

# The Free Presbyterian Magazine

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

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*“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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**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, Applecross, Fort William; **Fourth:** Struan. **Fifth:** Cameron.

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

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

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

**December: Third Sabbath:** Bulawayo, Santa Fe.

# The Free Presbyterian Magazine

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## Another Wonderful Work of God

Last month we considered a few of God's wonderful works on the basis of David's words in Psalm 40: "Many, O Lord my God, are Thy wonderful works which Thou hast done, and Thy thoughts which are to usward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto Thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered" (v 5). We noticed God's wonderful working in creation, in redemption and in applying redemption. Now we will try to highlight His wonderful activity in *preserving and advancing spiritual life* in a soul that has been made able and willing to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, has been justified, adopted into God's family, and set on the way to everlasting glory.

We may note the power of the opposition to spiritual life in every soul where the Lord has begun to work. We may particularly point to the malign trio: the world, the flesh and the devil. Each of them has, in itself, great power to weaken that life and even to extinguish it altogether. But to speak in that way is to ignore the teaching of Scripture that, although real spiritual life may for a time be weakened, it can never be entirely extinguished. And the work of grace will continue in the soul of believers until they are brought into the glory of heaven. God's promise to them is sure: "He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" – the Day of judgement (Phil 1:6). God will never break His word; so, if the good work of salvation has begun, that work will continue until the soul is brought into a state of perfection at the time of death.

But there is a further aspect to this work: the whole person – body and soul – will be reunited at the end of the world in a state of complete perfection. In spite of all their enemies, and in spite of their strength, God will bring all His children safely to heaven at last. How wonderful is the continuing work of grace in the hearts and lives of God's children, for, unworthy though they still are, none of them will be lost; they will all be made fit for heaven at last. Let us consider the opposition:

First, *the world*. Believers have been taken "out of the world" (Jn 17:6); accordingly the world, in this sense, includes all who do not believe in the

Saviour, who do not submit to Him as the King who rules over everything, who are still in a state of rebellion against God. In our time and throughout almost the whole of the earth's history, the followers of Christ have been few, and the vast majority of people belong to the world. Their sheer number gives them considerable power, and so does the fact that they are used by the devil against the people of God. Some of God's children may be in greater danger than others, and at some stages in their lives more than at others. Those who belong to the world are a source of temptation and a bad example to God's children, as well as a source of persecution.

In some ages and in some situations, that persecution may be more overt, in others less so. It is easy to recognise God's wonderful working when, for example, He sent His angel to deliver Peter from prison and from Herod's persecution. But it may be less easy to recognise that God is working wonderfully when His saints are protected from danger by what we may call His ordinary providence, or when they are not delivered from persecution but are given grace to withstand it and remain faithful to their Master. And if, like Paul and other disciples and a great multitude of martyrs in later generations, they are strengthened to endure great suffering, we are to conclude that, in each case, God was demonstrating His power in a wonderful way. It was God's wonderful grace that enabled Hugh Latimer to encourage his fellow sufferer, Nicholas Ridley, when they were tied to the same stake in Oxford in 1555, to be burnt to death. Latimer said, "Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man. We shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out."

Second, *the flesh* – that is, remaining corruption in the believer. Commenting on Romans 7:25, where Paul describes the effects of his remaining corruption, Charles Hodge states, "Paul served the law of God, in so far as he assented to the law that it is good, as he delighted in it, and strove to be conformed to it. He served the *law of sin*, that is, sin considered as a law or inward power, so far as, in despite of all his efforts, he was still under its influence, and was thereby hindered from living in that constant fellowship with God, and conformity to His will, that he earnestly desired." Hodge remarks further: "The strength and extent of the corruption of our nature are seen from its influence over the best of men, and from its retaining more or less of its power, under all circumstances, to the end of life".<sup>1</sup>

In spite of all this, the wonderful work of sanctification goes on in the souls of believers. We may think of the intercession of the Great High Priest on earth: "Sanctify them through Thy truth" (Jn 17:17). Christ's intercession

<sup>1</sup>Hodge, *A Commentary on Romans*, Banner of Truth reprint, 1983, p 246. The previous quotation is on p 239.

continues in heaven for every one of God's people, and sanctification takes place through the Holy Spirit, in His wonderful work, strengthening the spiritual life which He brought into their souls – and doing so in connection with Scripture, God's truth.

When the time comes for a child of God to leave this world, there is a final sanctifying act of the Spirit, when He brings that soul into a state of perfect holiness. Then all remaining corruption is removed, and the "flesh" will never be a trouble to the Lord's people in heaven. W S Plumer has pointed out that "not one among the ranks of the sinless [in heaven] has a single thought or a single desire at variance with the mind of Jehovah". What a prospect that is for the people of God!

Third, *the devil*. In this world, he "as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet 5:8). Yet Satan is under restraint; he will never be able to devour any of God's people. He is permitted to tempt them, but by God's gracious activity in both restraining the evil one and in strengthening the one who is tempted, Satan's ability to cause spiritual harm is limited. Yet it is one of the wonders of God's gracious providence that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose" (Rom 8:28). We cannot say that David's adultery was good for him; it caused him great harm. But his repentance, working together with everything else that preceded it, was for his spiritual good – as evidenced by Psalms 32 and 51, which he wrote following that repentance. Let us remember that the devil is a conquered enemy; Christ has had the victory over him, and that victory will never be reversed. Let us also remember the petition given to us, as preserved in the Word of God so that we may use it: "Lead us not into temptation" (Mt 6:13).

In conclusion, we may return to David. In his last days, as he contemplated his household, he knew that it was far from what it should have been. But he took comfort in the wonderful fact that the Lord had made with him "an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure"; and in a further exercise of faith he added, "This is all my salvation, and all my desire" (2 Sam 23:5). All his needs were provided for in that covenant; all his gracious desires would be answered; and the wonderful work of salvation that God had begun in him would most certainly be completed.

His soul is now in heaven, where he does not have "a single thought or a single desire at variance with the mind of Jehovah". But in eternal glory he praises God that all things in his life did work together for good, in God's wonderful and gracious providence – in spite of the world, the flesh and the devil. His confidence in the everlasting covenant was most certainly not misplaced. Let today's believers seek, by grace, the same blessed confidence.

# “The Lord Gave the Word”<sup>1</sup>

Synod Sermon by Rev D A Ross

Psalm 68:11. *The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it.*

I want to say a few words on these two statements in the verse: first, “The Lord gave the word”, and, second, what followed from the Lord giving the word: “Great was the company of those that published it”.

**Introduction.** The Psalm was written by David, under the direction of God, for it is part of the inspired Word of God, as all the psalms are. David here covers a wide field. He comes to different situations in which the Church is confronted by the wicked and he shows that God is against them. You can see from the Psalm that God will fulfil His word in a very solemn way against the wicked. Then David speaks of the righteous, how God highly esteems them and how He deals with them in a very gracious, glorious and wonderful way, ever supplying their needs and speaking to them by His Word.

Part of the Psalm can be applied to the Saviour, for example verse 18: “Thou hast ascended on high, Thou hast led captivity captive: Thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them”. There we have the exaltation of Christ as Redeemer. He brings poor, hell-deserving sinners into His own domain. Wonderful Saviour indeed!

**1. “The Lord gave the word.”** The One who gave the word is the Lord – that is, our God. This is the God we know, who wonderfully came to us with His word. He speaks to the heathen by His providence: “The heavens God’s glory do declare, the skies his hand-works preach” – but He speaks in a much fuller way by His Word. There are certain things we cannot know or understand and appreciate about God apart from His word.

When we read, “The Lord gave the word,” we cannot but think of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost all being involved in this wonderful matter of giving the word – and giving the word for sinners like us. Christ is the Person through whom the Father speaks what He has to say to the sons of men. Christ is the faithful Prophet of the Church, who speaks what the Father requires, as He indicated time and time again in His ministry when He was on this earth. The gospel is the word of God; the promise of life is the word of God; the truth about the damnation of the wicked is the word of God. The Lord gave the word, the word of salvation for poor, lost, hell-deserving sinners.

What a great loss Adam and Eve suffered by forsaking God’s word when

<sup>1</sup>Preached by the retiring Moderator at opening of the 2023 Synod.

they were under the covenant of works! Whatever they might have tried to do to make up that loss, they remained under the fulfilment of the word, “In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Gen 2:17). They could not get away from it. But God also spoke to them to deliver them from the calamity they brought on themselves and all mankind. “The Lord gave the word.” So, the Lord who gave the word is God Himself, who says, “I am God, and there is none else” (Is 45:22). He is the very person who in the beginning created this world, and Adam and Eve – and He spoke to them.

When we think of the Lord giving the word, we are to go right back to the beginning of time. It seems that the Psalmist is going back to the beginning when he says, “The Lord gave the word”. The word had a beginning in this world. It is God who was saying, “Let there be light: and there was light” (Gen 1:3). It is God who was saying all that there is in Genesis about the beginning. If we are of the people of God, we realise this and we also see it was a great wonder that God spoke to Adam and Eve. A greater wonder is that He continued speaking to them after they rebelled against Him; this is really the wonder of all wonders.

