

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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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:** Aberdeen, Tarbert; **Fourth:** Barnoldswick, Ingwenya.

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

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

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“Take not Thy Holy Spirit from Me”

In Psalm 51, David’s wonderful prayer of repentance, he asked, “Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me” (v 11). Clearly David was not indicating that the Holy Spirit could be entirely removed from him, seeing He had once come to dwell in his heart, for where God has begun a good work in anyone’s soul, that work will be completed. What then was David asking?

Let us begin by considering King Saul. We read that “the Spirit of God came upon Saul when he heard” that Nahash the Ammonite had encamped against Jabesh-gilead, ready to capture it (1 Sam 11). What we have here is the Spirit so working on Saul so that he, as king of Israel, was more able to resist the invader and carry out his other responsibilities as king. It was an enhancement of his natural gifts, not a case of being endowed with any spiritual powers – certainly not with saving grace. Clearly King Saul was not converted, with the Holy Spirit dwelling in his heart, giving him grace to fear God. The Spirit did not transform his life so that he would display a readiness to submit to God’s mind as expressed in the Scriptures and in the directions relayed through God’s prophet Samuel.

The Lord, through Samuel, directed Saul to destroy the Amalekite king, his people and their possessions, because the Amalekites had lain in wait for God’s people, the Children of Israel, after they had come out from Egypt. But Saul’s obedience was only partial; he heard God’s instructions and carried them out only as far as he himself saw fit. That is not how we are to behave, as if we were competent to revise God’s commands and had the authority to do so. But that is how most people react today; they will only accept God’s law as far as they can see that it is reasonable – as far as it conforms to human reason. But they are God’s creatures; that fact is what puts human beings under God’s authority. What is more, they are all *fallen* creatures; their thinking has been completely warped by sin; human reason is not at all reliable.

Following Saul’s disobedience, young David was anointed king in his place, and “the Spirit of the Lord came upon David” (1 Sam 16:13). But David not only received an enhancement of his natural gifts for reigning as

king after Saul's death, but the Holy Spirit had also come to work savingly in his heart, probably before he was anointed king. Thus he did truly live in the fear of God. And he went through life in dependence on the gracious, all-powerful God who had brought him out of Satan's kingdom into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

Matthew Henry comments, "The anointing of [David] was not an empty ceremony, but a divine power went along with that instituted sign, and he found himself inwardly advanced in wisdom and courage, and concern for the public, with all the qualifications of a prince though not [then] at all advanced in his outward circumstances. This would abundantly satisfy him that his election was of God." By way of application, Henry goes on to make the point, "The best evidence of our being predestinated to the kingdom of glory is our being sealed with the Spirit of promise, and our experience of a work of grace in our own hearts".

Dependence characterised the general course of David's life, but he was not perfect – far from it, as we know from the account in Scripture of his sin with Bathsheba and his arranging to have Uriah killed. (These sins, of course, were what lay behind David writing Psalm 51.) But the Lord restored David, gave him repentance and forgave his sins; He did not take the Holy Spirit away from him entirely; that was impossible. Indeed we are told that "David did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, and turned not aside from any thing that He commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite" (1 Ki 15:5).

On the other hand, "the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul"; the consequence was that he no longer possessed the special gifts which had enabled him to rule his country more effectively than his natural abilities would have made possible. Again we quote from Matthew Henry: Saul "having forsaken God and his duty, God, in a way of righteous judgement, withdrew from him those assistances of the good Spirit with which he was directed, animated and encouraged in his government and wars. He lost all his good qualities. This was the effect of his rejecting God, and an evidence of his being rejected by Him. . . . When men grieve and quench the Spirit, by willful sin, He departs and will not always strive."

It was very obvious that the Lord had left King Saul to himself when, in the absence of any communication from heaven, he consulted a witch. When people are left to themselves, there is no telling how far they may depart from the truth, however loud their professions of religion may have been. No wonder David prayed, "Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me". So should we.

