

The Free Presbyterian Magazine

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

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

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Communions

January: First Sabbath: Nkayi; **Fourth:** 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. **Fifth:** Ingwenya, North Tolsta.

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

May: First Sabbath: Aberdeen, Donsa, Grafton, Leverburgh, London; **Second:** Kinlochbervie; **Third:** Edinburgh; **Fourth:** Chiedza.

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

July: First Sabbath: Beaulay; **Second:** Auckland, Bonar Bridge; **Third:** Applecross, Fort William; **Fourth:** Cameron, Struan.

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

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

October: First Sabbath: Grafton, Lochcarron, North Tolsta; **Second:** Gairloch, Staffin; **Third:** London, Odessa; **Fourth:** Edinburgh, Gisborne, Mbuma.

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

December: Third Sabbath: Bulawayo, Santa Fe.

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Hope, and Its Absence

This article has been triggered by the slogan on a T-shirt I saw recently. Printed on the T-shirt were the words, “NO HOPE”. Perhaps it was qualified by other words on the garment, which was too far away for me to read them.

Perhaps the slogan was not intended to be serious, but it does represent the outlook of many people who feel altogether discouraged by the difficulties they are experiencing. The devil will often use such feelings of discouragement to tempt people to escape from their situation by taking their own lives. We must remember that the Saviour made it plain that the evil one has been a murderer from the beginning, and he has not ceased that evil activity, as he goes about “seeking whom he may devour” (1 Pet 5:8).

When the going becomes difficult, many people encourage themselves by saying, Things cannot get any worse. But one’s circumstances may indeed get worse. How thankful people should be that they are not in a lost eternity, that they are still alive and may yet obtain mercy from God. Paul speaks of those who are “without hope” and he links that situation with being “without God” and “without Christ” (Eph 2:12). It is the state of all who have not been born again, though many have a hope that is not a “good hope through grace” (2 Th 2:16).

But the Ephesian Christians to whom Paul was writing had been brought near to God “by the blood of Christ”. As John Calvin expressed it, commenting on Ephesians 2:13, “The blood of Christ has taken away the quarrel which existed between them and God, and from being enemies had made them sons”. They had been delivered from their sins through the death of Christ. He had died in their place; He had endured the punishment that they deserved because of their sins; He had taken their guilt and borne it away. So they were no longer without hope; they could expect God’s blessing throughout the rest of their lives in this world.

Even in view of death, they did not need to be without hope; Christ had gone before them; He had ascended to heaven; He had gone to prepare a place for them. And when death would remove them from this world, the

prospect was not at all hopeless, for He had gone before them and would welcome them to eternal glory in these terms: “Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord” (Mt 25:21).

If hopelessness involves mental illness, of course medical help should be sought. But the medical help does not take away the need for the gospel – and for the gospel to be blessed to the sufferer’s soul. What encouragement there is in the fact that God is merciful, that He is kind to those who are in need, even in desperate need. God in infinite mercy has provided deliverance for the guilty, to those who can have no hope in themselves, who cannot earn the forgiveness of even one sin. But the provision that God has made is free; it is, emphatically, “without money and without price” (Is 55:1). Though it may seem altogether discouraging to emphasise human inability in the realm of salvation, the fact that God is ready to show mercy should take away completely any discouragement that the sinner may feel.

What is more, while no sinner is able to save himself or herself, Jesus Christ is altogether able to deliver sinners *completely* from the wrath to come. Every sinner who trusts in Him – who will obey the gospel call, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved” (Acts 16:31) – will find that Christ’s sacrifice is completely sufficient to take away all his guilt. And His obedience to the whole law of God was fully accepted by God the Father as perfect and so is put to the account of every believing sinner. How this should encourage the hope of the believer! It is certain that all who trust in the Saviour that God has appointed will be brought to heaven; they will be brought there because the Saviour’s work is perfect. He will never forsake those who put their trust in Him.

To confirm that Christ has provided a complete salvation we may refer to the verse, “He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Heb 7:25). This is because Christ has “an unchangeable priesthood”; His appointment to that office is permanent. Yes, He finished His work at Calvary in offering up Himself as a sacrifice that satisfied divine justice, on behalf of those whom He represented there. But His high-priestly work is not finished.

His work of intercession continues. As the Old Testament high priest brought the blood of the sacrifice into the most holy place on the Day of Atonement in Israel, so the Great High Priest of the New Testament age is continually presenting the merits of His work of redemption before His Father in heaven. This is Christ’s intercession. What encouragement this continual intercession should bring to the believer! How it should keep hope alive, even in the direst of circumstances! How it should give absolute

certainty to all the promises, such as: “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Heb 13:5).

No doubt there are many in this generation who really are convinced that there is no hope for them. But let us remember that the gospel is a suitable message for those who have no hope. It points them, if they come in contact with the gospel, to an all-powerful Saviour who “is able to save to the uttermost”. There is no limit to what He can do in the salvation of a sinner, no matter how hopeless such an individual’s situation may seem to be, not least to themselves.

It was 500 years ago, in 1525, that William Tyndale’s translation of the New Testament into English was first published. It was the first to be translated directly from the original Greek (the translation associated with John Wycliffe was from Latin). Tyndale continued his work of translation until 1535, when he was living as an exile in Antwerp. He was betrayed to the authorities and sentenced to death. No doubt he had, by grace, a good hope of his soul being brought to heaven, but we have a record of his hope for the spread of the gospel. He was allowed to pray briefly before he was strangled and his body burned. One petition has been preserved: “Lord, open the King of England’s eyes”. And the eyes of Henry VIII were opened to the extent that he permitted the Bible in English to circulate in his kingdom.

As the earlier part of this article was being written, the members of the Scottish Parliament were debating the Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults (Scotland) Bill, which would allow patients to request medical assistance to end their own life. This would be permitted if the person had a terminal illness and if two doctors had confirmed that the patient was mentally fit to make the decision. Such a patient would have no hope of experiencing any good during future days. Instead of committing their remaining days in this life to a gracious God, the patient would be seeking to take control of the time and manner of their death – probably without any thought of what lies beyond; one MSP saw the Bill as “giving a person bodily autonomy”, rejecting the teaching of Scripture that God is ruling in all our circumstances.

Those who make use of this option, if the Bill is passed into law, would be displaying their lack of hope in God at a particularly solemn time – when they are so close to eternity. But how irresponsible it would be if parliamentarians in Scotland – or those in Westminster legislating on a similar ungodly proposal for England and Wales – were to give authority to doctors to make available to patients the wherewithal to kill themselves.

Sadly, MSPs voted in favour of the Bill by 71 votes to 56, but there are further stages in the procedure and further votes before the Bill can become law. May the Lord prevent it!

God Manifest in the Flesh¹

A Sermon by William Trail

1 Timothy 3:16. *And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh.*

A mystery is either something which lay concealed, perhaps for ages, and would probably never have been discovered unless it was revealed; or something which, even when revealed, the human mind cannot fully comprehend. While still hidden among the deep things of God, a mystery is not known to us, even as a bare fact. It might be likened to remoter stars which the telescope has not yet brought within the range of our vision; they are illuminating their distant regions, but we do not know of them. And when the mystery is made known, though it then becomes known to us as fact, still it may be shrouded in an obscurity which our feeble reason cannot pierce. It might be compared to one of those remoter stars which more powerful telescopes have now rendered visible to us as a mere point of light. All we know is that the star shines; for what its size may be, or its distance from us, we cannot find out. Its existence we know, but very little more.

Now, the incarnation is a mystery in this double sense, seeing that for long ages it was an unknown fact, and still cannot be fully understood. Until God revealed it, a deep darkness concealed it altogether; even yet clouds and shadows rest upon it. But whatever we really needed to know about this great mystery, in order to our salvation, has been made plain to us. There are dark shadows over the manger at Bethlehem. But if there are shadows, there is also sunlight. And this sunshine falls on the great practical question, How, through the Child who was born there, can a sinner be saved? Where knowledge is really necessary to us, there is no mystery, but revelation shines with unclouded clarity on our needs.

Are we then to quarrel because there is a measure of obscurity over what we do not need to understand, and what we probably could not be made to understand? Seeing God has so formed us, are we to refuse the clear revelation of His will about our salvation, because He has not also brought the incomprehensible mysteries of His infinite Godhead to the level of our finite understandings? Surely it is far more suitable for us to follow so far as the light which we can bear conducts us, than to complain presumptuously that we lack the light which we neither require or could endure.