What a wonderful thing it is that the Lord gave the word! We should try to meditate more and more on the fact that God is really speaking to us. Yes, of course, He speaks loudly to us in providence, but higher than this is the fact that God is speaking to us by His Word, from Genesis to Revelation. He is speaking to us of what He would have us to know about ourselves and our wicked hearts, and what He would have us to know about the way to be delivered from an evil heart and our rebellion.

When God gave the Word, He did not leave it to man to preserve it; He Himself preserves it. Man, of course, has a duty to preserve it and this is what we seek to do as a branch of the visible Church (as is the duty of every branch of the Church). Think of all the opposition to the Word, but consider too that, by His wonderful power, God has kept His Word in existence to this present time. That is a miracle! Many attempts to destroy the Word are found in Scripture history itself, in particular in the history of the Saviour. How intent the Church of that time was, in its sad and deplorable state, to destroy Christ’s words. But God is keeping His Word generation after generation, so that to the end of time, we are persuaded, His Word will be in the world, for He has a word to speak to the sons of men. God is the preserver of His Word not only in our wonderful translation, the Authorised Version, but in other languages too; it does not belong to only one language; the Word is spread abroad and many are blessed with this privilege of having it. The Lord gave His Word and the Lord preserves His Word.

We are to be responsive to this Word; that is, it is a Word to be obeyed.

God showed Adam and Eve a wonderful way to eternal life by their obedience under the covenant of works. We are given the Word to obey it. It is not merely the Church who is to obey it; the world also is under the obligation to obey it. When God has given His Word to our nation, His whole purpose is that we should benefit from it. It is for our good, our moral and spiritual good, our temporal and eternal good. He is giving it to kings and queens to be obeyed; He is giving it to us as a Church, and to every branch of the Church, to be obeyed. He gave it to Pharaoh to be obeyed, but he disobeyed; he said, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice?" Let men say what they like, they are bound by God to obey His Word. To obey His Word is a privilege because it is for our benefit, for our spiritual health, for our spiritual prosperity, and to deliver us from the path wherein destroyers go. What a kindness that is!

The Lord gave a word to Adam and Eve so that they would have eternal life, but when they disobeyed and fell into sin, He came over the mountain of their rebellion and disobedience to give another word: that the seed of the woman would bruise the head of the serpent. This is something for the whole world to hear. "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." So the Word is for this poor fallen world, for the down-and-outs, for all kinds of sinners. Paul said, "I am the chief of sinners", but the Word was even for him, the fierce persecutor of Christ and the Church of God. The Lord gave the Word for sinners to obey, to walk in the way revealed in it.

These are wonderful dealings on the part of God towards sinners. You, and myself with you, are wonderfully blessed by God; He is so kind to us in giving us His Word. It is also gracious on the part of God to give a particular word from the Bible to a particular person. For example, after David sinned, he got a personal word from God: "Thou art the man". It is wonderful when God by His word, and by the power of His Spirit, brings that very word home to the heart of a sinner so that he cries out, I am lost; I am undone; I am on my way to hell! Christ spoke about the publican in the temple, who could not so much as lift his eyes to heaven under a sense of his sin. He was obviously a man who knew the Word of God, who knew what a sinner he was. It was the Word that brought him to cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" Have you ever had the Word speak to you, friend? The poor Pharisee at the temple had the Word, but he was not listening to it. His fellow Pharisees had the Word, but they too were deaf to it. If we are deaf to the Word, we will do our own thing. But if we are listening to the Word we will do what God says – with the prayer, So help me, God.

You can see there are many wonderful things in connection with the Lord giving His word. We see in this psalm that King David, the Psalmist, in

trying times, went to God for direction and the Lord gave His word. The result was, as in verse 12, “kings of armies did flee”. It was not just that God spoke to him and left the matter there; no, He was active in fulfilling the promise of His word, to help David against his enemies. It was God who won the war: “The Lord gave the word . . . Kings of armies did flee apace”. We ourselves are to look to God: in our own private situations, in our public lives, in our Church life and in the visible Church worldwide, we are to wait on God to fulfil His word.

What are ministers of Christ doing when they are praying to God to save a particular sinner? They are asking God to bring His word with power into the soul of that poor sinner, so that he will cry, “God be merciful to me a sinner”. God’s people know something about these things; they know the wonderful fact that they can come humbly before God and plead with Him to speak a word in season to them, through the written Word accompanied by the Holy Spirit. This has been an ongoing wonder: that sinners are brought to the feet of Christ by the Word, like the poor demoniac of Gadara. He did not want to leave the feet of Christ, he wanted to go with Him, but Christ was of another mind: that the delivered man would publish the Word. This still happens – we hear of people being converted and becoming witnesses to Christ.

Another aspect of God giving His word is this – God’s people are fed. Pastors think about their flock; they realise that those who know Christ need to be fed. Christ said to Peter, “Feed My lambs. . . . Feed My sheep” (Jn 21:15,16), and, “When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren”(Lk 22:32). What was Peter to use for feeding the flock and strengthening the brethren? It was the Word! When feeding the flock, he was to present them with the great and glorious truths that “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” and that He looks after them as His flock. He has given them a new disposition, whereby they love the Word and drink it in. “The Lord gave the word!” What a wonderful thing!

See poor Adam and Eve, with their heads hanging down, at a loss under condemnation; but then we are told that the seed of the woman will destroy the one who destroyed man. That is the word and it is precious! It ought to be precious to everyone, because it is from God, because it endures, because it works and because God fulfills it. It is precious to the child of God because, when they are low (and they can be brought very, very low), the Word can lift them up and strengthen them. Do you know anything of this? The children of God do!

The Word is a dead letter to the dead soul, but it is a living letter to the living soul. Are you alive, or are you dead in trespasses and in sins? Are you

alive through the Word? Have you been revived by the Word? If so, it was God Himself speaking and reviving your poor soul, so that you can stand up on your feet, lift your head, and be enabled to say, I am a child of God; I am on my way to glory; I can oppose the ungodly in a gracious way; I can no longer walk with them but will walk with the people of God, because the Lord gave His Word and made it sweet to my taste!

Well, these are wonderful things about the Word of God! Words may destroy people – not words from God but from their own carnal minds and from the devil himself – and they drink in these words to their destruction in this world. Ah, but another destruction will follow that, for those who refuse the Word of God! Those who will have nothing to do with the Word, but reject it, will have that word rise against them: “Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels” (Mt 25:41). These are solemn, solemn, solemn things!

So the Word of God is not dead, although the dead sinner thinks it is; it is not dead for the believer who is tempted to believe it is dead. God is good in giving us a peep into His glory, His majesty and His excellent works for sinners, so that once again we get a view of Christ in the Word. How important it is that the Word is preached, that it is shown to be permanent. It is for time, for the day of judgement, and for eternity. What does the Word mean to you? Do you prize it? I hope you do.

**2. “Great was the company [or army] of those that published it.”** This was the result of the Lord giving the word. We may think that the company mentioned is a limited number among the people of God. That is not true; “the company” includes all the people of God in the Church. When someone comes to discover that “Thy word is truth”, and when he sees his own awful lostness and the excellent work of Christ which can save his soul, he belongs to this blessed company of God’s people. Nobody can be one of God’s people unless he discovers the power of the Word to convince of sin, so that he sees his need of believing in Christ and his need of the righteousness of Christ.

That is true of every one of God’s people. Having made such an extraordinary discovery, they are bound to speak about it – some more, some less. Surely the fact that Christ has redeemed a soul and brought him to admire Christ as the altogether lovely One will make him a witness. Ruth’s response to her mother-in-law was, “Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God” (Ruth 1:16). She had been a poor heathen woman; she has come a long way; she is now testifying on the side of Christ.

As that was true of Ruth, so it is true of every person who is regenerate and has been given a saving interest in Christ – true of everyone who values the Word of God, even little children. We have read about such little children

who could not but speak about the Saviour and about the Word. So this is something special to all the people of God, both individually and collectively. They are heralds of the Word of God. Does that take away from those who are called to preach the gospel? It does not! The call to preach the gospel and expound the Word of God is a particular calling. As the Saviour said to His disciples, so He says to those He calls to preach the gospel: “Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature”. But every person who is united to Christ is also to be involved in this duty. Indeed, if we were as engaged as we should be in declaring this, “The Lord gave the word”, and witnessing to the God whom we serve, who knows what wonders would come from it?

The word was so powerful in the life of Rahab the harlot, that she could stand against her whole nation and also bring her family out with her. That was extraordinary! She believed what she had heard about the wonderful things God had done for the Children of Israel and against the enemies of the Lord. Those in her great city who had heard the same thing did not believe and they lost their souls. Here then is a woman who heard the word, believed it, received it and lived by it. The same is true of the woman of Samaria. The same is true of us, more or less, if we are born again and are united to Christ. If you have had a view of the glory of Christ and of the wonder of His coming into the world to save sinners, you cannot but speak about it; it may be difficult, but you must. It is too glorious a matter to be silent about. “Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord” (Is 43:10).

