaven and hell, were but dreams and fables, you could not be less affected with them. Ah, my soul, my soul, my precious soul, is it easy to perish? Will you die as a fool dies?

And now, soul, you see what death is that you have treated so lightly; and what the only way is that we poor sons of death must go in if we are to escape its sting. You have seen here the vanity of all your pleas and pretences against conversion, and the way to Christ prepared and cast up for you. Now, I beg you in the name of God, who made you, and as if I made this request on my bended knees to you, will you not now, without any more delays, yield yourselves to the Lord. Soul, I beseech you, hasten into your room, shut your door and pray to the Lord before you dare launch out to sea again.

The Patient of Many Physicians¹

3. Healed at Once

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. . . .*

3. Her Immediate Healing. 1. Her coming to be healed was *late and yet immediate*: late in reference to the past, immediate in the haste of this afternoon. “When she heard of Jesus [she] came”; yet this could not well have been the first time she heard of Jesus; not only had all the town already been filled with the praise of His works, but all Galilee and Judea. But the name of Jesus struck her ear and her heart now for the first time, as having some interest or hope for her.

So it constantly is when a sinner feels himself lost; he is ready to give up all; but the tidings of salvation sound in his ear for the first time, as having something to do with himself. They come to him full of promise and life. Long before this, the whole city had brought their sick to Christ, and He had healed all that were brought. But she was not dying, when kind friends might

¹The final part of a chapter taken, with editing, from *Capernaum* by Moody Stuart (1809-98), who was a Free Church minister in Edinburgh. Last month’s section spoke of the woman’s case as “the worst of all”.

carry her to the good Physician; and it never occurred to herself that her case was one for His help. But hearing now that Jesus was passing through the street, from the feast in Matthew's house to the sickroom of the ruler's daughter, she lost no time in trying to overtake Him.

The act of her coming was good, but the reason was humbling: she came hastily to Jesus now, but it was because she had spent her all. She did not think of Christ first, but last. Physician after physician she had tried, but the thought of Jesus never occurred to her, as one able to relieve. She asked for advice and followed it, till it ran its course and left her no better; then she tried another and another, with the like result; she was hewing out for herself cisterns, which when hewn could hold no water. Fee after fee she paid, giving her money for that which was not bread, while her resources dwindled steadily away till at last she found herself a pauper, with all her living spent.

She did not have half a shekel of silver remaining to pay another physician, or else she would not have thought of Jesus; seemingly she did not have even a few pence left to buy bread, and she had no strength to work for it. Yesterday she had spent her last; today she had nothing, and it was drawing toward evening. And now she began to think that Jesus could help her. What an honour to pay to Him! He will charge her nothing for advice and aid, or for present health and eternal salvation.

This is exactly what every sinner does; no son of man comes to Christ first, but always last and after every other refuge has failed. The sinner stands with his back to the living waters, laboriously hewing cistern after cistern. Only when he finds them all dry does he turn and stoop to drink of the free and flowing fountain. The prodigal son has no thought of his father's house till he is perishing for hunger; when the choice is between his father and death, he counts death still worse than his father's house and he will now go home. Death is worst of all; his father's roof only second worst. And this is all the honour that any of us at first render to God, to Christ and to heaven. Earth, self, an imagined righteousness, the pleasures of sin, the creature above the Creator: these are our own heart's choice. At length, when we come to see nothing before us but death, judgement and woe, we flee to Christ as less terrible than death, and we think of heaven as not so intolerable as hell.

But though it begins thus, it never ends there. The lack of bread drives the prodigal home but, when once his thoughts return home, there is found in him by grace the true heart of a son; there springs up within him a sincere longing, repenting and yearning toward his offended Father. So in this impoverished patient, though Christ had been her last thought, He was highly exalted now; He was first, greatest, all. She desired no counsel now

from vain physicians. If she had thousands of gold and silver, she would leave all for Jesus. The hem of His garment was more to her than all the physicians and all the medicines in the world. Believing Christ was precious to her, not because she had touched and been healed; but before she touched, and because she believed Him to be full of health for every coming sufferer. Poor dying soul, Jesus is the same yesterday, today and for ever; and as He was then to her, so is He now for you in your need.

2. Her cure was *immediate*, complete, conscious. At once the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague. The root of the disease was reached and instantly removed; in a moment the spring of health and youth rose fresh within the inner depths of her frame; she was healed, and she felt and knew that she was well. She needed no experience to prove it; no trial, for she could walk erect and with elastic step; she needed no bread set before her to test her appetite; no work to show her strength. Others would look at those evidences, and they would come to herself in due time and be highly prized as daily proofs that she was the subject of no delusion. But meanwhile, independently of all the future, she knew for herself, because she felt within herself that she was well – not dying now but living, not weak but strong, and not through any mere outward cleansing, but with a true healing in the inner springs of life.

Thus it is with the immortal soul. The heart believes in Jesus Christ unto salvation; the conscience in that hour is cleansed and has peace with God; the soul is healed, is newborn, lives and is strong with everlasting youth and health. Eternal life has begun within the man; the life lost in Adam and corrupted from the womb is more than restored; it is renewed in Christ Jesus unto life more abundant. Did this poor woman feel within herself that she was cured of her bodily plague, and should the renewed man be all unconscious of his spiritual health and cure? Did her soul know the change that had taken place in the dull unconscious body, and should our soul not more know the everlasting change which by grace has taken place within itself?

3. But she cannot depart in health without *confessing Christ* the Healer. Public confession has been her great cross; the fear of it had nearly become a great snare; and a little more might have kept her back altogether. Yet ashamed, timid and retiring as she was, she faced a crowd for deliverance and she found it – not for the body alone, but still more for the soul. “Thy faith hath made thee whole”; “Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.” Here is a double deliverance; health of spirit and of body, temporal and eternal. But the Healer must be publicly acknowledged, and the need of health openly confessed.

Jesus not only allowed but commended her coming unseasonably; in the

parable of the friend at midnight, He encouraged and enforced it. Her coming stealthily He allowed and pardoned, but corrected. He did not refuse her on that account, because He casts out none that come in any way; and He therefore let her come in this way, or in any other way that anyone might choose to take. But having let her come thus, he did not thus let her go. If she was to go in peace, with everlasting health for her soul, and with a root of health for the body that will spring up again from the grave, she must not go ashamed of Christ and ashamed of her need of Christ. With the heart man believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation; heart belief was in her, and her mouth must now make confession.