Thus would we repel the infidel's objections to the doctrine of the incarnation, because it is a mystery. But we glory in the fact that it contains

¹Abridged from Trail's *Christian Graces*. Trail (1819-74) was minister of the Tron Free Church in Glasgow when this sermon was preached, on a communion Sabbath.

mysteries. Turning round on the enemies of the Bible, we would ask them what they would have said if it contained no mystery and we could understand it completely. Then the infidel would assuredly have been the first to maintain that the book might have been written by man. And the infidel would have been right, for the mysteries in the Bible are among the surest indications of its inspiration. They are the secret marks which prove the writing was divine – the profound utterances which convince us that the oracle had been spoken by the omniscient One.

Yet the mysteries of revelation not only stamp the Bible to be from God, but they also make it a suitable book for man. His reason, having been blunted by sin, needs to be made alive; and what is so fitted to stimulate devout and sober questions as mysteries? His reason has also to be humbled: and when is the spirit of the worshipper prostrated in deepest reverence but when God's footstool is seen to be shrouded in the solemn gloom of mysteries? Man has to be taught that he not only needs a revelation but also, now that he has a revelation, he still needs illumination from on high. And when will he look up for light from Him who is the Father of lights, but when he sits under the solemn shadows of His mysteries?

The mystery of the incarnation is presented in our text as a historical fact, not only as doctrine. Paul sums up its amazing history in six successive incidents, from when God the Son appeared in the flesh till He was received up into glory. It is a marvellously comprehensive narrative. But we have sometimes thought that we may regard it rather as presenting the great fact of the incarnation as if carried round through the various orders of intelligent beings, both in heaven and on earth, so that each in turn might express their opinion about it. *First*, it is presented to Jehovah Himself: "justified in the spirit". Next it is presented to those exalted creatures who circle His throne: "seen of angels". Then it is brought down to men on earth – first to God's favoured people; for when it is said, "preached unto the Gentiles", what we think of most is how this amazing fact would affect the Jews. Then it is presented to the other nations of the earth: "believed on in the world". What, however, we have to do with at present is the great fact of the incarnation: "God was manifest in the flesh".

1. It was God – the living, personal Jehovah who was thus manifested. God's perfections, or attributes, had already been manifested in the works of creation. His purposes, or thoughts, were expressed in His providence. And the voice of God was heard, not only in what He said Himself and in the inspired words of His prophets. But now more – greatly more – than this was made manifest. God Himself, not merely His perfections, or His voice; or the thoughts and intentions of His heart; but God Himself, His very essence,

became incarnate – was revealed in the flesh. For He who assumed our nature, who in that nature tabernacled among men, was the Son of God. He was, in glory and perfections, the equal of the Father. So, when He spoke, it was God speaking; when He worked, it was God working.

He is the eternal, invisible, infinite One; He who dwells in light that is inaccessible; whom seraphim and cherubim approach with veiled faces; the great Jehovah who, in most august majesty, sits on the throne of the whole universe, and before whom the nations of the earth are as grasshoppers. He is the omnipresent One, whom the heavens of heavens cannot contain; the Incomprehensible and the Almighty, whom by searching no one can find out unto perfection. Is it not an amazing thought that He, God Himself, should have drawn nigh, not in the passing shadows of His glory, but in a human body – living, moving, working, speaking, and mingling among people?

Assuredly there is mystery here. But how sublime the mystery is! Do you say there is lowness and smallness in that manger in Bethlehem? I do not see it in the sublime thought that there lies the Son of God. To my eyes that infant is incarnate Deity. Those infant lips are far more glorious than those of the wisest man, for before long they shall speak as never man spake. Yes, this Child will yet startle the world with wondrous words and mighty deeds. He will not lay aside His humble, human form; yet when in His presence, men shall be made to feel that they are in God's presence. He shall speak to the wild waves of ocean, and they shall obey; to the dead, and they shall hear. Stony hearts shall soften at His touch; iniquity, while raging for His blood, shall blush and sink its head before His frown.

Yes, there is mystery here, but what precious truth is wrapped up within that mystery! How my human soul clings to the thought of Godhead revealed in humanity! God is a Spirit; to Him therefore belong none of the properties of my bodily nature. To what then shall I liken Him, or to what similitude compare him? A pure Spirit, He has no shape or form. How then is my human soul to conceive of Him as a personal being – as without eyes yet seeing, as without ears yet hearing, as without hands yet working? Angels can behold Him and rejoice in Him. What is this to me, for they are spirits; whereas I am a creature of sense, to whom knowledge and even emotion can only enter through the senses? But how can right thoughts of God enter my soul through these?

Sometimes, when I try to think of Him who is a Spirit – a pure, infinite, eternal, omnipresent Spirit – I feel as if my reason is flung back upon me, exhausted by the vain attempt. At other times I start back, rebuked for having clothed Him with bodily forms and attributes, which I know cannot belong to Him. How gladly and gratefully then do I take hold of the doctrine of the

divine incarnated in the human – the eternal, invisible Spirit manifested in humanity. For here in the God-man, as well as the divine, is also a nature of which I can form truer conceptions, with which I can have closer sympathy. It is in this nature that I can now behold my God.

In the God-man, I can now think of God as coming near to me, as speaking to me, as revealing Himself to me, as admitting me to participate in His own unspeakable blessedness, and to be a fellow-worker with Him in His divine works. Beholding God in the face of Christ, I am not now looking on the unclouded blaze of glory which would dazzle and consume me; I am not now approaching a Being whose spiritual immensity seems only to mock my weak efforts to comprehend Him; I am not now listening to the awful utterances which would only confound and silence me. But I am gazing through the human, as through a veil which softens the divine, but does not obscure it. And in the well-known accents of my own humanity, I hear the very voice of the Eternal. And I feel that I can now cast myself, as a repentant child, on the very bosom of God my Father.

2. Here God as manifested may be perceived, not by the understanding only, but even by the senses. “God was manifest in the flesh”, or did plainly and openly show Himself – did make Himself conspicuous to the very eyes of men. Suppose (to use a well-known illustration) I strike my foot against a watch; I am ignorant who made it, but I feel certain that it must have had a maker, and just as certain that he must have been a skilled worker who could contrive so ingenious a measurer of time. In a sense I may be said to see the maker of the watch – that is, he rises up before my mind’s eye as someone who has the knowledge and skill needed to make the watch.

Even so, from the traces of wisdom, power, greatness and benevolence which we find in the world, we infer that its Maker must be a wise, powerful, great and benevolent Being. We did not see the world made, but we are sure it must have had a Maker, and just as sure that He must have sufficient wisdom, power and skill to create. Thus, through nature, we rise up to nature’s God. Though He Himself is invisible, yet we may be said in a sense to see Him – that is, He stands before our mind’s eye as a Being who is infinitely wise, great and good.

In this way God had already manifested Himself to His intelligent creatures. He has never left Himself without a witness. And the invisible things of Him were, from the creation, to be seen clearly – even His eternal power and Godhead. Not that He could be seen by the bodily eye; yet, as reflected by His works, He was visible to the eye of reason. So those who were not morally depraved must see Him, by their inward vision, as wonderful in counsel and excellent in working. And if the world by wisdom knew Him

not, this was not because He had hid Himself from its view, but because its foolish mind was darkened.

But let me now suppose that, while we are examining the watch, someone professing to be its maker were to show himself to us – that he takes the watch to pieces, and then puts piece to piece again precisely as before. In this case we could have little hesitation in concluding that this is really the maker of the watch. Not only does his work speak for him, but he is here also to speak for himself. Even so was it with God when He was manifest in the flesh. The Maker of the world presented Himself to people who were on it. He who could lay His finger on some parts of nature's mechanism, and at His will could arrest or restore its movements, must be the One who planned and made that mechanism. Who had made the eyes of a man but He who by a touch could give back vision to blind eyeballs? Who was the Author of life but He who could restore life to the dead? And who was the great Food-giver that was causing, by His rain, dew and sunshine, the grains dropped from the sower's hand to spring up into plentiful harvests, but He who could multiply a few loaves and fishes to feed the five thousand?

Here then was the Maker of the world manifested to the very senses of men. He stood forth now, not merely as He did before to the eyes of their reason, but to their bodily eyes. And why did He do this? Was it merely to prove to men that He was the Maker of the world? Or was it to claim back to Himself the praises of creation, which the heathen nations had lavished on their dumb idols? Not so, but because God had a greater work to accomplish. God thus openly showed Himself as the Creator and Preserver of the world, so that He might reveal Himself as the Saviour of the world. But why did He first reveal Himself as the Creator and then as the Redeemer? It was in order that men might know, by the very evidence of their eyes, that they were to owe their deliverance from sin and misery to that self-same Being to whom they already owed their existence and preservation – to that very Being against whom, as their Creator, they had so impiously rebelled, and whom for so long they had provoked by their sins.