That great company, we see, is made up of all God’s people. Yes, of course, they can be backslidden and therefore keep their mouths shut when they should have them open in witnessing, but that becomes a grief to them, as it was a grief to Peter. He wept bitterly because he did not speak up for his Saviour, who communicated His word to him. So this is a duty for all the children of God in every age. If some of them are of the fearing type and do not speak with their mouths as much as they ought (sadly, we all have to confess this), they speak with their godly walk. It is good to speak with our walk; it is the first essential in witnessing. And when we speak with our walk, it is more easy to speak with our talk. So there are these ways of speaking the Word, or spreading the Word.

To spread the Word is an important matter in the lives of the people of God and in the life of the Church of God. They say as it were, The Word saved my soul; it is only the Word that can save my family, the Word that can save my enemies, the Word that can save my King.” We therefore endeavour to spread the Word. And, dear friends, if we were really as active as we ought to be, it would be a better world. You know, just as much as I

do, how we have to hang our heads in shame that we are not as active as we should be in spreading the Word. However, there is still the endeavour made by the weakest of the children of God to speak the Word.

I remember hearing about a Christian lady who was in hospital and was very downcast. There was another lady in the bed opposite her who never said much but she used to go on her knees by her bedside. This made the Christian lady think that, although the woman opposite did not speak much, she said much by going on her knees. She was in fact a child of God and one of that great company. "Great was the company of those that published it."

It is the duty of every child of God to speak about our King, about our Lord, and to tell the world, "God speaks in His Word". Do not be shy to tell it; tell it in the most gracious, humble, becoming way, because poor sinners are by nature the enemies of Christ. Speak to them kindly; do not speak arrogantly; do not speak pharisaically but speak as a person who is saved, as a humble believer endeavouring to bring to the attention of a poor lost sinner the fact that "the Lord gave the word". They must be told that the seed of the woman did in fact bruise the head of the serpent; that poor sinners, even the worst of sinners, came during the ministry of Christ and sat at His feet, and they are now in glory.

So what a privilege it is to belong to this company, this army! What a wonderful company to belong to! An army is made up of all sorts of people, but everybody in the army is active. There are generals and other officers in the highest positions; then there are those lower down, sergeants for example, then right down to the privates – all sorts of people in the army making up a massive number, and they are all engaged in one duty or another. So it is with the great company in our text – it is a huge army, and they are all doing something. There are those in the Church who preach, who teach and those who exhort, and many others carrying out various duties, including prayer – all working for the spreading of the Word.

Everybody who has a saving interest in Christ wants to do something for spreading the Word. There is no army like this army! It is an army that will never be conquered; it is the army that Satan trembles before! Why? Because Christ is our Captain. He has given us His Word and He will have us speak His Word. He will accompany that Word with the power of His Spirit to bring down one of the enemy and add that enemy to the Church and thus bring him into the great company. This is the company that will be wonderfully and gloriously acknowledged in time – and in eternity at last.

What a wonderful position those are in who are united to Christ and are part of this army. It has existed down through the centuries to the present time and will exist to the end of time. "Great was the company of those that

published it,” that is, that spread the word. So help us, God, to do so, prays His Church. Forgive us, O God, when we fail to do so, His Church prays also. We should never despair, friend, that because we live in dark times, the Word is not going to work. I may leave this world and may not see much fruit to the gospel, but I know, as you know, the Word will work. When the Spirit of God is sent with it, what a Word it is! Giants in the kingdom of darkness will fall at the feet of Christ! Keep preaching the Word, teaching the Word, spreading the Word, lifting up Christ and the doctrines of Christ! Wait for the God of eternity. Never turn back. Plead with Him.

## Wandering Thoughts in Prayer<sup>1</sup>

*Thomas Watson*

**H**ow shall we cure these vain, irreverent thoughts, which distract us in prayer and, we fear, hinder its acceptance?

(1) *Be very conscious in prayer of the infinite nature of God’s majesty and purity.* His eye is upon us in prayer, and we may say as David: “Thou tellest my wanderings” (Ps 56:8). The thoughts of this would make us remember the duty we are about. If a man were to deliver a petition to an earthly prince, would he at the same time be playing with a feather? Set yourselves, when you pray, as in God’s presence. Could you but look through the keyhole of heaven and see how devout and intent the angels are in worshipping God, surely you would be ready to blush at your vain thoughts and vile irreverence in prayer.

(2) *Keep your eye fixed.* “Unto Thee lift I up mine eyes, O Thou that dwellest in the heavens” (Ps 123:1). Much vanity comes in at the eye. When the eye wanders in prayer, the heart wanders. To think of keeping the heart fixed in prayer, and yet let the eye gaze, is as if one should think of keeping his house safe, and yet leave the windows open.

(3) *Get more love to God.* Love is a great fixer of the thoughts. He who is in love cannot keep his thoughts off the object of his love. He who loves the world has his thoughts on the world. If we loved God more, our minds would be more fixed on Him in prayer. If there was more delight in duty, there would be less distraction.

(4) *Implore the help of God’s Spirit* to fix your minds on praying and make them serious. The ship without a pilot rather floats than sails. So that our thoughts may not float up and down in prayer, we need the blessed Spirit to be our pilot to steer us. Only God’s Spirit can place a bound on our

<sup>1</sup>An edited extract from Watson’s *The Ten Commandments*.

thoughts. A shaking hand may as well draw a line steadily as we can keep our hearts fixed in prayer without the Spirit of God.

(5) *Make holy thoughts familiar to you in your ordinary course of life.* David was often musing on God: “When I am awake, I am still with Thee” (Ps 139:18). He who gives himself liberty to have vain thoughts, when he is not praying, will scarcely have other thoughts in prayer.

(6) *Watch your hearts,* not only after prayer, but during prayer. The heart will be apt to give you the slip and have a thousand wanderings in prayer. We read of angels ascending and descending on Jacob’s ladder; so in prayer you shall find your hearts ascending to heaven, and in a moment descending onto earthly objects. Christians, watch your hearts in prayer. What a shame it is to think that, when we are speaking to God, our hearts should be in the fields, or in our counting houses, or one way or other running upon the devil’s errand!

(7) *Labour for larger degrees of grace.* The more ballast the ship has the better it sails; so the more the heart is ballasted with grace, the steadier it will sail to heaven in prayer.

## The Reformation in Italy<sup>1</sup>

### 4. Galeazzo Caracciolo

Peter Martyr Vermigli was born in Florence in 1500 (he was given the name Martyr at birth). He, like Luther, became an Augustinian monk and was sent out by his order as a preacher. Before he was 30, the prospect of promotion in the ranks of Roman Catholic clergy had opened up to him, but by then a major change had taken place in his religious beliefs. In his monastery he had access to the Scriptures and made good use of them. Later he was in a position to read books by the Reformers Zwingli and Bucer. In Naples, he met Valdés, Ochino and others with the same beliefs; his new convictions were deepened through discussions with them. Martyr and John Mollio, who also had Reformed sympathies, lectured on Paul’s Epistles, and monks, bishops and members of the nobility attended the lectures. There was opposition, but they were protected by some who had significant influence in the city.

Ochino preached particularly on justification by faith, a doctrine with which he was very familiar. Such preaching demolished the ideas of purgatory, penances and papal pardons. When he and others were challenged by a

<sup>1</sup>A further part of a Theological Conference paper, somewhat enlarged. The previous part, last month, surveyed the progress of the Reformation in the Italian states of Venice and Naples, and introduced Peter Martyr, Bernardino Ochino and Juan Valdés.

monk to a debate on these points, the monk came off second best. In support of their doctrine of purgatory, Romanists had long laid stress on the passage in 1 Corinthians 3 which speaks of a man's work (corresponding to the wood, hay and stubble) being burned up. When lecturing on this chapter in Naples, Martyr avoided a direct attack on the idea of purgatory, but he interpreted that passage in a completely different way from Rome and appealed to the writings of the ablest among the Church Fathers. The monks succeeded in having Martyr banned from teaching and lecturing, but the ban was later overturned.

Valdés died in 1540, when the church in Naples was still growing. He has been accused of Socinian tendencies, but there is no evidence of this in his writings, which dealt with Paul's Epistles and the Psalms, but there are some statements in them which are not well expressed.

Antonio Caracciolo belonged to Naples and took an interest in Reformed doctrine before going to France, where he became a bishop in 1551. He took a particular interest in Calvin's writings. As a bishop, he began to speak out boldly against Roman Catholic abuses. Large crowds came to hear him preach but, when he was challenged about his criticisms, he recanted publicly. In 1557 he met Calvin and Beza in Geneva and his zeal for a Protestant outlook was renewed. Afterwards he became a minister in Troyes, south-east of Paris, but he later abandoned his church and attached himself to the French court. He continued to preach and remained a Protestant till his death.