We may now glance at Samson. He had indeed a strange character, and we might well refuse to recognise him as an Israelite indeed if he was not

named in Hebrews 11 as one who acted “through faith” and “obtained promises”. Samson lost his supernatural strength when he told Delilah the secret of it. It was no doubt through the Holy Spirit that Samson had been endowed with such remarkable strength, and we may conclude that he lost his strength because the Spirit was, in measure, taken from him. Again we may stress that the seed of saving grace was not taken away, but the special gifts with which he was endowed, to be used for the defence of Israel, were removed. Because the Spirit was not altogether removed from him, he was brought back, and his wonderful gift was restored to him, which he used in his last action on earth against Israel’s enemies.

Yet Samson’s life is a beacon for God’s children, for Samson *loved* Delilah, who presumably was a Philistine and so one of the Lord’s enemies. So believers should learn the danger of getting too close, especially emotionally, to those who are the Lord’s enemies because they still refuse to come to Christ. The danger is not that the Lord will take away His Spirit in the full sense of the term; that will never happen. But the Spirit may be withdrawn in a degree from believers who are careless about how they live and about their use of the means of grace, public and private.

What need we all have to pray, “Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me”. Unbelievers should ask God not to take away the outward restraint He exercises on them through the Holy Spirit, so that they are kept back from many sins which they would otherwise fall into. And believers should join David in asking, as he did, that the Spirit would not be taken away from him, that they would be kept from turning back from the degree of godliness which the Spirit has wrought in their hearts and lives.

Finally we should ask that the Lord would not altogether take His Holy Spirit away from our communities, wherever we may live. Even if there is only one believer in that community, the Spirit dwells in that person’s heart. It is someone who, in one degree or another, should be a living epistle “known and read of all men”, showing something of what it is to live a godly life. And we should ask the Lord not to take His candlestick away from our community, assuming the pure gospel is still preached there.

Similarly we should ask the Lord not to take His Spirit away from whatever nation we belong to. Indeed we should recognise how ready God is, for the sake of Christ, to hear His children asking for greater things. We may ask that preachers would be sent out everywhere with the pure gospel, and for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit in every place throughout the world. We should be encouraged to do so because David, though he spent his life under the dimmer revelation of the Old Testament, could pray, “Let the whole earth be filled with [God’s] glory” (Ps 72:19).

The Need for More Earnest Heed¹

A Sermon by Rev H M Cartwright

Hebrews 2:1-4. *Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will?*

Sometimes it is good for us to stop and inquire as to what use we are making of the Word of God, and what benefit we are receiving from it. This passage is an exhortation for us to give more earnest heed to the things we have heard. We cannot believe in Him of whom we have not heard but, as the Bible makes very clear and as experience makes clear, we can hear without believing. It is of the utmost importance that our hearing should be turned into *obedience*, and that we should *receive* the Word in faith and love into our souls.

As enabled, we may consider (1) the things which we have heard; (2) the warning given to those who have heard these things; (3) the exhortation given to those who have heard these things.

1. The things we have heard. The Apostle is directing attention particularly to the great salvation. We have heard what God has to say about the great salvation. We think first of all of its greatness in the light of what it saves us *from*. If we do not appreciate our *need* of salvation, we will never appreciate how great salvation is. In the chapters we read, two things are brought out concerning our need of salvation. There is, on the one hand, the fact that this salvation – this Saviour – delivers from *sins*, and then there is the fact that He has destroyed “him that had the power of death, that is, the devil,” and delivered those “who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage”.

Sin and death sum up the situation in which we are by nature. We have all sinned and come short of the glory of God. We have transgressed His law, we have disobeyed His commandments, we fell in our first parents, we were born in sin, and sin has characterised our lives from the very beginning. We have not loved the Lord our God with all our heart and soul and mind and strength, and we have not loved our neighbour as ourselves. We have broken all the commandments. If we offend in one point, we are guilty of all. If we

¹Preached in Edinburgh on 9 January 2011.

do not have love to God in our hearts, we are not capable of keeping any of His commandments, and that is our position.

There is none righteous; no, not one, and that has brought us into a state of misery. It has made us liable, as *The Shorter Catechism* says, “to all miseries in this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell for ever”. The wages of sin is death. God’s justice demands that the soul that sins shall die. That death is not only the separation of soul and body for a time, but being cast away from God, separated from God, shut up under His displeasure for all eternity. As the *Catechism* says again, “Every sin deserveth God’s wrath and curse, both in this life and that which is to come”.