How great must the work be that the Creator came in person to accomplish! To finish His first works, He had but to speak the word, and it was done. He commanded, and the heavens and the earth were made, with all the hosts of creatures. When the world had to be created, a word was enough – the word of power spoken by the Creator seated on His throne. But when that world is to be redeemed, though its Creator is the Redeemer, a word is not enough. The Redeemer must come down to the scene of His labours; the Son of the Highest must appear in the lowly form of a servant. The Redeemer has not only to speak, but His voice, that called the universe into existence, must be

heard pleading, praying, weeping and uttering plaintive cries. To make the tree on which Jesus hung at Calvary, He had but to speak the word, and from a little seed or tiny sapling, its branches stretched towards the sun; but when He would redeem fallen man, He must be nailed to that tree, and on it He must hang as a spectacle to men and angels – thirsting, groaning, bleeding, suffering – till He dies.

3. Here was a real incarnation: “God was manifest in the flesh”; or as another apostle expresses it, “The Word was made flesh”. You have to consider both the medium and the manner of this divine manifestation.

First, *the medium*: it was the flesh; in other words, an actual human body, in all respects save one, identical with our own. Take away that one attribute of sin, which invariably attaches to the flesh in man, and in all other attributes, Christ’s body did not differ from that of other men. It was truly flesh – composed of the same elements, nourished by the same food, and subject to the same infirmities. It was the same flesh – being born of a woman, and thus drawing its descent from the same fountain, and having the same original ancestry as our own.

There were those, however, even in Paul’s day, who denied that Jesus had come in the flesh. Carried away by certain ideas about matter – that it is inherently imperfect and impure – they would not accept that the sinless Son of God would assume an actual material body, since this, in their view, would have been to clothe His divine purity with a polluted garment. But this idea is decidedly erroneous. Matter is not inherently impure; nor is it an unfit covering for a sinless being. Adam, in his state of innocence, wore it; and so also might the Second Adam, though He is the Holy One.

Further, this idea of Christ having assumed only the semblance of a body struck at the foundation of the scheme of redemption. Hence the reason why the Apostle John so strenuously opposed it: “He that denieth that Jesus is the Christ . . . is antichrist”. It was only if He had a real body that Christ, as the substitute, could suffer for sinners. It was not a phantom body that could hunger and thirst and undergo fatigue for them. It was not simulated lips that could groan in the last agonies of a cruel death for them. It was not the mere image of a corpse that could lie in the grave for them. No, there had to be a real body, whose limbs could truly feel weariness, whose lips could truly suffer thirst, and whose flesh could truly bleed. Therefore it was a real body that Jesus assumed, a body of bones, flesh and nerves, like our own bodies.

But there was more than a body, for the other idea is not less erroneous, which would represent the Son of God as having taken to Himself a true body but not a rational soul. While admitting the reality of the incarnation, this denies its completeness. With a body that was flesh of our flesh and

bone of our bone, Christ would not have been a complete man, if He had been without a human soul. But it was necessary for Him to be fully a man – in His soul as well as in His body. Suppose He had only offered up a body in sacrifice for us, this would only have been to repeat, in a slightly altered form, the old sacrifices under the law? These were mere bodies – irrational animals without reasonable souls. And if the blood of calves and of bulls did not take away sin, neither could the blood of a man, not even of the man Christ Jesus – if all He had to offer was a body without a soul.

No, flesh alone, though it was human flesh, could never have been an equivalent sacrifice for man, who has a soul. Hence the explicitness with which the prophet foretold of Him: “When Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand”. Hence too the emphasis with which Christ, as if He had His eye on this very prediction, exclaimed, “My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death”.

Here then was not a partial but a complete incarnation. Having to redeem human bodies from the power of death and the grave, Christ took to Himself a human body, which He might offer as a ransom for them. Having also to redeem human souls from the curse of the law, he likewise took to Himself a human soul, that He might have a full equivalent to give to justice instead of them. Thus He could present a true and full atonement.

Second, *the manner* of this manifestation: it was “in the flesh”. As early as the creation of the first man, God was manifest by the flesh; but now He is made manifest in the flesh. Man was made in God’s image, in his intellectual and moral resemblance to his Maker. But this divine image was short-lived. Even the body, as we might say, was broken by the Fall, while the inner and true likeness in the soul was entirely defaced – by sin. Could then this image be restored? Yes, and more than restored.

First, we see it restored in the Second Adam, for in His body, miraculously conceived, free from sinful taint, fair in its form and perfect in all its members. And in Christ’s human soul, with its faculties and its emotions all in purest harmony, we behold once again a specimen of a perfect man. The old image is in Him repeated. In Him humanity was recast, so to speak, in the original mould. Thus the lost likeness is restored.

Second, we have here more than a mere restoration. There is in Christ a new image. In the first Adam, God wrought upon the substance, whether material or mental, which was to manifest His likeness, even as the sculptor works on the marble. But in Christ there was the likeness of God, which did not have to be impressed on Him, but was inherent. Here was not a mere impress of the divine glory, but the glory itself. Not the image, but the very

substance was here. Not its similitude merely, but Godhead's self was here, shining brightly not upon the flesh but in it.

I wish, if possible, to raise your thoughts to a clear conception of what is implied by the difference between God being manifested *in* the flesh and *by* the flesh. When we say that God shines in Christ, and that in Him the image of the Father is to be seen, the light is not material, nor is the likeness ideal, nor is either of them merely external. For it is the very glory itself that is shining through, not given back in mere reflections, but coming forth in its very self, an unborrowed, a self-luminous, an uncreated glory.

When I reflect on the humble origin of our humanity: how, though man's body was an exquisite piece of workmanship, it sprang from the dust. And when I think what man has made of that humanity, and to what vile uses he put it, I sometimes feel as if it is not worth being redeemed. But when I see how God could restore it, and to what uses He could put it in the Person of Christ, I cease to wonder that He should have thought it worthy of being redeemed. But that He should have redeemed it at such a cost – here I am lost in mystery. But I bless God with my whole soul for such a mystery. For it is the mystery of His love to my fallen race – a love so lofty that when I look up, I lose it in its eternal source, in God's eternal heart; and when I look down, I lose it in the depths of that misery and guilt to which it descended. Lose it, did I say? Rather let me say that there I find it, for *I* lay in these depths by nature and, by grace, I would now rest my pardoned soul in that heart.

Now in *conclusion*: the God whom I proclaim to you this day is God manifest in the flesh; the God of nature, yet more than nature's God; the God of creation, yet more than creation's God; the God of providence, yet more than the God of providence; the God of Sinai, yet more than Sinai's God. For the God of grace and of redemption is here. The God is here whom you need as sinners. The God who is rich in mercy, who has found out a ransom, who is ready to receive you to His forgiving arms, if you will but come. If you have already come and been received by Him, He will never leave you nor forsake you. He is the God and Father of Christ, and therefore your God and Father, if you are in Christ. This God is here. And it is this God, fellow-sinners and fellow-saints, whom I have proclaimed to you this day.

May those of us then who are about to sit at the Lord's table behold, by the eye of faith, through the veil of the symbols of the bread and wine, the glory of Christ. May we behold Him who, that He might redeem us from the curse, assumed our nature, and that He may bestow on us the blessings of redemption, still wears our nature on the throne. May we see Him as He was on earth and as He now is in heaven – then and now and evermore – God manifest in the flesh.

The Immutability of God's Counsel¹

John Owen

Hebrews 6:17-18. *Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.*

Wherein God, willing. The words direct us to the purpose of God's oath, expressed in the following words. In this matter God swore by Himself, that thereby the heirs of promise might not only be settled in faith, but moreover receive strong consolation. God willed to do this; not only was it according to His inclination and disposition to do so, but it was a determinate act and purpose which He willed. The sovereign will of God is the sole cause and spring of all the mercy, grace and consolation of which believers are made partakers in this world. God wills the grace and the consolation, and it is so.

More abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel. The "counsel" of God is the eternal purpose of His will: in this particular place it was His holy, wise purpose to give His Son to be of the seed of Abraham, for the salvation of the heirs of promise. This is the counsel which contained all the mercy and the grace of the promise, and secures them to believers. Of this counsel it is affirmed that it is immutable – not subject to any change. God takes the whole absolutely on Himself, both as to ordering and disposing of all things and the means He uses to the end intended. Such was the counsel of God concerning sending His Son to be of the seed of Abraham, and the blessing that should follow.