It was a much more public and detailed confession now than it might have been, had she come owning her sickness at first. She might thus have obtained health, with perhaps no more publicity than in other cases of which we have no special record – passing as one among many. But now she was singled out by herself and had to detail all her history before all the people. In coming to Christ at all, there is often the taking up of the cross and, in her case, it would have been a heavy cross to come openly. But Jesus did not say, He that cometh to Me must take up his cross, but “him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out”. But *then* He proclaims, “If any man will come after Me, let him . . . take up his cross and follow Me”. The comer need not bear the cross of Christ – he may or he may not – but every follower must. So with her: Jesus does not put the cross upon her before she comes, but He lays it on her expressly before she departs, for without it she cannot follow Him, and no one can. We must all bear the cross now, if we would wear the crown hereafter.

Yet the cross is far lighter to bear afterwards than it would have been before. She was burdened beneath a heavy weight that crushed her to the earth; and Jesus would not lay an added load of public shame upon a back so unequal to bearing it. But now she was relieved; her soul was forgiven, accepted and renewed; her bodily frame was strong and well. Full of joy and health, she can lift the cross that she had shunned; it was now the only load she had to carry; Jesus gently lays upon her His yoke, which is easy; and His burden, which is light. For the moment she trembled and was ashamed in narrating all her long and hopeless malady; yet even then, fallen on the ground, she could declare before all how the plague had been removed, and how sound and whole she had become. Even already her cross had become her crown, herself healed, rejoicing in the Lord’s great goodness and remembering her sorrow no more, because of her joy in the great salvation and in God her Saviour.

Her soul has mingled with the spirits of the just made perfect, and her

body has mingled with the dust of the earth till the resurrection. But one of the everlasting memorials in heaven, of the Lord's works on earth, will be the resurrection unto life of this woman, who had suffered in vain so many things from many physicians and was healed in a moment by the good Physician, through her believing touch of the hem of His garment: May we too be partakers of a living faith, so that we may share with her in that blessed rising from the dead, when this mortal shall put on immortality, and this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and death shall be swallowed up by life.

The Grace of Adoption (1)¹

Rev Donald MacLean

It is generally agreed that this subject is much neglected in theological writings. This does seem strange when we consider the precious nature of adoption as described in the words of Scripture: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God" (1 Jn 3:1). Among the Reformers, this neglect arose because they concentrated on a proper definition of justification in their contest with the Roman Church. They were also inclined to treat adoption as part of justification. This was true, not only of individual Reformers such as John Calvin, and some of their successors such as Francis Turretin, but was also reflected in many of the creeds of the Reformed Churches. *The Westminster Confession* displays its superiority in many ways to other creeds, but is distinguished by devoting a chapter to adoption.

"The precious nature of the paternal relation of God to His people and their corresponding filial relation to Him creates a very high claim for adoption", says R A Webb in his useful book entitled, *The Reformed Doctrine of Adoption*. "The conception of God as Father is the most charming and transporting thought which can ever enter into the bosom of man, and the correlative conception of himself as a son of God is the most soothing and satisfying which a sinner ever finds to be true concerning himself." Philip said to the Lord, "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us" (Jn 14:8). It would satisfy Philip, and it would satisfy anyone, if he could grasp in his consciousness, and realise in his experience, that God is his Father.

In approaching this subject, it is essential to understand that the adoption of members of the human race into God's family does not mean that this was necessary to supply some defect in Him. Those who hold the doctrine of the universal Fatherhood of God think along these lines; they maintain that the

¹The first section of a Theological Conference paper.

Fatherhood of God means that He needed sons and daughters to satisfy His fatherly nature, and that His fatherly love consequently embraced the whole human family. They completely lose sight of the fact that God has an eternally begotten Son, who is the Son of His love, and He needs no one else to satisfy the love of His fatherly heart.

The effect of believing in the universal fatherhood of God. This doctrine of God being the universal Father of the whole human race teaches that God's administration of the world is not strictly a moral government but a paternal discipline. This doctrine has serious effects. For instance, if God is only a Father, and men are only His sons, sins against God are filial disobediences and are to be dealt with as such. The teaching of Scripture that sin is a breach of the moral law, and is consequently to be punished by death, is lost sight of. No father is compelled to exact penal satisfaction before he can fold his disobedient son to his bosom. A father can forgive without atonement.

The doctrines of sin and atonement are completely altered by this idea of the universal fatherhood of God. Christ's death, according to this view, was intended to reveal God's fatherly love to men, and thereby melt them into reconciliation with their heavenly Father. It also affects one's view of the nature of conversion, as this is represented as the return of a prodigal son to the bosom of his father, with no need for regeneration – God is seen as not so strict as to mark iniquity, but as a kind, indulgent father eager to overlook the besetting sins of His human family. The tremendous damage to souls caused by this doctrine is to be seen on every hand.

A son and a servant – on the human level. In order to appreciate the grace of adoption, in a proper sense, a clear distinction must be made between a son and a servant. Sonship has been defined as “the communication of the essence of the begetter to him that is begotten”. On the other hand, a master does not originate the nature and existence of the person who is his servant. The first view is one of derivation; the second consists mainly of subordination. It may be firmly maintained that the child is derived from his parents, and the very essence of sonship consists in the communication of life from the father to the son. Sonship must therefore be received in one of two ways: (1) by creation or generation, or (2) by adoption.

A person may become a servant in many ways – by purchase, by theft, by war, for instance. These many ways may bring a servant into a family, but a son can only be in the family by generation or adoption. The son is therefore different from a servant due to the mode of their respective origins. It follows accordingly that the son and the servant differ from each other in their respective *natures*.

We usually describe the distinction as filial in respect of the son, and servile

in respect of the servant. The filial spirit feels liberty and affection in the presence of the father. The servile feels servitude and subordination in the presence of the master.

The difference between how sons and servants are ruled. This leads us to consider the question of the different rules of life under which the two parties live. There are two principal forms under which law and authority are administered. The first is government as illustrated in the case of the state, the second is discipline as seen in the case of the family. The first is usually described as rectoral government, and the second as paternal government. In the case of the first, the master is the head and he rules over those who should obey him as his servants. In the case of the second, the father is the head of a family of whom he is the father.

The principle which reigns in rectoral government is justice. It consequently deals with its subjects in righteousness and applies its authority to them all fairly. The father, on the other hand, deals with his children on the principle of love and affection. It is true, of course, that while paternal rule arises from love, it must be controlled by justice. It should further be noted that the particular end of rectoral government is the maintenance of law and order while, on the other hand, paternal discipline has in view the well-being and happiness of the son.

In any form of government, there must be penalties when the commands of authority are broken. In rectoral government, transgressions are crimes to be punished, but in paternal government, offences are faults to be corrected. As far as the state is concerned, there is no room for repentance, but repentance is always possible in the home. These distinctions are well summed up in the following words: "Here then is a great and radical distinction between a son and a servant. The one is under parental discipline and the other is under rectoral government. The son is dealt with in his father's house, the servant in the magistrates' court. To the one, the head of the administration is a father. To the other he is a sovereign."