Another Caracciolo in Naples was Galeazzo, whose father was a Marquis. Galeazzo was impressed by a friend speaking about the duty of examining Roman Catholic teachings in the light of Scripture. The effects of that conversation were reinforced by hearing Peter Martyr lecture on 1 Corinthians, particularly Martyr's emphasis on the inability of the human mind to understand spiritual things, apart from the work of the Holy Spirit. Galeazzo searched the Scriptures to find out more about true religion. He held an important position in the court of the Emperor, and his fashionable friends mocked him after he began to live a godly life. But it was more difficult to stand up to the opposition of his father, who was totally opposed to anything that smacked of heresy. Even more difficult was the attitude of his wife Vittoria, who no longer recognised him as her husband.

There were Arians in Naples at that time, who did their utmost to implant, in the minds of new converts, disbelief in the miracles of Scripture, but Galeazzo escaped their influence by holding fast to divine revelation. Many who had listened to Martyr's preaching and to the teaching of Valdés believed the whole truth about justification by faith alone, rejected Roman superstitions, yet continued going to mass. When persecution broke out, they

fell away but later they were put to death as relapsed heretics; among them was the friend who first influenced Galeazzo.

Galeazzo's position at court often led to visits to Germany. There he had the opportunity of discussing spiritual matters with godly, decided Protestants. He realised that it was not enough to believe Scripture teaching on justification by faith but he must come away from the negative influence of a corrupt Church. Back in Naples, he knew that he must follow out his convictions. This involved, not only leaving his native city, but also his family, including his six children, who would be brought up in the faith which he now abhorred – a point that particularly touched his heart. He prayed, "O Lord, Thou who hast drawn me from the depths of ignorance and enlightened my understanding by Thy Holy Spirit, teach me to follow my heavenly calling and to devote myself wholly to Thy service. Neither father, wife nor children, neither country, pleasures nor honours can detain me, if Thou commandest me to depart."<sup>2</sup>

At the age of 35, in the year 1551, Galeazzo left home to go into exile; some friends went with him, but their courage failed them at the Italian border and they returned home. After a journey of two and a half months, Galeazzo reached Protestant Geneva. Calvin and others soon welcomed him as a brother and Galeazzo settled down in the city. His family were devastated by his flight and sent various messengers to persuade him to return, but all in vain. Galeazzo agreed to a meeting with his father in Verona, in Northern Italy, but in their discussions, the son steadfastly adhered to the scriptural position that he had taken up. After his return to Geneva, Galeazzo applied himself to organising an Italian church in the city for the many Italians who had sought refuge there from persecution in their own country. In this work he had Calvin's full support.

A further meeting between Galeazzo and his father took place in Italy in 1555. Galeazzo would have been happy to return home if he could have practised biblical Christianity there, but that was impossible. He travelled as far as he did out of respect to his father, even at some risk to his life. Even although he had a safe conduct for returning to Italy, such protection could not be depended on when there was such determination to eliminate those who were considered heretics. Galeazzo made more than one attempt to be reconciled to his wife but without success, even travelling to Italy to meet her when she did not turn up at the arranged place of meeting. The difficulty was still the same: his wife was not prepared to live with a Protestant.

While away from Geneva, Galeazzo received a letter from Calvin, who wrote about Vittoria: "I feel the most anxious desire to know which way her

<sup>2</sup>Quoted in M Young, *The Life and Times of Aonio Paleario*, vol 2, p 430.

inclination tends, and I hope even if she does not at once submit, that the voyage will at least be a beginning. May God in His infinite wisdom so overrule all, that we may have reason to bless His name! I feel persuaded that you will receive with a tranquil mind whatever He is pleased to send you, knowing that there is no consolation greater than putting our trust in Him; you have long preferred His will to earthly affections, however legitimate.”<sup>3</sup> Galeazzo died in 1586.

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# Forgiveness – Divine and Human<sup>1</sup>

## 1. Is There a Difference?

*Hugh Martin*

There is evidently some relation between the forgiveness which we receive from an offended God and the forgiveness we render to an offending brother. (1.) It is a relation of *similarity*: “Forgiving one another, even as” – in like manner as – “God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you”. Let your treatment of one who has trespassed against you be similar to – modelled upon – the treatment which God extended to you, when you had trespassed against him. (2.) It is *more* than a relation of similarity. It is the relation between a motive and the procedure to which it prompts: “Forgiving one another, even as” – since, seeing that, “God . . . hath forgiven you”. Let the fact that God has forgiven you move you, prompt you, persuade you, prevail upon you, to forgive your brother also.

No, (3.) it is *even more* than this. The connection is closer than that of mere similarity, and closer even than that of the influence of a mere motive. It is a connection of concomitance,<sup>2</sup> of intimate unfailing concomitance. Our reception of forgiveness from God is made, in a sense, to depend on our rendering forgiveness to our brethren. Not indeed that this can be regarded as compromising, or traversing, the great truth that our reception of forgiveness is suspended alone upon our faith: He that believeth is forgiven and “justified from all things”. But the harbouring of an unforgiving, vindictive disposition is inconsistent with the present and prevailing exercise of faith. The faith that really sees, appreciates and embraces the forgiveness of sins effectually purges the soul from malice, revenge and resentment.

<sup>3</sup>Quoted in Young, *Aonio Paleario*, vol 2, p 444.

<sup>1</sup>Taken with editing from *The British and Foreign Evangelical Review*, vol 30 (1881). This article will appear in the forthcoming volume of Martin’s writing to be published, God willing, by Free Presbyterian Publications.

<sup>2</sup>That is, occurrence in connection with something else.

And where these evil passions still prevail, proof is afforded thereby that true faith is not in action, and that the soul is disqualified and disabled from apprehending and appropriating the loving forgiveness of the covenant of grace. He that shows no mercy to man sees no mercy in God. He that shows no mercy sees no mercy. The same state of heart that shows no mercy is incapable of seeing mercy. He that refuses mercy to man refuses the mercy of God. In virtue of the one same dark frame of spirit, he does both; the fact that he refuses mercy to man proves that he lacks the contrite heart which accepts mercy from God. Hence "he shall have judgement without mercy that hath showed no mercy". With the same measure with which he metes [measures] out, it is meted to him again. "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

But this relation between God's forgiveness of us and our forgiveness of our brethren has been pressed too far, especially when considered as a relation of similarity. Thus dealt with, it has been made to yield a plausible objection – perhaps the most plausible – against the doctrine of the atonement. It has been said: God requires us freely to forgive an offending brother. He requires us to do so without demanding any atonement or satisfaction for the trespass that needs forgiveness. Our forgiveness is to be apart from all execution of penalty, or punishment, or vengeance. We are to stipulate no satisfaction to our offended dignity or honour. We are to demand no sacrifice. We are not to put our brother on the task of painfully expiating his offence. Frankly, freely, fully we are to forgive him.

Are we, on our part, to be more frank, or free, or handsome in extending forgiveness than God on His part? Are we to exhibit a placability greater than we are to attribute to the Most High? Are we to imagine that He will forgive only from regard to a plenary satisfaction – that He will demand a full execution of the penalty, a propitiation of suffering and blood-shedding and death – the sacrifice of a Lamb for a burnt offering? Is not the similarity between His forgiveness of us and our forgiveness of others destroyed if we think so? Or, if a true similarity is admitted, does it not disprove that doctrine of atonement which represents the God of all grace as pardoning iniquity, transgression and sin only because they have been expiated in the blood of a great and glorious victim? Thus from our being required to forgive without the intervention of an atonement, many would argue that no atonement is requisite, or intervenes, when God forgives us.

The notion pervades many minds in all ranks of life. As an objection to the fundamental doctrine of Christ's propitiatory sacrifice, it is proudly and very confidently put forward in those recent attractive but pretentious Anglic-

an productions, whose authors exhibit considerable literary abilities, combined with still greater theological ignorance. And some of them have had the senselessness and impudence to say that Calvinism is dead. It may be met with in the humbler and unlettered classes of society also.

In that beautiful book, *English Hearts and English Hands*,<sup>3</sup> where the truly heroic authoress describes her Christian efforts among a very rough class of the hard-wrought children of toil, a very graphic instance occurs. Such a person is recorded as having argued against the blessed truth of reconciliation and forgiveness by the blood or atonement of Jesus. He tells that he found, after a conflict with his feelings of resentment or revenge, that he could forgive an injury without insisting on anything like sacrifice or satisfaction or compensation for the offence, and felt comfortable after doing so. And he adds, with great simplicity, “Why could not God do a handsome thing like that?” Thus the unlettered child of nature, speaking the feelings of the natural man, adopts the very argument of the graceful sons of finest literature; and puts it, we humbly think, in a more striking form than they.

But in whatever form it may be put, it amounts simply to this, that the fact of our being required to forgive without an atonement argues that we may expect no atonement will be involved in God’s forgiveness. We propose for a little to exhibit the fallacy of this notion.