He was willing to "show unto the heirs of promise" this "immutability of His counsel". All the gracious actions of God toward us are the execution of His holy, immutable purpose; and all the promises are the declarations of those purposes. God's essential truth is engaged in His promises, and this declares the nature of unbelief: "He that believeth not God hath made Him a liar".

God was willing to give special evidence of the immutability of His counsel; He would do so "more abundantly". The promise of God is sufficient to give us security; yet, because something further might be useful, He would add a further confirmation to His word; this He did from a superabounding love and care; He confirmed His promise by an oath. He showed this im-

¹Here are the exposition and observations of Hebrews 6:17-18, taken with editing from "An Abridgement", by M J Tryon, of Owen's *Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews*.

mutability of His counsel to the “heirs of promise”: to all believers under the Old and New Testaments. Believers are called heirs of promise with respect to the promise itself, and with respect to the thing promised. The “heirs of promise” are “heirs of God”; that is, of the whole inheritance that He has promised His children.

Confirmed it by an oath. He interposed Himself with an oath and thus gives security to faith. He mediated by an oath; He interposed Himself between the promise and the faith of believers; and swearing by Himself, He takes it on His life, holiness, being and truth to make the promise good.

Observations: 1. The purpose of God to save the elect by Jesus Christ is an act of infinite wisdom as well as of sovereign grace.

2. The life and assurance of our present comfort and future glory depend on the immutability of the counsel of God.

3. The purpose of God concerning the salvation of the elect by Jesus Christ became immutable from hence, that the determination of His will was accompanied with infinite wisdom.

4. Infinite goodness, acting in Christ, was not satisfied in providing and preparing good things for believers, but it would also show and declare itself unto them, for their present consolation.

5. It is not all mankind universally, but a certain number of persons, to whom God has a purpose to manifest the immutability of His counsel and to communicate its effects. It is only the “heirs of promise” to whom God intends to communicate these effects.

6. God alone knows the due measure of His condescension, or what is appropriate for the divine nature in this. Who could have once apprehended that the holy God should swear by Himself to confirm His word and truth to such worthless creatures as we are? Who dared to have done so?

7. So unspeakable is the weakness of our faith that we stand in need of inconceivable condescension for its confirmation. Who would not think that the declaration of the immutability of His counsel by way of promise was every way sufficient? But God knew that we stood in need of yet more; not that there was a lack of sufficient evidence in His promise, but such a lack of stability in us as stood in need of a superabundant confirmation, as we shall see in the next verse.

That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie. The “two immutable things” are the promise and the oath of God. Both of these are equally immutable. The promise is not confirmed by the oath because it was weak and therefore needed the oath to strengthen it. We must carry along with us the infinite and inconceivable condescension of God in this matter. “In which it was impossible for God to lie” – that is, to deceive.

The highest security among men consists in a promise confirmed by an oath; God uses these in our case, and therefore it is impossible that He should lie. The special design in this was that:

We might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us. Strong consolation is that which prevails against opposition. There are comforts to be taken, and often are taken, from earthly things, but they are weak, languid and such as fade and die upon the first appearance of a vigorous opposition, but this “strong consolation” will prevail against all creature oppositions whatever. The people for whom God has a purpose to give this strong consolation are those who “have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us”. In the judgement of many, there is an allusion here to the manslayer fleeing to the “city of refuge”. These words convey an apprehension of danger, but also speed and diligence in an endeavour to reach a place of safety.

In the case of people under the New Testament, they flee to “lay hold of the hope”. The promise being proposed to us is the cause and object of our faith, on account of the faithfulness of God therein; faith brings hope, whose object is the same promise, or the good things thereof. Hence it is called, “the hope”; without it we could have none, there being neither cause nor object for it. And this hope is “set before us”, or proposed to us, which it is in the declaration of the promise of the gospel. There it is proposed to us as the object of our faith and hope, and as the means of the strong consolation which God is so abundantly willing that we should receive. And we “lay hold” of this hope; that is, we hold fast what we lay hold on with all our might and power.

There will be many endeavours to strike off the hand of faith from laying hold on the promise; and many more to loosen its hold when it has taken hold; but it is in the nature of faith, and it is a part of our duty, strongly to lay hold upon, and firmly to retain, the promise when we have reached out to it.

Observations. 1. A sense of danger and ruin from sin is the first thing which occasions a soul to look out after Christ in the promise.

2. A full conviction of sin is a great and shaking surprise to a guilty soul.

3. The revelation or discovery of the promise – or of Christ in the promise – is that alone which directs convinced sinners to their proper course and way.

4. Where there is the least degree of saving faith, when Christ is first seen in the promise, the whole soul is stirred up to go towards Him. The nature, life and being of the duty, obedience and grace of that faith, which the heirs of promise have, consists in going to Christ, on the basis of His invitation and call – in laying hold upon Him in the promise.

5. It is the duty and wisdom of all those, to whom Christ in the promise

is once revealed, to allow no delay in closing with Him thoroughly, by any gospel means or ordinance set before them.

6. A spiritual strength and vigour is required to secure our interest in the promise – we are to lay firm hold on it.

7. The promise is an assured refuge to all sin-distressed souls who betake themselves to it.

8. Where any soul convinced of sin betakes himself to the promise for relief, God is abundantly willing that he should receive strong consolation.

Love and Faith¹

Ralph Erskine

Do not expect to be always dandled by conscious communion with the Lord. It is indeed sweet to be lying in the lap of sense; but you must be set down on your feet, to walk by faith; and this life of faith is as sure as the other is sweet. By a life of sense, we get the more comfort; by a life of faith, our Lord gets the more glory; for faith works by love, and love is the heart and soul of all gospel obedience. Yes, though saving faith and conscious spiritual feeling go frequently together – there being a joy and peace in believing – yet faith must be content sometimes to live upon a bond when there is no present payment to be given or expected. And we may be well satisfied that a faithful and true God gives us such good security as the bond of His promises, and we ought to allow Him His own day for the accomplishment of them. The more believingly and patiently we wait, till the fruit that hangs on the tree of the promises is ripe, it will be the bigger and the sweeter.

Yet I think it is a sweet battle and pleasant disagreement that there sometimes is between the two graces of faith and love – while love says, I must have Him now, faith says, I must wait for Him patiently. Love says, I cannot be without Him; and faith says, I cannot limit Him. Love says, Let me rejoice in His sweet presence; and faith says, Let me rest upon His sure promise.

Love, I think, is more selfish and speaks for itself; but faith is more noble and speaks for God. What a noble life then it is to live by faith, even in a day of hiding [of God's favour] and darkness, and against hope to believe in hope and to be strong in faith, giving glory to God.

Though love may excel faith for length, as it is a triumphant grace (1 Cor 13:13), yet faith excels love for strength, as it is a militant grace. Hence, as love is strong as death, yet faith is stronger, for all things are possible to it.

¹An edited extract from a letter to a Mrs Mary Stuart and her younger sisters and brother, in *The Life and Diary of Ralph Erskine* by Donald Fraser.

Why? Faith borrows the arm of omnipotence and sets the power and the promise of God together on its side; it puts the God of truth to His word, and the God of power to His work, being fully persuaded that He who has promised is able to perform (Rom 4:21). And as faith most ordinarily is exercised in prayer, so when it comes to the open field, the pitched battle, to be wrestling with God for the blessing, then Jehovah condescends to yield and own that He has been overcome – yet so as the conqueror shall not boast in himself but glory in the Lord, in whom alone he is more than a conqueror (Rom 8:37).

David Brainerd¹

7. “I Long to Preach to the Whole World”

On 7 March 1745 Brainerd set out on a five-week journey. Having spent two years on his own, he wanted to discuss with other ministers the possibility of raising money “among Christian friends to support a colleague”. He was thinking of Christ’s example in sending out “His disciples two and two”² and consulted with quite a number of ministers in at least three American states. He returned home on April 13 and blessed “the Lord, who has preserved me in this tedious journey and returned me in safety to my own house. Verily it is God that has upheld me and guarded my goings.” The next day, a Sabbath, Brainerd felt “disordered in body”. Yet, though he was very tired, he mentions that he “had much more assistance than I expected” in preaching to a considerable number of white people (p 156).