The servant expects to be rewarded on the ground of his work. The son is content with the enjoyment of his father's favour. The servant may be quite intimate with his master but does not enjoy the same form of communion and the same nearness of approach as a son. This is, of course, pre-eminently true in the house of God. The angels as servants have a high place around the throne of God, but the privilege of adopted sons is much higher, for it is fellowship with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ.

John Duncan's End¹

Alexander Moody Stuart

John Duncan died when he was 74, after a few weeks' illness, on 26 February 1870. One Sabbath evening, three years before his death, he broke out into this soliloquy: "There are heaps of things in the past: mercies, sins, forgivenesses; in 70 years and more there is a great deal to look back to. Alas, I have never done a sinless action during it all; I have never done a sinless action during the 70 years. I don't say but by God's grace there may have been some holy action done, but never a sinless action during the 70 years. What an awful thing is human life! And what a solemn consideration it should be to us that we have never done a sinless action all our life, that we have never done one act that did not need to be pardoned."

He added afterwards, with singular self-knowledge, but with a judgement of himself too severe to be just: "I wish I had a little more personal faith. I think with the Psalmist that these things are more precious 'than gold, yea, than much fine gold'; but I cannot go so well with him in that, that they are 'sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb'. I stick at that; that has been often a plague with me; the precious things were more as casketed jewels than as meat and drink. They delight the intellect; but O, I wish I had a loving heart! I go mourning all the day for want of it. Hence I think that promise has been sometimes dear to me: 'The Lord thy God shall circumcise thy heart to love the Lord thy God'."

The last time that I saw him on his deathbed he said to me: "Pray for me, pray for pardon, and pray for purity, for I am still in the body". A few days before his end, he said to a friend in the ministry, "I have been at the point of death, the point of death"; and then raising himself, he added, "But I found that the one great mysterious death of Calvary was all I needed at the point of death". Years before, he had expressed his sense of his great unworthiness in the last of his recorded sayings in the *Colloquia*: "If there is anything in which I would be inclined to contradict Him, it would be if I heard Him say, 'Well done, good and faithful servant'". And, remarkably enough, the moment after the Lord Jesus had received his spirit, his attendant uttered over him those very words, "Well done, good and faithful servant".

The close of Psalm 45 was one of the Bible scenes on which he loved to

¹An extract from Moody Stuart's *The Life of John Duncan* (originally published as *Recollections*). It has been republished by the Banner of Truth and is available from the Free Presbyterian Bookroom. The fuller *Life of John Duncan* and *Rich Gleanings From Rabbi Duncan* have been published by Free Presbyterian Publications and are also available from the Bookroom.

dwell, not to open it, but to linger over it: “She shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needlework: the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto Thee. With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the King’s palace.”

For the unseen and the future he liked to drink from the well of the pure Word of life, without adding words of others, or of his own, and to draw for himself thoughts sweet and many from a source that might seem, to minds less thoughtful, little more than “a spring shut up [and] a fountain sealed”. These words he interpreted of the disembodied spirit carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom, and he applied them to the spirits of just men who had recently been removed from among ourselves. At the time of his own departure from this world, while remembering his application of this passage to others, and while thinking of it in connection with himself, it seemed to me as if in the company of the blessed receiving him into the everlasting habitations, the inquiry might be made, “Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness leaning on the Beloved?” and that they might be answered with the reply: This is he who, when bidden to the marriage feast, went and sat down in the lowest room.

The Wise Men from the East¹

C H Spurgeon

Why was the birth of the King of the Jews made known to these foreigners and not to those nearer home? Why did the Lord select those who lived so many hundreds of miles away, while the children of the kingdom, in whose very midst the Saviour was brought forth, were yet strangely ignorant of His presence?

See here again another instance of the sovereignty of God. Both in shepherds and in wise men from the East gathering around the young Child, I see God dispensing His favours as He wills; and, as I see it, I exclaim, “Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in Thy sight”. As of old, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elias the prophet, yet he was sent unto none of them but unto the woman of Sarepta, a city of Sidon, so there were many among the Jews who were called wise men, but unto none of them did the star appear; but it shone on Gentile eyes and led a chosen company from the ends of the earth to bow at Emanuel’s feet.

In these cases, sovereignty clothed itself in robes of mercy. It was great

¹An extract from Spurgeon’s “*Good Tidings of Great Joy*”: *Christ’s Incarnation the Foundation of Christianity*.

mercy that regarded the low estate of the shepherds, and it was far-reaching mercy which gathered a company of men, made wise unto salvation, from lands which live in darkness. Mercy, wearing her resplendent jewels, was present with God's sovereignty in the lowly abode of Bethlehem. Is it not a delightful thought that, around the cradle of the Saviour, as well as around His throne in heaven, these two attributes of mercy and sovereignty meet? He makes Himself known – and here is mercy. But He makes Himself known to those whom He has chosen – and here He shows that He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy, and He will have compassion on whom He will have compassion.

Mary Winslow¹

There is something peculiarly comforting and edifying, we have often felt, in the memoir of an aged Christian. It is cheering to have the testimony of one who has long served God, and their own generation, that the Lord is a good and faithful master; and that, even when it is carried under advancing years, His yoke is easy and His burden light. The saint who has borne the burden and heat of the day must have many lessons to impart to his fellow-labourers, while those whose period of service has extended over only a short time have had no time or opportunity to learn. We read the history of such a life with deep interest; we close it with tranquil seriousness but without the painful regrets which the record of those taken away in the midst of their days so often awakens. It is all the difference between looking at the “flowers cut down in spring” and the ripe sheaf gathered into the garner. When we feel that our brother's work on earth was done – that it was time for him to enter into the joy of his Lord – we are not tempted to grudge him his rest.

The volume from which we now give some extracts is *Life in Jesus, or a Memoir of Mrs Mary Winslow*² (mother of the well-known author Octavius Winslow). Christian readers will find it valuable. It is the history of a long life spent in the service of God, and of communion with Christ. There is not much of striking incident, and less of the ebbs and flows of spiritual experience than we find in many other biographies; but this is probably calculated to make it more generally useful in a practical way. She was the only child of a family of Scottish extraction who settled in Bermuda, and was born

¹An unsigned article, as edited, from *The Christian Treasury* for 1857.

²The volume has been reprinted by Reformation Heritage Books and is available from the Free Presbyterian Bookroom for £19.99.

there in 1774. She formed an early attachment to Captain Winslow, a young English officer, whose regiment was stationed in the island. Though their marriage was at first against the wishes of her parents, it proved a happy one. Some years afterwards, when with her husband in England, she was awakened to real spiritual anxiety, which terminated in her decided conversion. From this time we might choose as the motto of her lengthened pilgrimage, "The path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day".