We do not really believe that by nature. Even when we have that notion in our minds, we do not have that conviction in our hearts. Do we really believe that *every* sin deserves God’s wrath and curse? Do we really believe that our sin is such an affront to God, such an attack on God, such an undermining of God’s authority that the only just consequence is to be exposed eternally to God’s wrath and curse? We have to get some measure of conviction on this point before we realise how great salvation is and how awful and evil sin is – that it is a bitter thing to sin against the Lord – and how just God is in His condemnation of the sinner. Something of that truth has to get into our conscience before we will ever think of the salvation set before us in the gospel, as something that is beyond any measurement. So one way of bringing out the greatness of salvation is to think of what it saves us *from*: sin, death and the curse of the broken law.

We also have to think of what salvation introduces us *to*. The context speaks of God bringing many sons to glory. These people, who were dead in trespasses and sins, whose every sin deserved God’s wrath and curse eternally, are *saved*; so they are sons of God, whom He is bringing to glory. “God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ” (Gal 4:4-7). That is the glory of this salvation.

God’s children are not saved by the skin of their teeth, as it were, although that is how it feels in their experience. They are saved in the Lord with an *everlasting* salvation – so great a salvation that they are not just servants who are reconciled to God, but *sons*, adopted into His family and given all the privileges of His children, able to come to the throne of the Majesty on high and say, “Our Father, which art in heaven”. He “lifteth the needy out of the dunghill . . . that He may set him . . . with the princes of His people.”

But I think the greatness of salvation here is especially connected with the greatness of the Saviour. That is the theme of this book, and that is what brings home to us the greatness of salvation. When we think that the Saviour is the Son of God, the brightness of His glory, the express image of His Person, the Creator of all things, the One whom the angels worship, and that He has taken on Himself the work of saving His people from their sins. To do that, He has taken our nature: not the nature of angels, not the nature of the highest possible creature, but the nature of man. He has taken on Himself the burden of His people's sin. He has taken on Himself their curse and condemnation and, by Himself, He has purged their sins. By Himself He has delivered them from the power of Satan, from the power of death, from the fear of death; and it is set before us that the greatest work God has ever done is to save His people from their sins.

Creation is nothing in comparison. He created all things by the Word of His power in the space of six days, and all very good. He could have done it in a moment, in a flash, if He wished. He had His own reasons for spreading it over a week. Up until the time that Christ died, the Sabbath day commemorated the work of creation, and then the Sabbath day was transferred to the first day of the week, the day that Christ rose triumphantly from the grave, because here is something that is more memorable and brings more glory to God than creation. We cannot begin to think of the magnitude of this creation that includes this little world, with its human beings. People are discovering new wonders continually, but all this does nothing to reveal the glory of God compared to the accomplishment of Christ, the Son of God, on the cross of Calvary, when He purged the sins of His people and set them free from Satan's power.

Satan has his power because we are sinners. That is how he can get us to think the thoughts we think and to have the fears we have. But Christ has deprived him of his power, and surely this manifestation of the greatness and glory of the Son of God in our nature must be a tremendous work! It must be a *great* salvation.

You would not say a man was great because he could pick up a pebble and throw it a few feet, as any infant could. But that man is a great, strong man who could lift a boulder above his head that nobody else could *move*. The fact is that Christ has done a work which manifests His greatness: the work of saving His people from their sins. What a great salvation! "In that salvation wrought by Thee His glory is made great" (Ps 21:5).

We see the glory of Christ, even on the cross of Calvary, in the face that was marred, the visage that was marred more than that of any man. What a great salvation it is when you think of what sinners are saved from, and what

they are saved *to*, but especially when you think of the great Saviour, the One who is set before us in the everlasting gospel.

We also have to recognise that God Himself has made these things known to us. *God* spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, but He has spoken to us in these last days by His Son (Heb 1:1-2). As our text says, these things began to be spoken by the Lord. He came from God, the Word made flesh, to reveal the will of God for the salvation of His people. He preached the kingdom of God. He made God *known*; He made God's purpose of salvation known. It was known in the Old Testament, but now it is made known with greater clarity by Christ Himself, and what He revealed has been confirmed to us by those that heard Him.