That week, Brainerd rode to Philadelphia. He hoped to ask the Governor to persuade the “chief man of the Six Nations” to give Brainerd permission to live at Susquehannah and teach the people there about Christianity. On his way to Philadelphia and also on his return journey, he stayed with Charles Beatty,³ a young Presbyterian minister, and he enjoyed “sweet spiritual refreshment” with him. The two men rode together to Abington, where the Lord’s Supper was to be observed – “according to the method of the Church

¹A further part of a longer version of a paper given at last year’s Theological Conference. Last month’s instalment saw Brainerd continuing his missionary work, which was then centred on the Indians at the Forks of Delaware.

²Jonathan Edwards, editor, *The Diary and Journal of David Brainerd*, Banner of Truth Trust, 2023 edition, p 155. Page references in brackets, in the body of the text, are to this edition of the *Diary and Journal*.

³A brief “Memoir” of Beatty appears in *The Log College* by Archibald Alexander (Banner of Truth, 1968, recently reprinted). Beatty belonged to the North of Ireland and emigrated to America, where he became a minister at Neshaminy.

of Scotland” – in the congregation of a minister by the name of Treat.⁴ The local minister was preaching when they arrived; afterwards Brainerd preached on: “Blessed are the poor in spirit . . .” (Mt 5:3).

Brainerd commented, “God was pleased to give me great freedom and tenderness, both in prayer and sermon”; and noted further that the congregation “was sweetly melted, and scores were in tears”. It was, he believed, “a word spoken in season to many weary souls” (p 156).

During the communion service on the Sabbath, taken by the local minister, Brainerd enjoyed thinking about “the blissful communion of God’s people when they shall meet at their Father’s table in His kingdom, in a state of perfection”. In the afternoon, Brainerd preached outside, as the church building was too small to accommodate even half of those present. He spoke on: “These are they which follow the Lamb . . .” (Rev 14:4). After two services on the Monday, one taken by Brainerd, he and Beatty set off for their homes. The two men had profitable conversation on divine things as they rode along together. Brainerd spent the night in his colleague’s home and completed his journey the next day. Riding home alone, he “enjoyed some sweet meditations on the road, and was enabled to lift up my heart to God in prayer and praise” (p 157).

On April 30 Brainerd was very ill; he could scarcely walk about and spent most of the day in bed; he felt unable to read or meditate or pray and felt time pass very slowly. Yet he wanted to live to God, to delight in Him and to draw his highest satisfaction from Him. But two days later he was well enough to walk into the woods in the evening and pray there; he enjoyed meditating on Psalm 17:15: “I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness”. He noted, “I long to preach to the whole world; and it seemed to me they must needs all be melted in hearing such precious divine truths as I had then a view and relish of” (p 158). Yet, of course, he very well knew that only the Holy Spirit can bring about that kind of melting; yet his remark demonstrates his strong desire for God to be glorified in applying the truth to the hearts of sinners through the preaching of the gospel.

On May 7 Brainerd was preparing for a trip to Susquehannah, with his interpreter. He was still weak and was concerned how he would be able to reach his intended destination. He spent some time in prayer for God’s blessing, direction and protection, but he did not have sufficient strength of body to spend the day in fasting and prayer – as it seems he wished to do.

⁴Treat is mentioned in Beatty’s memoir (see previous footnote). There we are told that he preached for several years before he was converted, but was awakened through a sermon of George Whitefield. Both Beatty and Treat later went as missionaries to the American Indians in Pennsylvania.

The next day he set out with his interpreter, but he found the journey very difficult and tiring. He spent one night in the open, and later a north-easterly storm arose. He had nothing to provide him with shelter; the heavy rain made it impossible for him to light a fire; he saw that he had no alternative but to ride on. He hoped he would find some shelter; without it he was afraid he would not live till the morning. But the horses must have eaten poison where they had spent the previous night; so the men had to go on foot and drive the horses before them until, "through the mercy of God" (as Edwards acknowledges in recounting this incident) they came to a bark hut, just at dusk, and there they spent the night.

After reaching Susquehannah, he travelled along the river for about 100 miles, over a fortnight, and visited many Indian settlements. There were seven or eight different tribes living there and he preached to the various tribes, with their differing languages, through different interpreters. He was sometimes discouraged by the opposition to Christianity shown by some of the Indians; at other times he was encouraged by the willingness of other Indians to listen and their readiness to be instructed. Among them were some who had listened to his preaching at Kaunaumee; they showed great joy in hearing the missionary once more. Yet again he became seriously ill, as he rode through a district that seemed utterly uninhabited; he had a fever and extreme pain in his head and abdomen; to make things worse, he suffered a large haemorrhage. But at last he came to an Indian trader's hut, where he was able to stay for a week. After that, he felt fit to begin his journey home. Altogether his round trip involved riding about 340 miles, over 23 days.

Brainerd set off again on June 18, with a view to visiting Indians who lived nearly 80 miles from the Forks of Delaware, at a place called Crossweeksung, in New Jersey. This new field of labour was to be, as Edwards notes, the scene of "his greatest success, in his labours for the good of souls, and in his particular business as a missionary to the Indians" (p 162). The next day he reached Crossweeksung but very few of them were at home. Yet he preached to them and found them to be "very serious and attentive" (p 163).⁵

The Indians in this district were very scattered, perhaps only three families in any settlement, and the settlements were between six and 30 or more miles apart. Brainerd notes that these Indians were not inclined to raise objections,

⁵Up to this point, quotations have been taken from Brainerd's *Diary*. From now on, some of the quotations come from his *Journal*, which covers the period of exactly a year; these can be identified by page numbers beyond 257. The *Journal* is also entitled, "*The Rise and Progress of a Remarkable Work of Grace*". It was written because the society in Scotland which supported him financially instructed him to do so.

in contrast to what he had found elsewhere. After the service, he told the seven or eight women and children who made up his congregation that he would willingly come again the next day to speak to them. They readily set out on a journey of 10 or 15 miles to tell their friends elsewhere about the promised service, which was attended by several of these friends. The following day, Brainerd had almost 30 hearers, and a few days later there were 40. When a further week had passed, the Indians were asking for two sermons every day, which Brainerd was glad to provide, exhausting though such a schedule was.

On the Sabbath, Brainerd notes that “not a word of opposition was heard from any of them against Christianity, although in times past they had been as opposite to anything of that nature as any Indians whatsoever. And some of them, not many months before, were enraged with my interpreter, because he attempted to teach them something of Christianity” (p 264).

He notes also that they had taken three deer on two days very close to where the meetings were held. This left them with a lot of time to spend in learning about Christianity without having to go hungry. He believed this was God’s provision. Not surprisingly, after 11 days of repeated preaching, Brainerd was exhausted, especially because his health was so poor in any case.

On June 29 he preached twice “and could not but wonder at the seriousness and the strictness of their attention. Blessed be God that He has inclined their hearts to hear. And O how refreshing it is to me to see them attend with such uncommon diligence . . . with tears in their eyes and concern in the hearts!” (pp 164-5).

The next day was the second Sabbath that Brainerd spent in Crossweeksung. He noticed that there was even more concern among them for their souls, and they persuaded him to spend more time among them. He agreed to this, even though he felt very worn out.

The following day, he wrote that he “preached again twice to a very serious and attentive assembly of Indians, they having now learned to attend the worship of God with Christian decency” (p 265). He also spoke to them more privately and was amazed to discover how much the Indians had learned from his teaching in such a short time.

At this point he felt it his duty to leave Crossweeksung and return to the Forks of Delaware. He did so on July 2. Before going on his way, he spoke to each of them individually. They were all earnestly asking when he would return “and expressed a great desire of being further instructed” (p 265). Without prompting, they agreed that, when Brainerd would come back, they would all gather and live together as long as he was with them. They also promised to do as much as they could to bring to one place all the Indians in

these parts who lived farther away. Brainerd promised to come back to Cross-weeksung as soon as possible.

When parting, a woman told him tearfully: "I wish God would change my heart"; another woman said, "I want to find Christ"; and an old man, a chief, wept bitterly through concern for his soul. Brainerd could scarcely believe that this degree of awakening would turn out so positively; he had so often previously "seen encouraging appearances among the Indians elsewhere prove wholly abortive". He writes, "I have learned by experience that only [God] can open the ear, engage the attention, and incline the heart of poor, benighted, prejudiced pagans to receive instruction" (p 266).