She was left a widow, under distressing circumstances, at New York, in 1816. But before his death, she had the comfort of believing that her husband had been brought to the same faith in Christ as herself. Bowing with resignation under the chastening of the Lord, she applied herself with Christian energy and devotedness to the fulfilment of her duties towards her large young family. She lived alternately in England and America, crossing the Atlantic seven times; but her closing years were spent at Leamington Spa, under the roof of her son, Octavius, a minister and the writer of her memoir. Here, beloved and lamented by a large circle of Christian friends and relatives, she fell asleep in Jesus on 3 October 1854. A more delightful picture of old age, of the pilgrim waiting in the land of Beulah for his summons to cross the river, can hardly be imagined than is contained in the closing chapters of this volume.

Her conversion. "My anxious mind could find no rest, but still I felt a ray of hope dawn upon my benighted soul and continued to hear the precious truth as one hungering and thirsting for divine knowledge. One night, watching alone beside a sick child, I took my Bible and searched the Scriptures. The question, how the sinner could be justified, pressed heavily on my mind. If I could be saved by faith in the righteousness of another, then I felt that there was hope for me; but if there was anything left for me to do towards meriting this salvation, I saw I must be for ever lost.

"I read first one Epistle and then another, when, as I read, the words were brought to my mind, "Ask, and ye shall receive". I reasoned, 'Who is it that says this? It is God. Can God lie? It is impossible. He must do what He has said. He has commanded, "Ask, and ye shall receive". I will ask. I fell upon my knees and pleaded the promise. My petition was offered in the simple language of an untutored child. I knew nothing of Christian experience, had heard the gospel but a few times, and the only thing that had fastened itself upon my mind was the truth that a poor sinner could be saved. Thus I went to God and pleaded the promise, asking Him how such a wretched sinner as I was could be saved. I did not wrestle so much for my salvation as to know *how* I could be saved, as a helpless sinner that could do nothing.

“I arose from my knees, and again took my Bible. I read and compared scripture with scripture, but the one part appeared to contradict the other, and my mind was left in darkness and perplexity. Again I carried the promise to the throne of grace and again wrestled with the Lord. I returned to my Bible, but it was yet a sealed book. A third time I ventured near the Lord, still pleading this one gracious promise, “Ask, and ye shall receive”. In an instant, light broke in upon my soul.’”

It was as if Jesus stood before her and spoke these words, “I am thy salvation” (Ps 35:3). “I hailed the glad tidings; my heart and soul responded; Jesus was with me . . . my soul was saved; my burden was gone; the grave-clothes in which I had been so long confined fell off; my spirit was free; and I seemed to soar towards heaven in the sweetest, richest enjoyment, my heart filled with a joy unspeakable. I rose from my knees to adore and praise and bless His holy name. O what a night that was – never, never to be forgotten! I had seen Jesus. It was no vision of the bodily senses that I saw; but I had no more doubt that I was a redeemed and pardoned sinner – that I had seen Christ, and held communion with Him who died that I might live – than I had of my own existence.

“It was with difficulty I could refrain from calling up the whole house to hear what the Lord had done for my soul. I thought all would believe and rejoice too, so ignorant was I. As soon as it was morning I informed my husband of what the Lord had done for me. He looked amazed at what I said and feared I should lose my senses. I was grieved that he did not believe and could not understand, and urged him, by every argument I could employ, to seek for the same blessing, which I was sure the Lord would give him.

“It has since been evident to myself that, when the Holy Ghost gave me the promise to plead, he also gave me a measure of faith to credit God for its fulfilment. And in answering the prayer of simple faith, Christ came into my soul with a full and free salvation. “I am thy salvation!” This was good news indeed, fresh from heaven. Christ was mine, heaven was mine. All care and sorrow had vanished, and I was as happy as I could be in the body. I had found what I had long sought. I had been in search of real happiness for years, and in one night I found it all in Jesus. God’s richest treasury had been thrown open to my view; and in Him I found all I wanted for time and eternity. In this happy frame I continued many weeks, imploring all I knew and loved to come to Christ; but none understood me. I began to think that no one knew Jesus Christ but Mr Sheppard³ and myself, and often felt that if I had met a chimney-sweep in the street that knew and loved Christ, I could embrace him as a brother.’

³Thomas Sheppard, Mary Winslow’s minister in London.

“Such is the simple, glowing narrative of one upon whose soul the Sun of Righteousness had just risen. In the earnestness of religious feeling breathing through these genuine utterances of the heart, the reader may trace the leading characteristic of her subsequent Christian life. She always meekly acknowledged that at this early period of her new birth there was much holy zeal, as yet unaccompanied with deep Christian experience.

A widowed mother. “She was now a widow, with a large family of sons dependent upon her for their training. ‘She that is a widow . . . and desolate, trusteth in God.’ Such was her present condition. The surges of grief now yielded to a calm, intelligent survey of her position. She threw herself upon God. The covenant she made with Him when a wife, she now and more solemnly renewed as a widow – that the Lord should be her God. It was at this important crisis of her history that the following touching incident in her experience occurred:

“I had sent one of my sons, a youth of ten years, accompanied by a servant, on a matter of business. The appointed time for his return arrived, but he did not appear. Hour after hour passed away and nightfall drew on, but he did not come. The last steamboat touched the pier, but he was not on board. I walked my room for hours in prayer, and in great agitation of mind. Keenly did I then feel my lonely, helpless widowhood. Again and again I sought the Lord. After passing hours in this state of mental anxiety, I sent a brother in search and, soon after, all made their appearance! He had missed his way. The Lord heard a mother’s prayer, and brought him in safety to me.

“After all had retired for the night, I was left alone with God. My mind and heart had been greatly exercised throughout the day. I felt deeply my helplessness and responsible situation. I thought, “How can I, a helpless woman, care for and train up these children to manhood?” I felt I should sink beneath the overwhelming conviction of my weakness and insufficiency. I paced my room in prayer, tried to take hold of a promise; but all was dark as midnight – the present and the future. It was late before I retired to rest. In vain I endeavoured to compose myself; sleep had forsaken me. Again I lifted up my heart in prayer. I tried to cease from thinking and to close my eyelids, but in vain. All night I continued in prayer, until just before the dawn of day these words were spoken to my ear and heart, as if an audible voice had uttered them: “I will be a Father to thy fatherless children”⁴. . . .