1. It seems to be forgotten that this is *reasoning in a circle*, or perhaps rather a mere begging of the question. It is true that when brother trespasses against brother, they are required to forgive each other without the intervention of any penalty, or sacrifice, or atonement in their relation and procedure towards each other. But what if this actually presupposes an atonement? What if this mutual forgiveness is enjoined in a world under a constitution that does not and could not exist save as founded on an atonement? What if this duty could be required in this world, only because the great leading feature of God’s administration of its affairs and history is just the cross, or propitiatory sacrifice of Christ?

This is a very particular world in which we dwell, and in which we are called upon to forgive one another his trespasses. It is a very particular theatre for the moral government of God. It is utterly unlike heaven; it is utterly unlike hell. It is differenced from heaven by the presence of sin. What if it is differenced from hell, as we believe it is, only by the cross of Christ, by atonement for sin – a dispensation of forbearance and longsuffering founded on and justified by atonement in the cross? There is no sin in heaven. There is no atonement for sin in hell. Sin and atonement for sin – these together,

<sup>3</sup>By Catherine Marsh, “a story of gospel work among the ‘navvies’ who built the Crystal Palace and the railways in Sydenham”.

we believe, constitute the fundamental elements of this world's moral state and history, and of God's administration of His government over it. The presence of mutual offences through sin distinguishes this world from heaven. The possibility of mutual forgiveness differences it from hell. In this very particular world alone is the command given, Forgive your enemies; forgive one another his trespasses."

Your objection runs in such terms as these: I am called on to forgive an offending brother without demanding compensation, satisfaction, or atonement: how much more may I expect that God will forgive me without making any such demand! The answer is: God does forgive you without requiring at your hands any satisfaction or atonement whatsoever – Himself providing the atoning sacrifice which justice demands. How very much more may you be called on to forgive your brother without requiring him to render satisfaction, seeing you are not called on to do as God has done – to provide for the expiation of the trespass!

In heaven there is no need of mutual forgiveness. There the inhabitants never say, I am sick. The sickness of mutual offence – of mutual estrangement, of mutual jealousy or envy – never enters there. The glance of conscious perfect truth and love meets on every side the glance of boundless responsive confidence. In hell there is no possibility of mutual forgiveness. There the sweet refreshings of relenting pity – the pleasures and the charm of generous reconciliation – never come. Endless recriminations and mutual malignity reign. According to the prophet's awful figure in describing the destruction of Babylon, hell is moved from beneath to meet the coming of its fresh-doomed inhabitants, to give them a terribly malignant welcome to their place of woe.

But in this world – distinguished from heaven by the possibility that mutual offences may arise, and distinguished from hell by the possibility that mutual offences may be forgiven – a difference like this from all other places of the Lord's dominions must have some deep ground to rest upon. There must be some special distinguishing element in God's administration over it to bear out a difference so great, a character so special, a state of things so unique. It is the atonement of Christ. It is the fact that "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son" as a ransom and propitiation for sin. It is this that underlies the whole dispensation. In the dispensation of the fullness of times, "God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law".

In vain do we look anywhere else for anything to justify God in keeping this world in a different state from hell, when it came into a different state from heaven. Different both from heaven and hell it cannot righteously be,

under the government of a just and all-wise God, save for the sake of Christ's cross alone, and with a view to that dispensation of forbearance and forgiveness under which, for the sake of Christ's cross, this world is placed. Yet with this very difference of the world's state, both from the realms of the blessed and the abodes of the lost, the command to forgive one another – the possibility of our forgiving – is bound up. There would be no scope for such mutual acts of forgiveness if this world was altogether akin to heaven, and no possibility of such forgiveness if it was altogether akin to hell.

But strayed from heaven as this sinful world is, and yet not merged in hell; different from heaven in that offences may arise, different from hell in that offences may be forgiven; kept apart from heaven by the intervention of sin, kept apart from hell by the intervention of an atonement for sin. These things being so, can any reasoning be more pitifully helpless than that which attempts to show that, as our forgiveness of each other is to be without atonement demanded on our part, none has been required on God's part? That whole constitution of things, in virtue of which mutual forgiveness may have a place in this world at all, rests ultimately on the truth of that atonement against which such strange pleas are made to overthrow it.

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## Asking in Christ's Name<sup>1</sup>

*J C Ryle*

**W**e learn in these verses that *believers must ask much in prayer*. It is written: "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full".

We may well believe that, up to this time, the disciples had never realised their Master's full dignity. They had certainly never understood that He was the one Mediator between God and man, in whose name and for whose sake they were to put up their prayers. Here they are distinctly told that, from now on, they are to ask in His name. Nor can we doubt that the Lord would have all His people, in every age, understand that the secret of comfort following His ascension is to be instant in prayer. He would have them know that, if they cannot see Him with their bodily eyes any longer, they can talk with Him and, through Him, have special access to God. "Ask and ye shall receive," He proclaims to all His people in every age; "that your joy may be full."

Let the lesson sink down deeply into our hearts. Of all the list of Christian duties, none has such abounding encouragement as prayer. It is a duty which

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<sup>1</sup>Taken, with editing, from *Expository Thoughts on John*, vol 3. Here are some of Ryle's comments on John 16:16-24.

concerns all. High and low, rich and poor, learned and unlearned – all must pray. It is a duty for which all are accountable. All cannot read, or hear, or sing; but all who have the spirit of adoption can pray. Above all, it is a duty in which everything depends on the heart and motive within. Our words may be feeble and ill-chosen, and our language broken and ungrammatical, and not worthy to be written down. But if the heart is right, that does not matter. He that sits in heaven can spell out the meaning of every petition sent up in the name of Jesus, and can make the asker know and feel that he receives.

If we know these things, happy are we if we do them. Let prayer in the name of Jesus be a daily habit with us every morning and evening of our lives. Keeping up that habit, we shall find strength for duty, comfort in trouble, guidance in perplexity, hope in sickness, and support in death. Faithful is He that promised, “Your joy shall be full”. And He will keep His word, if we ask in prayer.

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## The Ferintosh Burn<sup>1</sup>

A Letter from *John Macdonald*

Tain, 11 July 1843

My dear John,

Having been engaged here, assisting at the communion, I have been requested by Mr & Mrs John MacLeod to give their son, Mr George, a few lines of introduction to you. From all I can learn, he is an amiable, agreeable and well-considered young man. He goes to India, expecting to be employed in the indigo line. I do not know whether he will reside in Calcutta, or whether you can have much opportunity of seeing him – but it will be gratifying to me, if you have it in your reach to show him some kindness, and to be of use to him in any way. Perhaps you are aware that his mother and you are cousins – she being a cousin to Mrs Taylor, in this place.

I left the family, at home, well, last week. They now live at Ryefield. And, since the Disruption, I have pitched my tent in the Burn. We are setting about getting a church erected. Forbes of Culloden, who is out-and-out with

<sup>1</sup>This letter was written by Dr Macdonald of Ferintosh, on the Black Isle, to his son, Rev John Macdonald of Calcutta, introducing to him a George MacLeod, who was to go out to India, and asking him to help Mr MacLeod. It is an interesting letter, particularly because it refers to the first Free Church communion at Ferintosh Burn, which was used for worship by the Church of Scotland for many years prior to 1843, when congregations were too large for the church building to hold them. A facsimile copy of the letter, which has not been previously published, has come into our hands from a friend who received it from a direct descendant of Dr Macdonald. NMR

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the Free Church, having kindly granted us a site in any part of his property in the parish which we might fix upon. About three weeks ago, we held the communion in the Burn – when a large crowd attended (some say 12 000). This was the first communion observed, in connection with the Free Church, in the North of Scotland – and I verily believe the Lord was present.

Love to Ann and the children.

I remain, my dear John, your affectionate father,  
John Macdonald

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## Obituary

### Mr Dick Vermeulen

**D**irk Peter Vermeulen was born on 18 November 1928 in Maarssen, a town in the middle of the Netherlands. He grew up in a Christian home, and later studied to be a journalist. However, he was drafted into the army in the late 1940s during the Indonesian War of Independence, and in this land far away from home Dirk drove a military truck and experienced serious combat. At this time of his life, sadly, he had no true religion, and worse, to use his own words, in his outward conduct he “lived like the heathen”. At the end of the war, he wrote to his parents that he was coming back to Holland, but afterwards they were surprised – and disappointed – to receive another letter saying that he was going to New Zealand first, for two years, to see if the place suited him. But, as it turned out in God’s providence, Dirk was not coming back to Holland.

In New Zealand Dirk was known as Dick, and he worked on a dairy farm in Matamata. At this time, in 1953, his brothers Chris and John emigrated to New Zealand, and in 1954 Dick married Miss Joan Anderson. Economic conditions remained poor in Holland, and his parents and other family members arrived in Wellington, on 24 February 1956, where Dick welcomed them. Together they took a train to Napier, and the next day they continued to Gisborne. There the Vermeulens were able to stay with the van Dorps (including the late Rev Johannes van Dorp), who were cousins of Dick.