The apostles were communicating what Christ Himself and the Spirit of Christ revealed to them. "Holy men of God spake as they were *moved* by the Holy Ghost." No scripture is of any private interpretation, which means that it is not coming out of their own minds. It is not the way *they* think. They are not saying, "*I* think this is the way it is." When we read these epistles or any part of God's Word, we are not getting the writer's interpretation of what was revealed to him. We are getting what *God* has infallibly communicated. Yes, the men were fallible and weak, but God made them what they were and gave them the thoughts and the words. God formed everything about them in such a way that, while they were writing these things themselves, what they were writing was the very Word of God. He bore witness to that, as it says here, "with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will".

In His sovereignty, God accompanied the revelations that were given through these men with signs and wonders, with works of power – which were confirming what they were saying. These works were in accordance with what they were saying, works that were not human but supernatural, and gifts of the Holy Spirit. These are the signs of the apostles. These things occurred in order to confirm the truth, before the Scriptures were complete, as we have them in the canon of Scripture today. It was a period when revelation was being completed, and the Holy Spirit was giving the people these miracles to give authority to what the apostles were saying.

We do not need the miracles now. We have the complete Bible, but the Holy Spirit still bears witness, not with signs and wonders but by making that Word speak to the souls of sinners and transform them. It is a greater miracle. Why are people wanting things like speaking with tongues? Childish things have no place in the Church of Christ today. The greatest confirming miracle of the truth of the Scriptures is the Scriptures speaking to the souls, minds and consciences of sinners and *transforming* them, making

them new creatures. The Bible comes with its own authority; we do not have to give it authority. It has its own light, its own power. God is still bearing witness by the Holy Spirit to the truth of what God has made known to us through the prophets, through Christ, through the apostles.

Have we felt the power of that truth ourselves? Then we do not need to scrape around for evidences of the truth of Scripture, however useful they are in their own place in addressing the agnostic. The Word of God has its own authority, and we believe it – if we do believe it because its authority has been impressed upon us. The Spirit of God has made the reading and the preaching of the Word a means of convincing and converting sinners, and of building them up in their most holy faith. These are the things which we have heard. We have heard them because God has *spoken* them, things concerning the great salvation, things concerning the great Saviour.

2. The warning given. The warning is to take care lest we let slip, lest we neglect, lest we be guilty of disobedience, lest we receive a just recompense of reward. The margin points to containers that are *leaking*: you pour water into them and it runs out through holes. Does that not describe the hearing of many under the gospel, perhaps all of us at times? The truth is poured into our minds and memories, but as far as efficacy and giving heed are concerned, it just *leaks away* and leaves no lasting impression.

The other allusion there could be in these words is to a ship at sea or in a great river, and there is a harbour that it is meant to enter, yet because the captain is not paying attention to his charts and instruments and position, but is taken up with other things, it slips past the harbour. That is what many sinners are doing under the gospel. They are drifting along. They are pre-occupied with other things, often legitimate in their own place.

I suppose the lives of most regular gospel hearers in our day are free from scandal and the things they are occupied with are legitimate in themselves, but *anything* that takes up our attention so that we let slip, or do not give heed to, the things we have heard is *dangerous*. We ought to examine ourselves as to whether we are in that situation. We hear the Word of God, and the Apostle says, “We ought to give the more earnest heed to the things”. It is as applicable to the preacher as to the hearer. *We* ought to take heed, lest we let them slip. We can make these things known to others and slip past the harbour ourselves! We have to *beware* – in the pulpit and in the pew – of *neglecting* the great salvation. The same word is used in the parable Jesus told about the king that made a marriage for his son. He sent out messengers, servants, to bid people to the marriage. We are told they *made light* of it, and went, one to his farm and the other to his merchandise. The remnant, the others, took these servants, treated them badly and slew them.

The gospel hearer may not react violently against the gospel or the preacher of the gospel, as they did, but those who neglected the invitation were absent from the marriage supper just as the others were. They missed out on what they were invited to partake of, not by slaying the messengers but by just neglecting it. Most gospel hearers who do not come to know the grace of God in truth are just slipping along, not violently opposed to it consciously – just not really interested, not interested enough for their chief concern to be to have Christ as their Saviour! They are *neglecting* the great salvation, thinking *lightly* of it, a salvation accomplished by the Son of God in human nature, a salvation that the angels are looking into, stretching their necks, as it says, to see what it is all about.