“So powerful was it, I instantly replied aloud, “O Lord, be Thou the Father of my fatherless, O my God! “O the solemnity of that hour! I felt God was with me, and my soul was filled with joy and holy reverence. He had condescended to visit my lone room and fill it with His presence. He had

⁴The words possibly coming to her mind on the basis of Ps 10:14 or Jer 49:11.

come to comfort his widowed child, and I was comforted. My soul poured out its grateful acknowledgments. I could adore and praise and bless His holy name. A solemn, sacred influence pervaded the place. God was with me, of a truth.

“Fatigued with the anxieties of the day, and exhausted with the mental exercises through which I had passed that night, I composed myself to rest. The Lord withdrew, and my weary eyes were closed in refreshing sleep. Years have passed since then, and the Lord has not for one moment forgotten His promise. But I take the promise to extend beyond this poor dying world. Had the Lord given each of my children a world, and they should lose their souls, what would it profit them? I believe His purpose is to be their Father to all eternity, and that I shall meet all, all my children in heaven. How often have I gone and pleaded the promise before Him and have always found my faith increased! And still my faith holds out, “for He is faithful that promised””.

Her departure. “It was on Tuesday evening, 3 October 1854, that she departed to her rest. At 6 o’clock in the morning of that day, she had sunk into a state of exhaustion so extreme as scarcely to betray any signs of life. Observing the alarm this produced, she rallied her feeble powers and indicated her perfect consciousness and recognition of all around her. One of her sons then took his position at the head of her bed and, as the Holy Spirit aided his memory, repeated for three hours such passages of Scripture as were appropriate to her solemn circumstances. There was nothing to which she was more responsive than this. The occasional lifting of her wasted hand, the glance of her dim eye toward heaven and the soft whisper of her faint voice, indicated she felt the preciousness of God’s Word and the support it was imparting to her soul, around which the deep waters were now swelling.

“Soon afterwards, while one of her sons was holding her hand, she raised them both, still retaining his, and fixing her eyes upon his face, with a look of the profoundest solemnity and tenderness, pointed upward. The act was too significant not to be understood. ‘Meet me in heaven!’ was her dying charge. And then, when her lips were thought for ever sealed – lips that had testified so long and so faithfully of Jesus – she exclaimed, with a voice of wondrous energy and power, ‘A cloudless death! A cloudless death! A cloudless death!’ So resplendent was the glory now surrounding her – so sacred and awestruck the feelings of all who gazed upon the scene – that the spot where the last conflict was being waged seemed more like the vestibule of heaven than the chamber of death. And now her oft-urged prayer was answered, her utmost wishes were fulfilled; Jesus, that same Jesus who once trod this earth, had come with the pale messenger, lightening the dreary valley with

His presence, and manifesting Himself, as once He did to Stephen, as her own risen, living Saviour waiting to welcome her to her long-wished-for home.”

Sin and Excuses for It¹

Henry Cooke

Genesis 3:13. *And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.*

An unconverted sinner always has some ready excuse for his sin; and every excuse has one of three objects. The first object is to satisfy the sinner's own conscience or, at all events, to silence its accusations; the second is to satisfy reason, or to silence the rebukes of others; and the third is to make sin seem less serious, or to justify it, in the sight of God Himself.

It is impossible to list all the sources from which those excuses are drawn, but it may be useful to instance a few of the most common – not to suggest them for the use of sinners, but by merely mentioning their names, to demonstrate their futility. Many seek, for example, their excuse in admitting their sin, but pleading that it is a little one. Others, again, will not plead the littleness of their sin, but urge that it is committed infrequently. Others will plead their ignorance of the evil of their sin, and urge that they did not intend whatever has been wrong in their conduct. Others charge their sin to mere lack of thought, or assert that the temptation took them suddenly and unawares. Others will plead the imperfection of their natural temper, and pretend they deplore that it is weak or ungovernable; while others produce, as a full satisfaction for all that is past, their purpose or determination to amend their behaviour for the future.

But the chief of all excuses is that which shifts the sin from the sinner's own shoulders and lays the burden of the guilt on another. This was the first excuse and was urged in reply to the questioning of God Himself. Since that time, it has constituted the great model upon which most excuses for sin have been formed. Before we can fully comprehend the futility of the excuse, we must examine the circumstances that led to it as a final effort to escape from the accusations of conscience, or the knowledge and judgement of God.

Our first parents, while in a state of innocence, had freely conversed with God. But the moment they sinned, being smitten by their conscience they hid from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden. From this we discover that the object of every excuse is, in some manner, to hide our sin. “And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art

¹Taken with editing from *The Christian's Daily Companion*. Cooke (1788-1868) was a prominent Presbyterian minister in Belfast.

thou? And he said, I heard Thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. And He said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? And the man said, The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.”

Now in this reply it is to be noted that it is not obvious whether Adam charged his sin more to the woman or to God Himself; for while he related that the woman “gave to him”, he told the Lord that it was the woman whom *He* had given to be with him. So it would appear that he traced the evil back to God and blamed His gift for the shame and the guilt in which he now stood before his Judge. To this excuse, so frivolous and unthankful, God did not pause to reply but immediately said to the woman, “What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.”

The chief thing to be noticed in this excuse is ignorance of God. Our first parents had foolishly fled among the trees of the garden, as a hiding-place from the eyes of the all-knowing God; and now they had recourse to anything except the true account, hoping to evade His searching yet merciful examination. They did not confess to God that, in the midst of His bountiful profusion, they had coveted the only gift He had withheld; they did not tell Him that a little food had tempted them to disregard His authority; they did not tell Him that they had felt discontented with their state of blissful innocence and happy communion with God; they did not tell Him that, moved by ambition, they had sought to escape from the rank of subjects and claim equality with their Creator. But, concealing these things in their bosom, they answered as under the impression that God can discover no more than they were pleased to reveal.

But ignorance of God’s omniscience is not the only thing to be noted; there appears also to be equal ignorance of His mercy and His grace. To flee, to hide, to evade and to deceive are the objects of every act and answer; but not a word of sorrow, or prayer for pardon, is heard from the lips of these sinners.

How amazing that one simple act of sin, and within a period so obviously brief, could have produced a transformation of character so sad and so degrading! But we need not wonder at this; the natural world around us can sufficiently illustrate the process. One single cloud can obscure the sun; one single injury to the eye of the body can render its glories invisible – so one single sin coming between God and the soul becomes as a cloud impenetrable to the light of His countenance, and totally deprives us of that purity of heart without which no man can see the Lord.

Let us learn then the utter vanity of every excuse for sin. The ingenuity

of our first parents was unsuccessful. Most probably they did not succeed in satisfying themselves; it is certain they were unsuccessful in satisfying God.

Let us learn also the danger of abiding in the way of temptation – of standing in the way of sinners, of walking in the counsel of the ungodly, and sitting in the seat of the scorner.