That Sabbath his cousin Jan van Dorp read a sermon by Robert Murray M’Cheyne. During these days, Rev William MacLean was not yet minister in Gisborne, and sermons were being read to the congregation. Jan’s father, Cees van Dorp, also spoke to Dick about the needs of his soul. Known fondly as “old Mr van Dorp”, Cees van Dorp was eager to speak about spiritual things, often reminding people he met that they must prepare for eternity, even directly asking whether they knew the Lord. This Sabbath proved an

occasion of awakening for Dick, bringing him to consider his sinful condition and need of salvation. After going home to Matamata, he was under so much concern about his soul that he decided to go and visit “old Mr van Dorp” again, travelling about 320 km to Gisborne. It was then, after his conversations with “old Mr van Dorp”, on the Sabbath, that Dick Vermeulen was converted.

When he came home to Matamata, he was a different man. The radio was thrown out as well as his worldly books. Others noticed and were struck with the change – he had so suddenly turned from his worldliness. He was now keeping the Sabbath, and he began holding services in his home, reading sermons by C H Spurgeon translated into Dutch, to his parents and family. He was very fond of Psalm 25:7: “Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to Thy mercy remember Thou me for Thy goodness’ sake, O Lord”. Though he had been a rebellious youth, the Lord had mercy upon him, and Dick Vermeulen experienced the goodness of the Lord, revealed so wondrously in the gospel.

Dick eventually bought his own farm in Reporoa, around 1960, with the help of the Government. Because he was milking cows, he found himself unable to go to Gisborne or Auckland for communions. But one year there was a significant drought, and then he was free to go to the communion in Gisborne. Dick’s younger brother Peter had already become a communicant member in the Gisborne Congregation. It was on this occasion, 28 March 1964, that Dick was led to seek communicant membership, and as he was known to have been changed for a number of years, he was admitted into full membership and his name was added to the communion roll.

Times were not always easy for Dick, who had to work in the forestry industry for extra income. But he continued to keep the Sabbath, by this time listening to sermons by Rev William MacLean on reel-to-reel tapes. These he obtained from his cousin Cor van Dorp. He also diligently taught his children from the Scriptures and *The Shorter Catechism*.

Dick Vermeulen took an interest in the Wellington Congregation, where some of his family members lived. He searched the Wellington region for a church building and ultimately was instrumental in purchasing a building in Tawa in the early 1980s. There he was ordained and inducted as an elder in the Wellington Congregation on 27 July 1980. Once a month he travelled from his home in Reporoa to Wellington to conduct the worship services. He continued to serve there as an elder until 2002, and later he was an assessor elder, from 2009 to 2019. Dick was also among the first to suggest that the Wellington congregation should move to Carterton, where all the members of the congregation lived latterly. The Tawa building was sold in 2014 and a suitable building was purchased in Carterton, of which he became a trustee.

Dick had a special affinity for small congregations; he was convinced that “a little one shall become a thousand” (Is 60:22) in the Lord’s good time. Accordingly, he encouraged younger office-bearers and was often in prayer for the Carterton congregation, as well as the other congregations within the bounds of the Presbytery.

In the beginning of 1988 Dick Vermeulen read every month a notice in *The Free Presbyterian Magazine* requesting help for mission work in Kenya and Malawi. Then a special plea went out to New Zealand and eventually it reached Mr Vermeulen. It was about this time that he sold his farm and had “no concrete ideas about his future occupation”, to use his own words. He then offered his services to the Jewish and Foreign Missions Committee and arrangements were made for him to meet Rev D B Macleod in Kenya. Together they conducted services and eventually a Free Presbyterian mission was established in both countries.

Zealous for the cause of Christ in Africa, and very generous to the locals with his money, he contributed to the spiritual and temporal wellbeing of the African community, building small churches and houses. He diligently taught in Sabbath schools and would often teach the children about human depravity, asking them, for example, whether their parents had taught them how to lie. Mr Vermeulen instructed them well, for they would shake their heads to indicate, No; and when he asked, “What made you do it?” they would all put their hand over their heart and say, “Because it is in here!” The work went on and he laboured in that continent until the mid-1990s. The local people remained fond of him and called him, “Mr Dick”. He was known for his enthusiasm, hard work, and perseverance amid many difficulties.

During his time in Africa, Dick frequently sent newsletters home to New Zealand, informing loved ones of events there. About 90 typed pages in all, the newsletters make interesting reading. Readers at home would no doubt have been intrigued by Dick’s numerous travels, building repairs, taxiing people for medical help, and interactions with different characters. Sometimes disappointed by setbacks, and at other times admiring the providence of God, Dick pointed out the poverty and suffering of many Africans, and their great need for both spiritual and temporal mercies. As he witnessed the stark ignorance of some of the natives, he appreciated even more the privilege of growing up in a sound church and being “brought up in the truth from our youth”. This is a great reminder for young people to value their privileges in the means of grace, as well as showing that they are inexcusable for their neglect.

When he returned from the mission work in Africa, Dick Vermeulen and his wife Joan moved to Tauranga. There he began holding worship services,

and the first Kirk Session meeting of the new preaching station was held in 1997. Later, in 2003, he was inducted as an elder in the congregation and, when several people were newly added to their number, he instructed them in the Reformed doctrine, worship and practice of the Church. He emphasised seeking first the kingdom of God and often quoted, “Them that honour Me I will honour, and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed” (1 Sam 2:30).

He reminded the congregation of their dependence on divine power for all things and told them, “We can’t move our little finger without God. It is in Him that we live and move and have our being.” In speaking of God’s sovereignty in the election of sinners to salvation he would say, “Are we not sovereign [so to speak] when we choose which charity we will support? How much [more] sovereign is God then?” He warned about God’s chastisements, that we reap what we sow, and we only trouble ourselves [by our discontent and departure from God] and recalled that his own father used to say, “If you won’t listen, you will feel”. But he also encouraged the little group in Tauranga by referring to Romans 8:28, “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose”. He often expressed his amazement at the goodness and mercy of God by saying, “What a wonder!”

Mr Vermeulen was also actively involved in work for the Trinitarian Bible Society, and in 1996 he became the chairman for the New Zealand branch of TBS. In the late 1990s an effort was underway to reprint the 1868 version of the Maori Bible. Dick Vermeulen took the initiative in obtaining the use of an old copy of the Maori Bible, having microfilms made, and helping with digitisation and proofreading. Completing a three-year course in the Maori language, he was respected among the Maori themselves and given the title of elder, *kaumatua*.

Mr Vermeulen looked forward to attending communions and always enjoyed hearing the preaching of the gospel. He was edifying in spiritual conversation and encouraged younger elders and ministers in their work. He was an assessor elder for the Singapore Congregation, where he assisted in the formation and development of the congregation, giving special encouragement to the new office-bearers. Three times Mr Vermeulen represented the Asia Pacific Presbytery (then known as the Australia and New Zealand Presbytery) at the Synod: in 1992, 1995 and 2001. Serving as Presbytery Treasurer for a time, Dick also supported the youth conferences within the Presbytery, and was helpful in presenting papers. He was known for his hopeful prayers and often spoke of the bright prospects of the Church. He knew that there is no uncertainty in the promise of God. In quoting or read-

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ing from the metrical version of Psalm 22, he gave special emphasis to the word “shall”, as in: “The meek shall eat, and shall be filled . . . they shall come, and they shall declare His truth and righteousness / Unto a people yet unborn, and that He hath done this.” God’s purposes for the Church will certainly come to pass.

On 29 August 2019 Dick Vermeulen died quietly in Wellington. He was always conscious of the brevity of life and the reality of eternity. In his July 1991 newsletter he wrote: “Well, another month has flown by – days that have gone past which we will not be able to live again in the flesh, days nearer to a never-ending eternity. How much need there is to consider the prayer of the Psalmist when he asks the Lord to teach him to number his days, that he may know how frail he is (Ps 39:4), so that we follow not our natural inclinations and be like the man in Luke 12 and be called ‘a fool’ on our last day upon this earth for neglecting the everlasting wellbeing of our never-dying souls.”

Dick Vermeulen did not neglect the welfare of his soul. Instead, we believe he laid up treasure in heaven and is now enjoying that blessedness with Christ. To his numerous family we extend our sympathy, desiring that all who knew him might follow his example of faith and service. (Rev) *J D Smith*

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## Book Review

*Trees of Frankincense, Free Presbyterians of East Sutherland and North-East Ross*, compiled by Ruth Daubney, 356 pages; hardback, £24.95; paperback, £15.99; obtainable from the Free Presbyterian Bookroom.

This attractive book contains accounts of over 60 men and women who lived in, or were at least connected with, the districts mentioned in the title, more specifically the area covered by the present Free Presbyterian congregation meeting in Dornoch and Bonar Bridge. All the ministers who served in the congregations now combined into the one just mentioned, and had already passed away at the time when the book was compiled, are represented here. So are many other men and women, living in these districts during the period covered by the book, who professed Christ.

A wealth of spiritual experience is recorded here, and there are many interesting sidelights on the church history of these districts over the best part of 200 years. Most of the accounts are taken from obituaries which appeared in *The Free Presbyterian Magazine*. Occasionally some extra information is given in footnotes. The title of the book is taken from the Song of Solomon 4:14.