Yet many whom it concerns most intimately are neglecting it, and that is disobedience. It is disobedience to a plain command: Repent and believe the gospel. It has all the authority of God behind it. The unbeliever is included with all the horrible sins that exclude people from heaven. Yes, we know murderers, adulterers and robbers, and all the terrorists and wicked people will be excluded, if they do not repent. But the Lord is saying, Among them all are unbelievers, those who heard the Word of God, who read it every day of their lives from the time they could read, and yet they drifted on to a lost eternity, they *neglected* the great salvation. They refused to repent and believe. These are transgressors and disobedient.

It says in 2 Thessalonians that Christ will come in flaming fire to take “vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel”. That is all you need to do, that is all I need to do, to perish. We are *condemned already*, but how the neglect of the gospel adds to our condemnation. It will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, Sodom and Gomorrah, in the day of judgement, than for sinners who have been acquainted with the revelation of God in all its fullness. Yes, every sinner, supposing they never heard about the one living and true God, supposing they never heard about Christ and the great salvation, will perish. There is no other way to heaven except through Christ. No other religion, no Christianity without Christ will take a sinner to heaven. Every sinner has light enough to condemn him, but what must be the condemnation of the sinner who goes to eternity with his head full of the gospel and yet it is a gospel that he has disobeyed! That is what we are warned against: simply to let slip, to neglect – perhaps not rising up in opposition to, but not acting upon, the truth with which we are confronted.

3. The exhortation. “Therefore, we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.” *Therefore.* In view of the greatness of salvation and of the Saviour, in view of the privileges we have because God has acquainted us with these truths

in His Word, in view of the danger we are in of letting slip, of just *drifting* to eternity neglecting the great salvation, we *ought* – it is necessary for us – to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard.

There is a sense in which that is applicable to every one of us. It is to the Church that the Apostle is writing, to those who had made some kind of profession of Christ. Even those who really are the Lord's people, although they will never perish, they can suffer a great deal through not giving more earnest heed to the Word of God. We can become very impoverished in our Christian lives and very unchristian in our thoughts, attitudes and behaviour. We can lose much conscious blessing through not giving heed to His Word.

But especially in view are those who are in danger of not attending to the truth at all. The exhortation is to give more earnest heed – the most earnest attention we can – to the things we have heard. They are to become matters of real concern to us. We are not just to read the Bible casually and hope that somehow we will get a blessing through it. Those of us who profess Christ find ourselves falling into that situation. Especially late at night, perhaps, you just feel you have to read a passage. You read it, and when you are finished reading, you cannot remember what it was about. *That* is not going to bring a blessing to anyone, although the Lord is merciful.

But the Lord said, “*Search* the Scriptures . . . they are they which testify of Me” (Jn 5:39). Let us search the Scriptures, looking for Christ and desiring that God would reveal Christ to our souls and make Him our Saviour, a *reality* in our soul's experience. That was said about the Bereans. The apostles were more or less driven out of Thessalonica because the people would not listen. Many of them were converted, but the Jews as a whole would not listen to what was being said. But when the apostles went to Berea, these were more noble than those of Thessalonica, in that they “searched the Scriptures daily” to see if these things were so. “Therefore many of them believed.” They were *earnestly attending* to the truth. They were *searching* the Scriptures. They were receiving them with readiness of mind. It was a readiness to submit to the authority of God's Word.

We have to be *intent*, intensely intent, on seeking the Saviour, seeking salvation as it is revealed in His Word. We cannot *drift* into the kingdom of God. “*Strive* to enter in at the strait gate!” “Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (Mt 7:14). Few are looking for it. The Lord makes it very clear in His Word that, if anyone asks, he will receive; if he seeks, he will find; if he knocks, it will be opened unto him (Mt 7:7).

We know that it is not in the sinner by nature to seek the Lord or use the Word of God in that way. “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the

kingdom of God” (Jn 3:3). But our inability does not excuse us. Both his obligation and his inability press on the sinner. Why are we unable? It is not a God-imposed inability. It is a *sinful* inability. It is our *sin* that we do not repent. It is our *sin* that we do not believe. It is our *sin* that we do not come to Christ and receive Him and rest upon Him as He is offered to us in the gospel. And what is our sin cannot be pleaded as our excuse in the Day of Judgement! We cannot come before a judge saying, Although I am here on my hundredth charge for stealing, I cannot help it because that is my nature. We will not be able to say to God, It is my nature; I cannot believe because it is my sinful nature! “God *commandeth* all men everywhere to repent.”