Let us beware of the shallow selfishness that would lay down our guilt at the door of our neighbour. It is most certain that we may be tempted by others. Theirs is the guilt of the temptation, and for that they must account to God; ours is the guilt of compliance, and for this we must account likewise.

Instead then of excusing our sins, let us confess our sins and flee for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us. For though we have sinned, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus the righteous; and if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us in His blood from all unrighteousness.

Book Reviews¹

Sermons and Addresses of George Smeaton, published by the Banner of Truth Trust, hardback, 324 pages, £13.00.

The publication of *Sermons and Addresses of George Smeaton* will be heartily welcomed by those who love Scriptural truth. Professor Smeaton (1814-1889) was one of the finest Biblical theologians ever raised up in Scotland, an evangelical preacher of distinction and a conspicuously meek and gracious follower of Jesus Christ. He served as Professor of New Testament Exegesis in New College, Edinburgh, for over 30 years, along with the renowned theologians William Cunningham, John Duncan, James Buchanan and James Bannerman. Professor James MacGregor held that Smeaton possessed “the best-constituted theological mind in Christendom”. Smeaton’s masterly treatises on the atonement and the Holy Spirit are now supplemented by this book, which contains some of his shorter writings. We are grateful to Rev John W Keddie for editing this fine volume. Mr Keddie has also written a useful biography of Smeaton, entitled *George Smeaton, Learned Theologian and Biblical Scholar* (Evangelical Press, 2007).

Smeaton witnessed a work of revival during his pastorate in Auchterarder, Perthshire, in the period after the Disruption, and the sermons which are included in this collection are notable not only for their high tone and weighty conceptions of truth, but also for their warmth and fervency. There is also a searching element to be found here which will doubtless leave exercised

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

readers reproved and humbled by the content. The sermons entitled, “The Lord’s Jealousy against Backsliders”, “A Witnessing Church”, and, “The Real Presence of Christ in the Midst of His People”, show Smeaton to have been a man of outstanding spiritual discernment and faithfulness. These sermons alone make the book worth a great deal, and it would be good if it found a wide circulation and a prayerful reception. Though some might find the depth of the matter and the rather literary style to be challenging, Smeaton’s writings overall are admirably clear.

Some examples may be given to illustrate the quality of the material. In the sermon entitled, “A Witnessing Church”, Smeaton pointedly asks, “Would not God’s people tremble, if they saw how many their lukewarm lives embolden to abide in sin? God will be with us while we are with Him, nor will He withdraw the Spirit till we sin Him away. And what if God’s own people themselves mar His glorious displays of grace and power in this dark age, because the salt is losing its savour when the land needs it most, and their love is waxing cold through abounding iniquity, when, if ever, it should burn most brightly?” He continues, “Say not, O that a dead world were quickened; but, O that I myself were quickened”.

In the discourse on Christ’s real presence with the Church, Smeaton states, “United prayer, sustained waiting on the God of ordinances, together with a cordial desire to be completely occupied by the Spirit beyond the circle of public ordinances as well as in them, are not found among us to any adequate extent, and hence sermons fall but half way to men’s hearts”. Speaking of the glory of the ordinances of public worship, he says, “When we shall see their glory from the margin of eternity, and reflect where we were permitted to stand from Sabbath to Sabbath, shall we not say what many say already, ‘We have scarcely been half awake’”. In solemn words, he warns us: “So little are many aware of the great throne, erected in ordinances, that they frequent those sacred spots just as they go to any other public meeting, and in the same common state of mind. Instead of feeling that the place is holy ground, and of acting with holy reverence, as Moses was directed to act at the bush, many never for a moment suppose, while they indulge a wandering fancy, that the jealousy of the Most High burns like fire in vindicating the sacredness of ordinances.” A sobering consideration for all of us.

Also included here are sermons preached by Smeaton following the death of leading conservative Free Church ministers who were his colleagues: Samuel Miller of Glasgow, Alexander D Davidson of Aberdeen and James Begg of Edinburgh. They each provide very insightful thoughts on the work of the ministry and of the Church. The collection also contains various addresses given to students, published articles and Smeaton’s definitive

statement of Church-State relations, “The Scottish Theory of Ecclesiastical Establishments”, which sets forth the Scriptural case for the recognition and support of the Church of Christ by national governments.

There are occasional statements that we do not entirely agree with in the first sermon entitled, “Immanuel” (which was originally published in 1840 in the *Scottish Christian Herald*, and is thus the earliest item included in this work). In addressing the unconverted, Smeaton states on page 22 that “Christ came to save you”. This statement extends the personal reference of the gospel offer beyond what Scripture entitles us to proclaim when we indiscriminately address sinners with the glad tidings of salvation. Certainly, Christ came to save sinners of all kinds and His salvation is genuinely offered to all, but to say that Christ came actually to save each gospel hearer is going beyond what the Word reveals. There is also a remark on page 7 which tends to suggest that the end of the world might come imminently, which clearly does not accord with the Biblical, post-millennial view of the future, even though we assume Professor Smeaton to have been generally post-millennial in his outlook. Again, the statement on page 10 that the Eternal Son prepared Himself a body would be more accurately phrased if it stated that the Father prepared a body for the Son.

Notwithstanding such points, this welcome new collection of the writings of a master in Israel can be very highly commended to our readers.

(Rev) *A W MacColl*

Thoughts on Public Prayer, by Samuel Miller, published by the Banner of Truth Trust, hardback, 201 pages, £11.00, obtainable from the F P Bookroom.

This book is aimed mainly at ministers who have the solemn duty of leading a congregation in public prayer. It will also be useful to office-bearers who have to lead in public prayer and to those who pray for their pastor and office-bearers. The book has six chapters including “Introductory Remarks”, “History of Public Prayer”, and, “The Claims of Liturgies”. The last three chapters are more practical; they are not only scriptural but also full of wise advice.

The author, Samuel Miller, expresses “deep regret that this subject [of public prayer] has not engaged more of the attention of ministers of the gospel”. He emphasises that “public prayer is not only divinely prescribed, but an unspeakably important ordinance”. Miller (1769-1850) was well qualified to write on the subject. As a minister of the Presbyterian Church of the United States of America, he ministered in New York City for 20 years and then for 36 years was Professor of Ecclesiastical History and Church Government, at Princeton Theological Seminary (which he was instrumental in establishing).