Musical Instruments in Public Worship (3)¹

4. Musical instruments in the Scottish Church. At the Reformation from Romanism in Scotland, our fathers endeavoured to remove from the worship of God all those superstitions and idolatrous practices by which it was polluted and degraded, and to restore it to the purity and simplicity of the gospel of Christ. In the confusions of that eventful period, the organs were mostly destroyed, with the images and other monuments of Roman idolatry. After many struggles and sufferings, the corruptions of the Church of Rome were condemned, and the leading doctrines of the gospel publicly acknowledged by the Estates of Parliament in 1560. A plan for the worship and government of the Church was afterwards formed and observed by our pious ancestors, such as appeared to them most agreeable to the Word of God and the practice of the primitive Church.²

In this order, there was nothing calculated to please the sensual mind, or to gratify avarice or worldly ambition. The grand simplicity of the gospel pervaded the whole. At length, in 1592, this form of worship and government was established by civil authority. None of the Reformed Churches of Europe ever proceeded as far as that of Scotland in removing the will-worship and idolatry of the Roman Church, and in restoring the worship of God to the purity and simplicity of the apostolic age. This beautiful simplicity of worship

¹This piece is understood to be the work of Rev Malcolm MacSween, Oban. It has been edited. The original title was, *Should Musical Instruments Be Used in the Public Worship of God Under the New Testament Dispensation?* The second section, last month, consisted of an "inquiry whether instrumental music is authorised by God in the worship of the New Testament Church" and an "inquiry into the period of the Christian Church when organs began to be used in the worship of God".

²See *The Second Book of Discipline*, agreed upon in the General Assembly of 1578, and inserted in the registers of Assembly for 1581.

and government was, however, soon defaced by that kind of mixed Episcopacy which was afterwards introduced and continued in Scotland until the Civil Wars broke out.

By an Act of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland 1643 it was appointed that a Directory for Worship be prepared and reported to the next Assembly, so “that unity and uniformity might be observed throughout the kingdom, in all the parts of the public worship of God”. The reason why nothing was done in that business was that the Assembly of Divines at Westminster met on the first day of July in the same year, 1643, and agreeably to engagements between the Convention of Estates in Scotland and both Houses of Parliament in England, and upon invitation from the Assembly at Westminster, commissioners were sent from the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, to co-operate with them “in all such things as might conduce to the extirpation of Popery, Prelacy, heresy, schism, superstition and idolatry, and in uniting this whole island in one form of Church government, one Confession of Faith, one Catechism, and one Directory for the Worship of God”.

The Scottish commissioners proceeded to Westminster and joined with the Assembly in their labours there. On 20 May 1644, the Scottish members wrote from London to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, giving an account of their labours and progress, in which they give the following statement: “We cannot but admire the good hand of God in the great things done here already, particularly that the [National] Covenant, the foundation of the whole work, is taken; Prelacy and the whole train thereof extirpated, the service-book in many places forsaken, plain and powerful preaching set up, many colleges in Cambridge provided with such ministers as are most zealous of the best reformation, altars removed, the communion in some places given at the table with sitting, the great organs at Paul’s and Peter’s, in Westminster, taken down, images and many other monuments of idolatry defaced and abolished, the Chapel Royal at Whitehall purged and reformed; and all by authority, in a quiet manner, at noonday, without tumult”.

From this statement it appears that these commissioners, with the Assembly at Westminster, considered organs a part of the pollutions of Popery and Prelacy which it was needful to have removed by authority in that work of reformation. Organs were then so completely removed from the churches in England, and so generally reprobated, that at the Restoration (1660) there could scarcely be found either organists or organ builders.

In *The Westminster Confession of Faith* no provision is made for restoring those organs which were then removed. But it is declared in section 21:5 that “the reading of the Scriptures with godly fear . . . singing of psalms with

grace in the heart . . . are all parts of the ordinary religious worship of God". There is no mention of organs or musical instruments. This *Confession of Faith* was approved and adopted by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland on 27 August 1647 and ratified by Act of Parliament on 7 February 1649, and again by Act of Parliament in 1690.

In the *Directory* for the worship of God then composed, no provision is made for restoring the abolished organs or any other form of instrumental music whatever. It is there declared to be the duty of Christians to praise God publicly by singing of Psalms in the congregation, and also privately in the family; that in singing of Psalms the voice is to be tunably and gravely ordered, but the chief care must be to sing with understanding, and with grace in the heart, making melody unto the Lord. This *Directory* was examined and approved by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland on 3 February 1645 and ratified by Act of Parliament on 6 February 1645, and still continues to be the only authorised *Directory* for the worship of God in the Scottish Reformed Church. The Act of 1645 was approved and revived by the General Assembly of 1705.

The *Westminster Confession of Faith* and *Directory* of worship of the Scottish Presbyterian Church were ratified by Acts of Parliament in 1690 and 1693 and by the Act of Security in 1707. They form an essential article of the union with England, and are secured by the coronation oath of the sovereign. So that this worship, modelled and established upon the abolition of organs, altars, images and all the train of Popery and Prelacy is as well secured as any laws, ecclesiastical or civil, can make it. This worship, authorised in the *Directory* was practised in the Presbyterian Church until the introduction of instrumental music was made permissive by the Scottish Established Church in 1866, by the United Presbyterian Church in 1872, and by the Disruption Free Church in 1883.

A Prayer for Revival¹

Rev J S Sinclair

At the beginning of a new year it is customary for people to express to one another their good wishes for happiness and prosperity during the year

¹The editorial, as edited, in *The Free Presbyterian Magazine* for January 1914. It is based on Habakkuk 3:2: "I have heard Thy speech, and was afraid: O Lord, revive Thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy". The spiritual situation, as Mr Sinclair describes it in preparation for publication in early 1914, has of course deteriorated badly since he wrote this article.

on which they have entered. Such wishes as manifestly occupy the mind of the greater number are for natural happiness and material prosperity. They have no concern about anything higher and desire nothing better than their own and their neighbours' worldly success. But the case is – or at least it ought to be – different with those who fear God. The thought which should have the uppermost place in their minds at this season, as at all seasons, is the spiritual prosperity of the kingdom of God. It would become them to be deeply concerned, in times of darkness and declension such as ours, that the Lord would send, for His own name's sake, a season of genuine spiritual prosperity to the vineyard of the visible Church.

The prophet Habakkuk, in his time, was greatly concerned about this matter. True, he did not live in the very worst times that the Jewish people ever saw. It is reckoned that he wrote his prophecy during the reign of good King Josiah. This excellent king had made a valuable reformation of an outward kind in Judah; but it would appear that many of the sins which had been encouraged by his predecessors still held too large a place in the land. The Lord sent messages of warning by His servants, Jeremiah and Habakkuk, and intimated to the people that He would “raise up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation,” to chastise them for their sins – a judgement which came to pass in due time. Habakkuk was thus deeply moved to plead with the Most High for a time of reviving in the following terms: “O Lord, I have heard Thy speech and was afraid; O Lord, revive Thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy”. We shall briefly notice these words, with application to the situation of Church and nation in our own day.

1. *The prophet's fear:* “O Lord, I have heard thy speech and was afraid”. The prophet had heard the voice of Jehovah speaking concerning the evils of his time and proclaiming woes to those who were guilty of indulging in these evils. To all appearance, the wicked were at this period numerous, strong and deceitful, while the truly just were few and weak, unable to resist effectually the inroads of iniquity. The Lord had declared His intention to send dreadful enemies into the country, and the prophet, conscious not only of the sins of the wicked but also of his own sins and the sins of God's children in general, trembled with fear lest the work of God should be entirely swept out of the land. He confesses this in lowly entreaty before God: “Rotteness entered into my bones, and I trembled in myself that I might rest in the day of trouble”.

Now it is plain – to everyone who, under the teaching of the Holy Spirit, studies the condition of the Church and nation in our day – that things are in a low and degenerate condition. If we have ears to hear the Lord's voice

speaking to us in the Word, we may well be afraid lest marked judgements speedily overtake us.² Sins against the law of God abound on almost every hand. Immorality of life and vain practices in worship are on the increase. The living witnesses for truth are few, and some of them spiritually weak and powerless. It would be good if those who perceive the needs of the times were filled with a humble, earnest, godly fear for the cause of God and righteousness.

2. The prophet's supplication: "O Lord, revive Thy work in the midst of the years; in the midst of the years make known." His godly fear impelled him to earnest prayer. There is an unbelieving, slavish fear that drives many poor sinners away from God; but there is a believing, filial fear that constrains them to draw near to Him with all their difficulties and temptations. Such was the fear of Habakkuk, and such is still the fear of all those who truly know the Lord. The prophet felt that the grand remedy for the sad state of affairs was the revival of God's special, saving work – making known His glorious character as the God of salvation. "In the midst of the years" of calamity, he felt much afraid of God's judgements, and longed and prayed for manifestations of His grace and power. "O Lord, revive Thy work." And such is the exercise of those in our time who earnestly desire to see the coming of Christ's kingdom in power and in the Holy Ghost.