I came across a statement by Thomas Boston: “If you do what you can, perhaps the Lord will do for you what you cannot do for yourself”. Now that statement has to be carefully guarded. It is not as if the work is shared between us and God. It is not as if our doing merits His doing on our behalf. But there is an important point there. A person cannot just sit back and expect God to save him. Many a one has been saved that was not expecting God to save him. As the old saying has it, “They came to scoff and they remained to pray”. We are not limiting God, but you may think of people who were hearing the gospel day after day, year after year, and still letting slip, still neglecting, still not stirred up to seek the Lord. We ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, to all the doctrines of God’s Word but especially the truth concerning Christ as the great Saviour of sinners, as the Author of the great salvation.

There is much here that we can use to examine ourselves and our attitude to the Word of God. What use have we made of that Word? We know these things. We have known them all our days. We can put in order the doctrines of the Bible. The children learn *The Shorter Catechism* and it is an excellent summary of biblical truth. We have the whole Bible. We believe that it is true, but what effect has it had on our relation with God, on our seeking of Christ? Are we coming and going from the place of the holy, from the Bible, from preaching, from the fellowship of God’s people, still *drifting along* towards eternity. Time is like a river flowing to eternity’s vast sea, and so many gospel hearers are just drifting along, neglecting the great salvation.

We ought to give the more earnest heed, that kind of heed that will keep us awake. If you are here without Christ, nothing better could happen than that you could not sleep for a night, or for many nights, through concern for your soul. That is the kind of attention we need to give to the Word of God, so that the Word would get into our minds, our hearts, our consciences, and that by the power of the Holy Ghost we would be made willing to entrust ourselves to this great and glorious Saviour.

Hector MacPhail of Resolis¹

2. Some Fruits of His Work

Robert MacDougall

This noted evangelist's grey pony was well known over a wide district of the Highlands. Taught by its master, the docile animal soon learned to halt of its own accord in approaching or passing any person on the highway. After MacPhail's death, the pony became the property of a very different master. Still it would insist on stopping as before on the way, and the irritated owner soon exchanged it for a more pliant animal. The pony would have suited the Welsh evangelist, Thomas Charles of Bala, who in those days seemed to have received part of the mantle of the departing northern pastor and to have unweariedly preached Christ, not in the pulpit alone, but in the schools, in the huts, and on the highways and wild mountains. If Charles met a poor man or woman on the road, he would stop his horse and ask, "Can you read the Bible?" So he soon became known everywhere by this practice.

MacPhail was ever most anxious that the young would be led to the Saviour and never lost an opportunity of teaching them to pray. On one occasion he prayed by the bedside of a young boy, Barrington Ferguson, who was seriously ill. As he was leaving the room, he said very earnestly to the youth, "Be you much in prayer, and you will one day be in a lovely place beyond the sun". The little boy recovered. He became in time a worthy and devout elder, fruitful in old age, and lived until 1850, when he soared into the land that is brighter than the sun.

Passing idle herd boys, MacPhail would draw them to his side, and many were the kindly methods he would use in order to adapt the truth to the capacity of the young and ignorant. Sometimes he would offer a silver coin on condition that the youngster should form habits of prayer in future.

He took into his own service a herd boy whose religious education had been sadly neglected. On being asked if he was in the habit of praying, the boy excused himself by pleading that he did not know what to say in prayer. His master at once replied, "Is there nothing that you stand in need of? Whatever need you feel, just make that the subject of prayer."

Then he quietly told one of the servants to listen to the boy's attempts to pray. The boy was soon in a quiet corner on his knees. He had no shoes, rather a common want in those days, for poor parents ruled that the first shoes worn by their children should be purchased by their own youthful earnings. Then the boy's porridge, it seems, was cold when he came in hungry

¹Reprinted with editing from *The Free Presbyterian Magazine* for February 1916. The previous article last month included an account of MacPhail's conversion.

to breakfast from herding animals. These wants he audibly expressed, in simple but earnest Gaelic expressions. The boy's grievances were reported to his master, and they were at once attended to.