In his "Introductory Remarks" he says, "It has pleased God, in all ages, eminently 'by the foolishness of preaching' to save them that believe. . . . In prayer, we always speak to God, in the way of His own appointment; in preaching, God speaks to us by His commissioned servant. . . . It is not wise, however, to exalt either of these exercises at the expense of the other. Both are required in the New Testament Church; and both have a value beyond our power to estimate." While stating the need of the Holy Spirit's help in prayer he adds, "Neither in prayer, nor in any other exercise of religion are we to suppose that the Holy Spirit's influence is intended to supersede the exercise of our own faculties; but rather to stimulate, to strengthen and to purify them".

He distinguishes between the grace or spirit of prayer and the gift of prayer. "He has the spirit of prayer who engages in that duty with serious, enlightened, cordial sincerity; with that penitence, faith, love, and holy veneration which becomes a renewed sinner, in drawing near to God to ask for things agreeable to His will". On the other hand, "by the gift of prayer is to be understood that combination of natural and spiritual qualities which enables any one to lead in prayer in a ready, acceptable, impressive, and edifying manner; that suitableness and scriptural propriety of matter, and that ardour, fluency, and felicity of expression which enable any one so to conduct the devotions of others, as to carry with him the judgement, the hearts, and the feelings of all whose mouth he is, to the throne of grace". He further remarks, "The happy union of the spirit and the gift of prayer is the great object to be desired".

In dealing with "Frequent Faults of Public Prayer", one he mentions is, "descending to too much minuteness of detail . . . ". He adds, "Closely connected with this fault in public prayer is another, of which we often hear serious complaint. It is that of excessive length. This is so common and so crying a fault that it ought to be mentioned with emphasis, and guarded against with special care." He also says, "The excellence of a public prayer may be marred by introducing into it a large portion of didactic [teaching] statement . . . laying down formal exhibitions of Christian doctrine".

What then are what Miller calls the "Characteristics of a Good Public Prayer"? He states, "One of the most essential excellencies in public prayer, and that which I feel constrained first of all, and above all, to recommend, is, that it abound in the language of the Word of God". He also says, "A suitable prayer in the public assembly is dignified and general in its plan, and comprehensive in its requests A good public prayer ought always to include a strongly marked reference to the spread of the gospel, and earnest petitions for the success of the means employed by the Church for

that purpose. . . . The closing prayer [after the sermon] ought to be framed upon the plan of making it, as far as possible, one of the most solemn, appropriate, and impressive parts of the whole service.”

He adds, “The whole manner of uttering a public prayer should be in accordance with the humble, filial, affectionate, yet reverential spirit . . . which ought to characterise the prayer itself throughout. . . . Our gracious covenant God loves to be taken at His word; to be firmly and affectionately trusted; to have His exceeding great and precious promises importunately pleaded; and to be approached as a willing, tender Father, not only ‘mighty to save’, but ready and willing to save; more ready to bestow the gifts of His grace than earthly parents to give good things to their children.”

Among “The Best Means of Attaining Excellence in Conducting Public Prayer” are, says Miller, “to abound in closet devotion, and in holy communion with God in secret”, and “to store the mind with the language and the riches of the Word of God”.

The book is a useful guide especially in the vitally important duty of being the “mouth of the congregation to the throne of grace”. We commend it and believe it will be helpful to many.

(Rev) *N M Ross*

Protestant View

Turning to Rome?

A Church of Scotland minister in the Springburn district of Glasgow is considering leaving his church because congregations in his area, which is one of the poorest districts of the city, are being closed down. He claims that the closures amount to “walking away from the poor”.

He has considered joining the Roman Catholic Church because it “has more of a structure and spirituality to it”. At least the Church of Scotland has the form of a scriptural, Presbyterian structure, but the Roman system has multiple unscriptural levels of power, culminating in the autocracy of the Pope, the “man of sin” (2 Th 2:3). The Church of Scotland is in a bad way spiritually, with widespread rejection of the authority of the Bible and a willingness to perform same-sex “marriages”, but the Roman system of doctrine has been perverted by a myriad of false doctrines based on tradition and in opposition to the Scriptures.

The Church of Rome is no place for a sincerely Protestant minister, one who truly receives the teaching of Scripture – especially because she promotes the blasphemous doctrine of the mass, which claims to repeat Christ’s once-for-all sacrifice as if it was not sufficient for salvation.

Notes and Comments

Profiting From False Religion and From Religious Error

The Lord allows false religion and religious error in the world for various reasons. One is to test His people, but another is to highlight important aspects of true religion. Thus the sacramentalism of Romanism – in which the main “grace” is received through the mass and the other so-called “sacraments” – is a reminder to Protestants that they are to profit from the Word of God. If we are not profiting from the Bible – whether read, or preached, or meditated upon – then we are not profiting at all, and no religious “experience” can make up for this. The Christian cults (such as the Mormons and the so-called Jehovah’s Witnesses) are all in error on the Divinity of Christ, so whenever we hear of these cults, let us remember Christ’s Divine glory and desire for ourselves fresh views of “the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor 4:6).

The false religion of Islam brings out very clearly the *importance of truth and of love* in Christianity, both of which are sorely lacking in Islam. The God of Israel is the God of truth and the God of love (Ps 31:5, 1 Jn 4:16). Also lacking in Islam, and indeed in all other religions, is the unique Christian doctrine of the Divine forgiveness of sins through the blood and death of Jesus Christ: “There is forgiveness with Thee” (Ps 130:4); “I believe in the forgiveness of sins” (Apostles’ Creed). The true Christian finds pardon, peace and reconciliation through faith in the blood of Christ, which cannot be found anywhere else in the religious world.

Of a somewhat different nature is the great emphasis that the Baptists place on their doctrine of adult or believer’s baptism. We do not agree with this doctrine or regard it as scriptural, but it does serve as a continual reminder of the *importance of Christian baptism*. Baptism marks a separation from the world, and an incorporation into the covenant of grace, and this is a privilege for the Christian, but it also carries with it an important duty. To remember this duty is an important practical part of the Christian life and of Christian separation from evil: “walk as children of light” (Eph 5:8). Baptism also signifies the pouring out of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, and the true Christian is to remember that he is a possessor of the Spirit and is to live accordingly. He is not to be enfeebled by his sin and unbelief but is to say with the Apostle: “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Phil 4:13).

In the same way, the Episcopalians over-emphasise the important truth that ministers are overseers (*episcopoi* in Greek) in the Church, while the

Brethren over-emphasise the opposite truth that all true Christians are equal, and that all believers are spiritual priests and are “taught of the Lord” (Is 54:13). The Congregationalists draw attention to the *importance of the local congregation* and to the special duty that the believer has to the “immediate Christian family” in which Christ has placed him. “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ” (Gal 6:1-2). And so it goes on. In this manner we can profitably survey the whole religious world, looking to that God who says to us, “I am the Lord thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go” (Is 48:17).

DWBS

A Christian Nation?