Let it be observed then that two things are needed in order to constitute a true revival of the Lord's cause: first, the revival of His work in the souls of those who are already His living people; and second, the revival of His work in relation to sinners outside the kingdom – "the other sheep" who must be brought in from the mountains of vanity.

(1.) *There is a need to seek the revival of God's work in the souls of His children.* It is plain that we live in a comparatively dark and dead time in the spiritual experience of even the living in Jerusalem. We do not see the liveliness and vigour of soul, the heavenly elevation of spirit, the intense earnestness at a throne of grace, the warm, loving and self-sacrificing zeal, and the close and holy walk with God of Christians of a bygone generation. Yet possibly a few here and there may be found exemplifying these characteristics in some marked degree.

But the lamentable case is that, in general, among those who may be credited with possessing divine life, there is too much spiritual lethargy, carnal security, coldness, and worldliness of mind and life. People are at ease in Zion – too much satisfied with the form of religion apart from "the power", very diligent in attending to their worldly affairs and prospects but lukewarm

²We must view the First World War, which broke out only months after this article was written, as a "marked judgement" from God.

in the all-important matters of making “their calling and election sure”, and of seeking the real advancement of the kingdom of God. There is a great need that the Lord would send forth anew His Spirit and Word with special power, into the understandings, consciences and hearts of His own people, so that they might be humbled, emptied and brought afresh – as it were, for the first time – to the feet of Christ and to “the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than that of Abel”. They need, as a consequence, to experience special outflowings of the love and power of God in their souls, and be filled with a more tender and lively zeal for the glory of His name and the good of His cause.

When the Spirit was poured forth on the Day of Pentecost, He first descended on the disciples in the upper room, before He came upon the multitude who were awakened to a sense of their sins. Peter and the other ten were eminently anointed by the Holy Ghost. It is greatly to be desired in our own day that those who stand up in the name of Christ to preach the Word would receive a special baptism of the Spirit, and that the gospel would go forth from their lips not “in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance”. The preaching of the gospel has been the chief means employed by the Lord in all ages for promoting His kingdom in the souls of those already taught from above, and in effectually calling others out of darkness into His marvellous light.

(2.) There is a special need for the revival of God’s work in relation to those outside the kingdom. It is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles that “the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be [or, were being] saved” (Acts 2:47). It is perfectly plain that there is a most urgent call for prayer to ascend for the revival of the Lord’s work in this respect. We must not be deterred from earnestness in this direction because, perhaps, we see others proceeding on wrong, unscriptural lines, imagining that they can convince and convert sinners by fleshly means. Their mistaken efforts must not make us callous about the salvation of perishing souls. Nor must we abuse certain solemn and precious aspects of divine truth by misapplying them to the detriment of real zeal for the everlasting benefit of our fellow sinners. Some may be ready to fold their hands in ease and say, The Lord will make sure of His own elect – all whom He has ordained unto eternal life; He will call them effectually at His own time and none of them shall be lost.

These are certainly valuable truths, but it must not be forgotten that the Lord has ordained the means as well as the end, and that He employs such means as the reading of His Word, the preaching of the gospel, Christian counsel, and earnest prayer at the throne of grace for the accomplishment of His gracious purposes in the conversion of poor sinners. If we neglect or

undervalue these means we fight against God and against the ways of infinite wisdom and goodness, and we are in danger of being consumed with spiritual judgments, if not with eternal miseries.

Let us consider how few they are that truly fear the Lord in our day and generation, and how few are savingly impressed even when the truth is proclaimed in a lively and convincing manner. And if we do consider these matters, we shall see abundant reason for crying mightily, unto Him who sits between the cherubim, that He would grant a season of awakening and converting power. Young people are growing up, even in godly households, who continue quite unconcerned about their eternal prospects. The messenger of death is often busy, and what an awful thing it is to contemplate poor sinners who are brought to the very gate of heaven so far as outward privileges are concerned but falling from there into the blackness of darkness for ever!

The very smallness of the flock of Christ in the present day ought to be a stimulus to those who call upon the name of the Lord to plead earnestly with Him for a day of power, as also a goad in the side of those who may be near “the door” – not far from the kingdom – pressing them to “strive to enter in” that they may be saved. “The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence and the violent take it by force.”

3. *The prophet’s plea:* “In wrath remember mercy”. He acknowledges that the Lord is justly displeased with the land and the people. He cannot plead the righteousness of any creature whatsoever, good or bad. All had sinned and come short of the glory of God. The Most High is “slow to wrath”, and so when He is manifestly displeased it is a sign that much iniquity has been committed. Judgement “is His strange work”. Habakkuk feels that he must cast himself unreservedly on the mercy of Jehovah. He entreats the Lord that, in His just anger, He would not forget His attribute of mercy. He had manifested Himself at times and in ways without number, in the past history of His chosen people as a God of abundant mercy. And now, the prophet pleads, is a large opportunity for the display of that same mercy.

This plea is suitable for our own situation as a generation. We have sinned and done wickedly, and God is justly angry with us. We have provoked Him to hide His face and to send spiritual and temporal judgements upon us. The only appropriate plea for us to use is that He would remember His covenant mercy. That mercy is abundantly revealed in His Son Jesus Christ, and so when we ask Him to remember mercy, we ask Him to remember One whom He shall not forget eternally, His only-begotten and well-beloved Son. “The Father loveth the Son and hath given all things into His hand.” Let us plead then that for the sake of the gift of His infinite mercy, He would revive His work among us as a people, and throughout the land in which we live.

The prophet was beginning to cherish the fear that the Lord had forgotten to be gracious, as has often been the case with God's people under lengthened and trying dispensations. So Habakkuk pleads that He would remember mercy. And this fear must be resisted by the power of divine grace, and we should seek to have our expectations enlarged and our hopes strengthened in view of the riches and unchangeableness of God's mercy in Christ. Let us seek to wait with earnestness and patience upon Him, praying that He may grant a little reviving, in the midst of the bondage of the present time, during the coming year. "His mercy endureth for ever."

Notes and Comments

Towers of Vanity: Man's Unchanging Rebellion and the Enduring Hope of God's People

Today, man may consider himself far more intelligent, refined, respectable and resourceful than those who lived in the years immediately after the Fall of Adam. However, in his natural state, man (whoever he or she may be) is still a fallen son or daughter of Adam, "dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past," says the Apostle Paul to the Church at Ephesus, "ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience; among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others" (Eph 2:1-3). These statements were true of those who lived before the Flood, after the Flood, at the time of the building of the Tower of Babel, during the intervening centuries, and today, when so many new towers of vanity are being constructed by man that provoke the high and holy God of heaven!

The solemn and godless state of our nation, and indeed of all the countries in the world at present, is evident: this is not new; it is something that causes the godly to mourn in every degenerate generation. Time and again, Christians of all ages have prayerfully sought, in private, as families, and in public, the day when it will please the Lord again to pour forth the Holy Spirit copiously, to revive His work to the glory and praise of His name. Many have spiritually yearned for that wondrous day to dawn when "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Hab 2:14), when "all nations shall call Him blessed" (Ps 72:17).

While the current humanistic and pagan state of the world is not new, the

blatant audacity and widespread extent of man's rebellion against God – which originated with our federal head Adam, in the Garden of Eden – seems to be increasing in severity, scope and visibility at an alarming rate in our day. In such a time, we need to remember the comforting words of the Lord to His Church and people, so applicable in all generations: “Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth”. To this gracious admonition, we are to respond in humble faith, genuine gratitude and longing expectation: “The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah” (Ps 46:10,11).

Indeed, we are to be earnestly anticipating the days yet to come, when “all the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Thee” (Ps 22:27). We are to pray, as we are taught by the Lord, “Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven” (Mt 6:9,10).

We read the solemn statement of inspiration in the Holy Scriptures about the years following the Fall of Adam and the widespread apostasy of those days: “And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Genesis 6:5). Interestingly, the translators of our Authorised Version of the Bible helpfully added notes to the margin of Genesis 6:5. They evidently believed that the wording they employed was insufficient to convey fully the intensity of the underlying Hebrew text. Thus they included two informative comments in English in the margin to enhance the reader's understanding of the divine text. Adjacent to the words in the verse, “imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil”, the margin adds, “Or, the whole imagination”. The Hebrew word signifies not only the imagination, but also the purposes and desires”. And against the word “continually”, the margin adds, “Heb. every day”.