A day or two after that, MacPhail, in his usual earnest, kindly manner, asked the boy how he was getting on. With boyish glee he replied, "O so nicely; I never was so well off as now; whatever I need, I have only to put it in the prayer, and I find it very quickly given me". This was the happy opportunity for which the pastor waited. He taught the boy that he had a soul, that was neglected, guilty, starving; and he showed him how to pray for better things than those bodily comforts that perish with the using. Henceforth the attention of the boy was turned to the more pressing necessities of the soul. Awakened by the Holy Spirit to a sense of his sin and misery, he was led in a day of power to a saving interest in Christ Jesus.

The story of Luke Heywood is well known, but a brief account of the conversion of one who became afterwards an honoured witness for the truth, and a successful labourer in Christ's vineyard, may appropriately be given here. Fort George lies on the seashore between Inverness and Nairn, on a point jutting out into the Moray Firth. It was built in the middle of the eighteenth century at a cost of £200 900, and it contains accommodation for nearly 3000 troops. Beneath its formidable-looking walls there is a ferry crossing about a mile broad. The boats are stationed on the opposite side from Fort George and cross for passengers in response to a signal. There booths were erected for the convenience of the military for the sale of country produce.

One afternoon, MacPhail was returning home from the east coast, and from the Fort George ferry lay the direct route northward to Resolis, nine miles distant. As he waited with his faithful pony for the ferry boat, a profane soldier, whose name was Luke Heywood, a private in an English regiment stationed in the Fort, came out to the wooden booths to purchase meat and asked the price of a leg of mutton lying on the table. On being told the charge, the godless soldier invoked damnation on his own soul if he ever paid that price for the joint. But the butcher would not give way, and much loud wrangling ended in the soldier accepting in full the original demand.

MacPhail was all the while standing nearby and was greatly shocked at the profanity of the purchaser. As Luke Heywood turned in the direction of the Fort entrance, the minister greeted him kindly. MacPhail entered into conversation with him and remarked, "What a fine leg of mutton you have got there!" "Yes," was the reply, "and was it not cheap?" "What, may I ask, did you pay for it?" "So much," said the soldier. "No! You are mistaken. I, in waiting for the boat, overheard the bargain. You prayed that God might damn your soul if you gave the figure you have just named. Know you not

that you have thrown away your immortal soul for that piece of meat?” And now the way was opened for those solemn warnings and appeals which the devoted pastor was so pre-eminently skillful in addressing to the conscience. At length, bidding the saddened soldier farewell, MacPhail stepped into the ferry boat, which had by this time reached the pebbly beach.

“The words of the wise are as goads”, and they pierced Luke Heywood to the heart. As he returned to the barracks, a tumult of emotion swept over his stricken soul. He tried hard, but could not shake off his convictions. The doom of a lost soul was thundering louder in his ears than all the cannonry of the Fort. At length, agonized in soul, he hurried out to where the ferry came to the shore, and asked for the gentleman with the grey pony. Of course he was told at once that the person he inquired after was the well-known minister of Resolis, who by this time was well on his way home. Then, in his agitation, he said he must hasten after him and, making some inquiries as to the way, he leaped into the ferry boat, now leaving for another passage of the Firth.

Arrived at the north side, Heywood hastened over the heath-covered ridge that separates Rosemarkie parish from Resolis. Towards evening he arrived at the manse door and anxiously asked for the minister, who gave him a most cordial welcome. What a change the sword of the Lord had produced on the careless soldier, “piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit”! What cries from the depths were now rising up in one who had bartered his soul “for one morsel of meat”! But what a mercy for the wounded soldier to be under the treatment of so skilful an under-physician. MacPhail’s study was a veritable spiritual doctor’s surgery, and very many were the cases of wounded consciences that were successfully treated there. Three days the soldier remained at the manse, days of concentrated agony, such as Saul passed at Damascus. All that tradition has handed down in regard to those days of soul-conflict is MacPhail’s remark: “Poor Luke Heywood in three days passed through those depths in which I sank and struggled for so many long months”.

His deliverance out of the horrible pit was very remarkable, and deep was the joy of this sincere convert on experiencing, with power, that the blood of Jesus cleanses from all sin. With a heart yearning over him with parental affection, MacPhail parted with this “brand plucked out of the fire”. I can fancy the rapturous melody with which they both sang Psalm 126: “When Zion’s bondage God turned back, as men that dreamed were we. . .”.