There follow here some extracts from a few of the obituaries, chosen almost at random; they help to illustrate the spiritual quality of those whose memory is recorded in the volume under review.

We begin with Angus Gray of Lairg: "He said: 'I was three years an elder before I knew anything of the power of grace. I was often praying when I was a boy, and when I became a young man I had great pleasure in praying in the woods. I was not taken up with vain company and was on good terms with myself. One day I met Mr MacGillivray, the minister, who said to me, "I think it is your duty to join the Church; you are making a private profession when you go to pray in the woods, and it is your duty now to make a public profession". I told him I had no thought of that, but he said, "Go and pray in the woods about it, and tell me afterwards". I did as he wished me and had very joyful, light thoughts about it. Soon after that I was called to pray in meetings, and people were thinking well of me, and I was of the same opinion myself. By and by they made me an elder.

"I was not long in that office when I began to know the strength of sin and the terrors of the Lord. I fell into such a deep thought that I could not read nor pray, and a spirit of perfect atheism came over me. I could not believe that there was a God. I felt very miserable, and had it not been that I had a wife and family I would have fled from the country. One day, as I was going along the road driving a horse and cart, the words, "Our God is a consuming fire", came like thunder. These words filled me with fear, and I felt as if between two hedges, an angry God on the one side and the broken law on the other, and my heart filled with enmity against both. For some months I was in that fearful pit. Then it was He sent His Word and healed me. The words in 1 John 4, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins", were made peculiarly precious to me then. Then I had great joy in the finished work of the Redeemer, and you see I needed a sore cure for the false religion of my younger days, when I thought my love and joy and prayers had gotten me the land.'

"On being asked how long this happiness remained, and if the atheism returned, he continued, 'I have often been troubled with the unbelief of my heart, but never had again the same spirit of atheism, and my joy lasted a considerable time. Sometime after my deliverance I heard Dr Kennedy preach in Creich, and he spoke of the love of Christ, and so described my case that I was drunk with joy, and when I came out of the church I might as well have been in a foreign land for all I knew where I was.' . . .

"Although he attained the great age of 94 years, his faculties remained unimpaired to the end. He had an unusually deep sense of sin. Some months

before the end he complained bitterly . . . of his great sinfulness, but he said his hope was built upon that word: 'I, even I, am He that blotteth out Thy transgressions'.

"The last days of his life were by far the most joyous. His cup was at last made to run over. . . . The doctrine which towards the very end was most firmly fixed in his mind was the love of the Father."

Andrew Tallach was an elder in Dornoch, before he was appointed a missionary in Lochinver and later in Raasay. Rev Neil Cameron wrote, "An outstanding characteristic of Mr Tallach was the patience with which he could bear fiery trials and reproaches. He very seldom said one word to defend his own interests, but could not bear that God's truth and cause should be allowed to suffer so far as it was in his power to vindicate the same. 'When He suffered, He threatened not, but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously', was truly his way in dealing with such as opposed him.

"In his duties as an elder he was unbending in the use of discipline, believing that by so doing he would not only maintain peace in God's house, but that it was also his duty in performing his ordination vows to God and men. This was true of him from the day he was ordained to that office. It was quite evident that he did this not from a vindictive spirit against any man. In carrying on his work as a missionary he knew nothing among the people, and did not desire to know anything, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified. This was the object for which he laboured from day to day. In carrying out this purpose, he spent much time in prayer; sometimes he spent the whole day in private prayer and meditation. . . .

"His mental vigour and solid grasp of the doctrines of grace, both as to practice and experience, came to light very vividly when speaking at fellowship meetings on the Friday of communion seasons. He kept always to the point raised . . . and never interfered in harangues on extraneous matters. Precision in the treatment of the experience of the Lord's people, with a peculiar power of adaptation of Scripture thereto, made his exercises on such occasions very helpful to the poor and needy. His real aim was to 'strengthen . . . the weak hands and confirm the feeble knees. . . .' Neil Mackinnon, Portree, who was, without exaggeration, a prince among the laymen of the Church, held Andrew Tallach in great veneration and esteem, and often spoke of him as a dear brother in Christ."

We conclude with Ellen Logan, from the parish of Creich, where Bonar Bridge is the main village: "Ellen must have become the subject of a saving change very early in life, for she was heard to say that the greatest realisation she had of the love of God shed abroad in the heart was when, as a girl on her knees, she prayed by her own bedside. That these early experiences

were not of the evanescent kind, her deep and solid piety during a long life amply demonstrated. . . .

“There was a large number of prayerful men who conducted prayer meetings in several parts of the parish week by week. The prayer meeting on which Ellen Logan waited was that at Ausdale, conducted by Gustavus Munro, Hugh Graham, William Murray and other eminently pious men. To the very last it was a joy to her when she recalled and could rehearse to her friends what Gustavus Munro said, or any of these worthies said. Once, she related, she went to the prayer meeting with the feeling that she was spiritually much more dead than alive. To her surprise, one of the first things Gustavus Munro said was: ‘You are here thinking you should not be present at all, such is the death you find yourself in; but if you were dead, you would not feel yourself dead’ – or words to the same effect. A saying of Hugh Graham’s that she often quoted in her heaviest troubles was in the sense that: ‘We are not pleased when we have trouble, neither are we quite pleased when we are without trouble’.”

The book is warmly recommended.

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## Notes and Comments

### The Fatherhood of God

Rev Stephen Cottrell, Archbishop of York, in his opening speech at the Church of England’s General Synod in York in July, suggested that using the words, “Our Father”, at the beginning of what we term the Lord’s Prayer could be questionable. He said, “I know the word *father* is problematic for those whose experience of earthly fathers has been destructive and abusive, and for all of us who have laboured rather too much from an oppressively patriarchal grip on life”. He went on to say that he is impressed with the word *our*; “not ‘my God’; not ‘your God’; ‘our God’,”. He used this to urge Synod members to be brotherly and sisterly in their discussions.

The Church of England currently has a commission examining gendered language and avers that “Christians have long recognised that God is neither male nor female, yet the various ways of addressing and describing God found in Scripture have not always been reflected in our worship”.

Some questioned the Archbishop’s approach; Rev Dr Ian Paul said, “But this is how Jesus reveals God to us. We are not at liberty to reject His clear and consistent teaching of Scripture.” And Canon Dr Chris Sugden, Chair of the conservative Anglican Mainstream group, said, “Is the Archbishop of York saying Jesus was wrong or that Jesus was not pastorally aware? . . . If

people have had a difficult relationship with their human father, then the option open to them is to say, You can rediscover the true nature of fatherhood through Christ.” But others agreed with the Archbishop.

Once again, the hierarchy of the Church of England is being swayed by the fashion of the times rather than being anchored by Scripture. They treat the Bible as a human composition that can be updated at will, rather than the inspired, infallible, inerrant Word of God.

Even Vladimir Putin, the Russian leader, in an address to the Russian people in February, mocked the Church of England for its gender-neutral approach to God and for same sex marriage blessings, as an example of confusion in the West.

It is shocking when the second most senior bishop in the Church of England questions the wisdom of Him who is “Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace” (Is 9:6). FRD

### **“It is Written: Cold and Heat . . . Shall not Cease”**

Climate change, global warming, and temperature extremes are a few of the vast array of terms that have come into our vocabulary in recent years. Among significant sectors of society, they have replaced other well-known, scripturally meaningful words, such as Creator, righteousness, sin, repentance, and Holy Bible. Media outlets regularly promote provocative reports on climate change with gloomy, sensational headlines, bombarding us with exhortations to support the latest initiatives to stop the earth’s progress towards the catastrophic scenarios that many confidently forecast will be experienced shortly unless drastic preventative action is taken.

Whilst the reality of temperature changes and their effects in different parts of the world are not to be denied, or underestimated, this relentless barrage of ungodly and humanistic material advocating this new atheistic “religion” is to be greatly regretted. Is it thought that God, the Creator of the heavens and of the earth, is no longer overseeing every aspect of His creation with infinite care?

Are things happening today in the world that He had not foreseen and provided for from eternity? Could it be that the infinite God, who spoke the billions of stars and planets into being, and placed each of them individually in their perfect orbit, has after 6000 years withdrawn His sovereign care and control over certain aspects of His vast, intricate creation? If our God is not the same yesterday, today and for ever, we need to change the words of *The Shorter Catechism*: “God is a spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth”, and then close and turn away from our Bibles, as not inspired, reliable or authoritative.

No! “Let God be true, but every man a liar” (Rom 3:4). It is “through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God” (Heb 11:3). The Lord has declared, “I am the Lord, I change not” (Mal 3:6). Man needs to be reminded of the very first words of the Bible, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth”. He is God, the Almighty God, the Creator: it is His Creation; He created all things in six days, and all very good.

Once more we hear “the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing”, as “the kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against His anointed” (Ps 2:1,2). Biblically understood, the whole of this rebellious movement is but an echo from the past. The blasphemous question, “Hath God said?” is being asked again. At first, it was slyly whispered in the ear of Eve at the dawn of creation, in the Garden of Eden. It is now a roaring, thunderous, profane declaration: Planet earth is so ill, so very sick: it requires its inhabitants to save it!