The Lord saw that the “wickedness of man was great” and that the fallen posterity of Adam was continuously manifesting every day that their whole imagination, purpose and desires were only evil. How distinctly different this was from the lives of the godly few in that dark age, whose lives had been wondrously transformed by the Spirit of God and whose chief end in life was to glorify God and enjoy Him for ever. Though we read that Enoch and Noah “walked with God”, it could not have been easy for them or any others who feared God and desired to live in the light of His countenance during such evil times.

No doubt, their prayers for grace, wisdom and protection were answered in the Lord's goodness, and they were enabled to shine as lights amid the darkness and sinful rebellion of the day. It was a day in which the over-

whelming majority rebelliously aligned themselves with the powers of darkness, promoting the very evils that the ungodly judged would be devastatingly triumphant over the despised and diminished Cause of God and truth of the day. They were soon to find that their sinfully optimistic arrogance had been significantly misjudged!

In the following verses of Genesis 6, we read of God's intent to destroy man, but also of the grace the Lord showed to Noah and his family. "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith" (Heb 11:7). By the time Noah had finished constructing the ark, the remaining godly of his day had all passed away. God "spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly" (2 Pet 2:5). Notwithstanding the longsuffering of God extended towards them through the faithful preaching of righteousness by Noah, they continued impenitent and unbelieving in their rebellious and God-dishonouring lives until, finally and most solemnly, as we read, "they did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all" (Lk 17:27).

Were things to be different after the Flood? Alas, no! The wretched evil in the heart of fallen man remains the same in every generation. The wickedness of man was still great. The entire imagination, thoughts, purposes and desires of his heart were still only evil, and that continuously. Only by the powerful and sovereign regenerating grace of God could there ever be a difference.

Comparatively soon after the Flood and following the repopulating of the world by the children of Noah, there were again the godly and the ungodly. Before long, the ungodly gained the ascendancy and formed themselves into nations. These ungodly nations united in rebellion against Almighty God by building in the plain of Shinar what became known as the Tower of Babel. They said, "Let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth" (Gen 11:4). However, we read that their purpose was frustrated by the Lord, who confounded their language, so that they could "not understand one another's speech. So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city" (Gen 11:7,8).

Century after century, ungodly men have stood resolutely and wilfully opposed to God and the truth of His Word. Man has not improved over time;

instead, he has worsened, shamelessly flaunting his arrogance and hatred of God – despite his natural awareness of his Creator. “For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened” (Rom 1:20,21).

Our day is no different. The ungodly continue to rebel against their Creator and Lord, who is the one and only Saviour of sinners. In their arrogance, they persist in building mighty towers of vanity that are admired by the wicked, but which continuously provoke Almighty God. “He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall He speak unto them in His wrath, and vex them in His sore displeasure” (Ps 2:4,5).

Notwithstanding the great darkness and the terrible wickedness of the day, the Lord’s people are to flee continuously to their Lord and Master as their Refuge, their Strength, and their very present Help in trouble (see Ps 46:1). “Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice: and let men say among the nations, The Lord reigneth” (1 Chr 16:31). DPR

Cyber-Attack on M&S

The retailers M&S (Marks and Spencer) have been hit by a vicious cyber-attack. The hackers first stole customer data and then encrypted it so that M&S could not use it. M&S is losing millions of pounds a day as a result. We are very sorry and concerned about the crime, but we note that the money M&S have made from opening on the Sabbath is taking wings and flying away. DWBS

Hadrian’s Wall and Its Tree

At the time of writing, two men are on trial for cutting down a sycamore tree on Hadrian’s Wall in September 2023. The tree was strikingly situated in a dip between two hillocks and was much filmed and photographed. Weddings had been conducted there, and the pagan scattering of ashes. A BBC report states that “prosecutors said the irreparable damage to the tree had been estimated to be worth £622 191”, while the men are charged with £1144 of damage to Hadrian’s Wall. The present writer is very fond of trees and nature, but the fuss over this tree exceeds all bounds. The death of one aborted child is infinitely sadder, more important, and more wicked than the cutting down of whole forests of such trees. DWBS

The Supreme Court Ruling on Male and Female

On April 16 the UK Supreme Court delivered a landmark ruling in the case

of *For Women Scotland Limited versus Scottish Ministers*, clarifying the legal definitions of *man*, *woman* and *sex* under the Equality Act 2010.

The Court unanimously determined that these terms in the Equality Act refer exclusively to biological sex at birth. This means that, for the purposes of this act, individuals who have “transitioned” and obtained a Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC) are not to be considered as having that “acquired gender”. The ruling specifically addresses the interpretation of the Equality Act 2010 and does not invalidate the Gender Recognition Act 2004; transgender individuals retain protections against discrimination under the protected characteristic of gender reassignment.

The decision has significant implications for access to single sex spaces. Organisations may now lawfully restrict access to spaces such as women’s shelters, hospital wards, changing rooms and lavatories according to a person’s biological sex. Following the ruling, several sporting bodies have updated their policies to restrict participation in women’s categories to biological females.

Advocacy groups like For Women Scotland and political figures, including Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer, welcomed the decision, viewing it as a reinforcement of women’s rights and giving clarity to the law. Previously some politicians, including the Prime Minister, were completely flummoxed, and seriously embarrassed, when challenged to define a woman and a man. These people are now clamouring to put themselves on the right side of the Supreme Court decision. On the other hand, trans rights organisations and some medical professionals have expressed concern, labelling the ruling as exclusionary. The British Medical Association criticised the decision, calling it “scientifically illiterate” and harmful to transgender individuals, which is an extraordinary comment from an organisation representing the medical profession.

The ruling has intensified discussion around the inclusion of transgender individuals in various sectors, with debates continuing over how to balance the protection of women’s rights and ensuring transgender rights. The Equality and Human Rights Commission is expected to provide further guidance on the practical implications of the ruling in the coming months.

One would hope and pray that we are now seeing a return to common sense, where scriptural truth is placed before “equality, diversity and inclusion”. “So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them” (Gen 1:27). FRD

Church Information

College and Library Fund

By appointment of Synod, the first of two special collections for the College and Library Fund is due to be taken in congregations during June.

W Campbell, General Treasurer

Acknowledgement of Donations

Congregational Treasurers acknowledge with sincere thanks the following donations:

Duirinish & Bracadale-Strath: Anon, "In memory of my dear Uncle Alex Ross", £100.

North Tolsta: Anon, £1000. *Communion Expenses:* Anon, £30, £60. *Door Collection:* Anon, £80, £100.

South Harris: *Communion Expenses:* Anon, £50.

Stornoway: Anon, for church heating, £100.

There are many deceitful things in the world. The wind is deceitful, the ocean is deceitful, the creature is deceitful, but the human "heart is deceitful above all things" (Jer 17:9), and in nothing, probably, more so than in the principles and motives which govern and sway it. O it is appalling to think what self-idolatry and self-seeking and self-complacence may reign in our hearts, prompt and govern our actions!

Octavius Winslow

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.

Duirinish and Bracadale: **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. **Beauly** (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). 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 A 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 I D MacDonald; tel: 01478 612110.

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 1RD; tel: 0141 954 3759.

Greenock: Sabbath 2.30 pm, held in Free Church of Scotland hall, 14 Jamaica Street, PA15 1XX. Contact Rev R MacLeod; tel: 0141 954 3759.

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

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 B Jardine; tel: 01859 502253.

North Uist: Bayhead; Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm; Thurs 7.30 pm. Manse tel: 01876 510233. Contact: Rev J B Jardine; tel: 01859 502253.

Perth: Pomarium, off Leonard Street. Sabbath 11 am, 6 pm; Wed 7.30 pm. Manse: 5 Main Road, Luncarty, PH1 3EP; tel: 01738 828762. Contact: Rev D Campbell; tel: 07790 068991.

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.

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, or as intimated locally. Manse: 2 Fleming Place, Stornoway, HS1 2NH; tel: 01851 702501. Contact: Rev J B Jardine; tel: 01859 502253.

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, StPeter's; Tues 7 pm at Friends' Meeting House, StPeter'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

Sancta 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: grifton@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: sydneyfpcchurch@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: 022 092 2136.

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: 022 092 2136.

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: Odessa: F P Mission Station, 3 Saimona Litmana Street, 65047. Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm; Thursday 6 pm. Rev D Levytskyi; tel: 00 38 067 457 02 18; e-mail: dlevytskyi@gmail.com.

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.

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

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