One definition of a Christian country is one which recognises a form of Christianity as its official religion and often has, as a state church, a Christian denomination that supports the government and in turn is supported by the government (Wikipedia). In that sense England is a Christian country because the Church of England is formally part of the legislature of state – some bishops have seats in the House of Lords. At a stretch, the rest of the United Kingdom could be brought under this same umbrella.

Another definition of a Christian country would be one in which the majority of the population claim to be Christian. Sadly, according to data from the 2021 census of England and Wales, this is no longer the case. (The Scottish census took place in 2022 and results are not yet available.)

The census of 2011 showed that 59.3% of the population in England and Wales claimed to be Christian (regardless of church attendance). In the 2021 census, however, only 46.2% declared themselves to be Christian. In contrast, the number who said they had no religion increased from 25% to 37.2% of the population. Those who identified as Muslim rose from 4.9% in 2011 to 6.5% last year.

The falling away from belief is not reflected in non-Christian religions, which all saw a rise. The number of people identifying as Muslim in England and Wales rose by over 1.2 million between 2011 and 2021. The largest group, other than the main religions, was paganism which saw a tenfold rise in those identifying themselves as a shaman. (A shaman is believed to be able to communicate directly with the spirits. This, it is claimed, comes about, by allowing the soul to leave the body to enter the spirit world; or by acting as a mouthpiece for the spirit being, somewhat like a medium. They are believed to have other exceptional abilities (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*.)

The decline in Christianity is visible, with church attendance decreasing

across all branches of the Church of Christ. No wonder we are seeing moral decline in government and people. Many of our laws take no regard of the Creator's commandments and are, in fact, an abomination in God's sight. Our Prime Minister is a Hindu, and the Scottish First Minister is a Muslim. They may be determined to do what they see as the best for our country, but they will never ask themselves, What do the Scriptures say? or, What will the Lord have me to do?

The sad fact is that we are far from being a Christian country. The Saviour said to the Church of Ephesus: "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent". Should we not fear that the same will be said of the United Kingdom? How much we need an outpouring of the Spirit of grace and of supplications.

We should pray that the Lord will draw our nation to Himself in His loving-kindness and that we as a people would run after Him. FRD

Church Information

Meetings of Synod

The Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland will meet in the Glasgow church, on Tuesday, 23 May 2023, at 6.30 pm, DV, when the retiring Moderator, Rev D A Ross, will conduct public worship.

(Rev) Keith M Watkins, Clerk of Synod

Meetings of Presbytery (DV)

Outer Isles: At Stornoway, on Wednesday, June 7, at 11 am.

Zimbabwe: At Bulawayo, on Tuesday, June 13, at 11 am.

Western: At Lochcarron, on Tuesday, June 20, at 11 am.

Northern: At Dingwall, on Tuesday, June 20, at 2 pm.

Southern: At Glasgow, on Tuesday, June 27, at 2 pm.

Asia Pacific: At Sydney, on Friday, July 6, at 9.30 am.

Home Mission Fund

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

W Campbell, General Treasurer

Acknowledgement of Donations

The General Treasurer acknowledges with sincere thanks the following donations:

Bookroom Fund: Anon, £41.

General Fund: Anon, £41.

Welfare of Youth Fund: Anon, for Youth Conference expenses, £50.

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. **Beaully** (Balblair): Sabbath 6.30 pm, Thursday 7.30 pm. Rev A W MacColl MA PhD, 10 Achary Road, Dingwall, IV15 9JB; tel: 01349 866546.
- Dornoch:** Sabbath 11.30 am. **Bonar:** Sabbath 6 pm. Wednesday 7.30 pm (alternately in Dornoch and Bonar). **Lairg:** Church and Manse; no F P services. Rev J A Morrison BA, 2 Cherry Grove, Bonar Bridge, IV24 3ER. Tel: 01863 766157.
- Edinburgh:** 63 Gilmore Place, EH3 9NU, Sabbath 11 am, 6 pm; Thursday 7.30 pm. Rev D Campbell MA, 35B Barnton Avenue West, Edinburgh EH4 6DF; tel: 0131 312 8227, e-mail: dcampbell1560@gmail.com.
- Farr** (by Daviot): Sabbath 12 noon. **Tomatin:** Sabbath 12 noon. **Stratherrick:** Sabbath 12 noon. (Each of these services is held once in three weeks as intimated). Contact Mr M J Schouten; tel: 01463 221776.
- Fort William:** Monzie Square, Sabbath 11 am, 5 pm, as intimated. Manse: 15 Perth Place, PH33 6UL; tel: 01397 708553. Contact Mr D A McKinnon. Tel: 01397 702597.
- Gairloch** (Ross-shire): Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm. Prayer meeting in **Strath**, Thursday 7.30 pm. Manse tel: 01445 712118. Contact Rev D A Ross; tel: 01445 731340.
- Glasgow:** St Jude's Church, 137 Woodlands Road, G3 6LE; Sabbath 11 am, 6.30 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. Rev R MacLeod BA, 4 Laurel Park Close, Glasgow, G13 1RD; tel: 0141 954 3759.
- Greenock:** Sabbath 2.30 pm, held in Free Church of Scotland hall, 14 Jamaica Street, PA15 1XX. Contact Rev R MacLeod; tel: 0141 954 3759.
- Halkirk:** 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 11 am, 7.30 pm; Wednesday 8 pm. Contact: Mr David Kuiper; tel: 519 363 0367. Manse tel: 519 363 2502.

USA

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

Australia

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

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

New Zealand

Auckland: 45 Church Street, Otahuhu. Sabbath 11 am, 6 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. Rev J D Smith, 9 Pedlar Place, Conifer Grove, Auckland; tel: 09 282 4195.

Carterton: 124 High Street North, Carterton. Sabbath 11 am, 4 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. Contact: Mr Hank Optland, P O Box 150, Carterton, 5743; tel: 02 7432 5625.

Gisborne: 463a Childers Road. Sabbath 11 am, 6 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. Rev C Hembd, 5 Goldsmith St, Elgin, Gisborne 4010; tel: 06 863 3140; mobile: 022 409 1336.

Tauranga: For services, contact Rev J D Smith; tel: 09 282 4195.

Singapore

Singapore: 33 Ubi Avenue 3, Vertex Tower A, #05-60, Singapore 408868: Sabbath: 9.30 am and 5.30 pm; Wednesday: 7.30 pm. Contact: Mr Bernard Yong, tel: (65) 9639 3040, e-mail: byong1@singnet.com.sg.

Ukraine

Odessa: F P Mission Station, 3 Pestelya Street, 65031. Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm; Wednesday 6 pm. Rev D Levyskiy; tel: 00 38 048 785 19 24; e-mail: dlevyskiy@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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