The egocentricity of man has gone mad! Man thinks he knows so much but, alas, comparatively, he knows nothing at all! Not having any scriptural understanding of his rebellious and depraved nature, or his bondage to sin and Satan, man naturally displays his atheistic arrogance and enmity. Vainly, he tries to forget and deny the Creator and Benefactor in whom he lives, moves, and has his being. Though fallen man would deny it, He is the One on whom man is so utterly dependent, and to whom he is obligated under the covenant of works to render all honour and glory. Sinful men and women further evidence their foolish irrationality in despising Him as their only hope in this lost world. The Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour of sinners, is the One alone able to save from sin. Soon this Saviour will be the Judge before whom all will stand. How apt therefore are the words, “But he that sinneth against Me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate Me love death” (Proverbs 8:36)!

God declares, “While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease” (Gen 8:22). These words of Holy Scripture convey the Creator’s gracious purpose of preserving His world until the end of time. The old world was destroyed by the flood. The new world will continue until the end of the age under His perfect and comprehensive control, notwithstanding all the many variations in cold and heat that man may experience, and has experienced, at different times over the centuries.

The earliest official recordings of the climate in the United Kingdom date back to the late nineteenth century. However, information is readily available on fluctuations in temperature in the preceding 1000 years. During this extensive period were the Medieval Warm Period (around 950-1250 AD) and the Little Ice Age (around 1303-1850 AD), both centuries long. There

have been (in the Lord's goodness) continuous times of "seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night" since the Flood. These seasons – including those of cold and heat – we are assured will continue until the end of time.

For now, the war continues. Sinful men and women, as the pawns of Satan, continue their foolish fight against God. However, the outcome is sure. Christ has been victorious. All the forces of evil will be overthrown. God will get all praise, honour and glory to Himself!

The United Kingdom had been until very recently recognised as a global leader in climate-change activity. May the Lord graciously work amongst us that soon we may be seen to be a global leader in the proclamation of the true gospel of Jesus Christ to the peoples of the earth – so that, by the blessing of the Lord, multitudes of our fellow sinners throughout the world may be turned unto the Lord Jesus Christ in repentance and faith, to the glory and praise of His great, holy and blessed Name! *DPR*

### **Mr Nigel Farage and the Banks**

For at least 15 years, according to reports, British banks have been closing people's accounts because of their outspoken political or religious opinions. Victims of this persecuting practice have come from a wide spectrum of views, but often the issue has been opinions that they have expressed on homosexuality and transgender. The most recent victim was Nigel Farage, the former leader of the Brexit Party. Mr Farage, however, had enough political clout to turn the tables on Coutts Bank, who had closed his account, and to secure the resignation of two leading figures.

There has been a considerable public backlash against the banks, and even the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) is insisting on an independent investigation. The executive director of the FCA, it transpires, is himself a prominent homosexual and transgender activist. Mr Farage is not a notably religious man but once again he has been used in providence to help the people of Britain. *DWBS*

### **Trinitarian Bible Society's Chinese New Testament**

The first translation of the Bible into Chinese was that of Robert Morrison, a British missionary to China, in 1819. The TBS has reported on their translation work on the Bible in Chinese. "Mandarin Chinese is spoken by approximately 70% of people living in China. Geographically, Mandarin covers a large part of China: from Yunnan in the southwest to Xinjiang in the north-west and Heilongjiang in the north east. It is believed that Chinese is the language with the largest number of native speakers in the world and has the second [largest] number of speakers in total (including native and

non-native speakers). Although the Chinese language has various dialects, such as Cantonese, almost all dialects use the same written form.”

The Society published the Chinese New Testament earlier this year. In their work on the Old Testament, the translation “team have prepared a first draft translation of Genesis. They are currently translating Exodus and Psalms and are more than halfway through both books. The work is now being assisted on a trial basis by a native Chinese woman who is gifted and experienced in both Biblical Hebrew and translation into Chinese. We are also progressing a version of the New Testament in traditional Chinese characters, which are in common use among many Chinese speakers in the Asian countries beyond mainland China.”

At a time when persecution is increasing in mainland China, it is good that an improved, faithful translation of the Bible is in progress.

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## Church Information

### Theological Conference

This year’s Theological Conference will be held, God willing, in Inverness, on Tuesday and Wednesday, October 24-25, with Rev Roderick Macleod as chairman. It is expected that the following papers will be read, all in public:

**Turretin and the Satisfaction of Christ** *Rev A W MacColl*

**Samuel Rutherford and the Resolutioner Controversy** *Mr M A Vogan*

**The Word *World* in the Writings of the Apostle John** *Rev C Hembd*

**The Book of Psalms** *Rev D W B Somerset*

**Augustine of Hippo and Pelagianism** *Rev K M Watkins*

*(Rev) D W B Somerset, Convener, Training of the Ministry Committee*

### Synod Committee Meetings

Synod committees will meet, DV, as follows:

#### **Tuesday, October 3:**

09.10 - 09.40 Church Interests Committee

09.50 - 11.20 Training of the Ministry Committee

11.30 - 12.30 Sabbath Observance Committee

12.40 - 13.40 Overseas Committee

13.50 - 14.50 Outreach Committee

15.00 - 17.00 Religion and Morals Committee

18.00 - 19.30 Publications and Bookroom Committee

19.40 - 20.40 Welfare of Youth Committee

#### **Wednesday, October 4:**

10.00 - 13.00 Finance Committee

*(Rev) K M Watkins, Clerk of Synod*

## FREE PRESBYTERIAN PLACES OF WORSHIP

### Scotland

- Aberdeen:** 2 Alford Place, AB10 1YD, Sabbath 11 am, 6 pm; Tues, 7.15 pm. Rev D W B Somerset BSc DPhil, 18 Carlton Place, Aberdeen, AB15 4BQ; tel: 01224 645250.
- Bracadale Duirinish-Strath: Struan:** Sabbath 12 noon. **Glendale and Vatten:** Sabbath 6pm, alternately. Thurs 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; Wed 7.30 pm. **Beaully (Balblair):** Sabbath 6.30 pm, Thurs 7.30 pm. Rev A W MacColl MA PhD, 10 Achany Road, Dingwall, IV15 9JB; tel: 01349 866546.
- Dornoch:** Sabbath 11.30 am. **Bonar:** Sabbath 6 pm. Wed 7.30 pm (alternately in Dornoch and Bonar). **Lairg:** Church and Manse; Sabbath 3.30 pm as intimated. 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; Thurs 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 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**, Thurs 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; Wed 7.30 pm. Rev R MacLeod BA, 4 Laurel Park Close, Glasgow, G13 4ND; 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; Thurs 7 pm. Rev W A Weale, F P Manse, Bridge Street, KW12 6YG; tel: 01847 831758. **Thurso:** Duncan Street; Sabbath 3 pm; **Strathly:** 6 pm, first and third Sabbaths of month.
- Harris (North): Tarbert:** Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm. **Tarbert and Stockinish:** Wed 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; Wed 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; Wed 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, Tues 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; Wed 7.30 pm. Rev D A Ross. F P Manse, Laide, IV22 2NB; tel: 01445 731340.
- Lochcarron:** Sabbath 11 am, 6 pm; Wed 7 pm. Manse.
- Lochinver:** Church. No F P services at present.
- Ness:** Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm; Wed 7 pm. Manse tel: 01851 810228. Contact Rev K M Watkins; tel: 01859 520271.
- North Tolsta:** Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm; Thurs 7.30 pm. Manse tel: 01851 890325. Contact Rev J R Tallach; tel: 01851 702501.
- North Uist:** Bayhead; Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm; Thurs 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; Wed 7.30 pm. Rev A B MacLean, 5 Main Road, Luncarty, PH1 3EP; tel: 01738 828762.
- Portree:** Sabbath 12 noon, 6.30 pm; Wed 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 12 noon; **Applecross:** Sabbath 6pm. Tues 7 pm (alternately in Shieldaig and Applecross, as intimated). Shieldaig manse tel: 01520 755259, Applecross manse tel: 01520 744411. Contact Rev D A Ross; tel: 01445 731340.
- Staffin:** Sabbath 12 noon, 5 pm; Tues 7.30 pm. Manse: Clachan, Staffin, IV51 9H. Contact Rev J B Jardine; tel: 01859 502253.
- Stornoway:** Matheson Road, Sabbath 11 am, 6.30 pm; Thurs 7.30 pm. **Achmore:** Sabbath 12 noon; Tues 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; Wed 12 noon. Manse tel: 01851 672251. Contact Rev K M Watkins; tel: 01859 520271.
- Ullapool:** Sabbath 11 am, 6 pm; Wed 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; Wed 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); Wed 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; Tues 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 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 Levytskyi; tel: 00 38 048 785 19 24; e-mail: dlevytskyi@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.

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

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

**New Canaan**: Church. Rev T Mwedzi.

**Zenka**: Church.

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