But I must meantime leave Heywood going on “his way rejoicing” to the Fort. His conversion was a wonderful illustration of “grace abounding to the chief of sinners”. A somewhat similar story is narrated in the *Memoir* of the

famous John M'Laurin, who laboured with such success in Glasgow in the eighteenth century. Caught on one occasion in a crowd in one of the streets, he was subjected to considerable pressure and jostling. Some profane person near him was annoyed at the crush and called on God to damn his soul for Christ's sake. M'Laurin turned to him and remarked with impressive solemnity, "God has done many things for Christ's sake, and perhaps He will do that too". The remark sank into the man's conscience. A blessed change of character followed, which he ascribed to the simple but emphatic rebuke of the faithful, devout and heavenly minded divine.

So, in like manner James Thomson, a noted Resolis catechist, of deep Christian experience, was in his career of sin before his conversion, "in the act of uttering a tremendous oath to one of his horses when the arrows of the Almighty pierced his conscience and, after a fiery struggle between hope and despair, he became another and a new man," whose memory is deservedly revered in Ross-shire.

But let no profane swearer take encouragement from these pages to "continue in sin that grace may abound". These reformed swearers were made to feel, with intensest bitterness, the wormwood and gall of sin. So Saul of Tarsus, arrested in his career of mad persecution, was ever after vile in his own eyes, "less than the least of all saints" and "not meet to be called an Apostle, because [he] persecuted the Church of God".

Luke Heywood, in the full fervour of his first love, returned to resume his military duties at Fort George. The Lord had done great things for him, whereof he was glad. One can fancy his feelings and emotions as he recrossed the ferry and, moving in a new world, gazed upon the haunts of his former dissipation. It is likely that he brought a letter from his spiritual father to the Governor, Sir Eyre Coote, written in part like that model of elegant apology, Paul's Epistle to Philemon. Even supposing him punished for his three days' absence without leave, the severest penalties would be trifling to one who had so recently cried, as it were, "out of the belly of hell", and God heard his voice. Like the Gadarene demoniac, "clothed and in his right mind", he was longing to tell his comrades "how great things" Jesus had done to him. At once he began to keep a prayer meeting, which the soldiers attended with feelings like those of the hearers of the newly converted Saul of Tarsus, and similar results followed.

The story of so remarkable a conversion, and the fame of the prayer meetings at the Fort, extended far and wide and were the talk of the countryside. Civilians, some of whom walked 12 miles from neighbouring parishes, mingled with the redcoats that listened, after the daily routine of military duties was over, to the wonderful things God had done for the fervid convert's

soul, and had their hearts bowed as they joined in the prayer of the contrite spirit. How many of the soldiers were converted cannot now be ascertained, but there is no reason to distrust the reports handed down by tradition of the change effected in many hearts hitherto strangers to grace and to God.

But persecution because of the Word was not long in arising. The captain of the company to which Heywood belonged was an avowed and determined enemy of the truth. He resolved to put an end to this outbreak of fanaticism in the Fort and threatened to punish the devout Christian leader with flogging if the meetings were not discontinued. The soldier, however, knew that he had broken no law of the army. Meetings for boisterous mirth and revelry had been – in the evil days now behind him – allowed to pass unchallenged, and now that an evident reformation was spreading among the ranks, why should so good a work be interfered with? Heywood counted the cost. The sphere of conscience was invaded, and he must serve God rather than man. The God whom he served continually would deliver him; and if not, it would be an honour to suffer shame for Christ's sake.

One day the persecuting captain and another officer – said to be a brother of his own – received an invitation to shoot on a moor near Culloden, a few miles from the Fort. Before starting on his hunting expedition, the captain summoned Heywood to appear before him. He then told Heywood he was going away for the day, and if on his return he found that he had been holding any prayer meeting, he swore profanely that he would order the culprit before him to be publicly flogged. Luke was silent for a minute or two, and then, almost echoing the words of doom spoken of old by Micaiah to Ahab, he answered right solemnly, "Captain, if you return alive, God never spoke by me". Of course, the warning words were treated with contempt, only deepening the persecutor's resolution to stamp out the meetings, as he hastened up the beach and on to the hillside. In the course of the day he had occasion to crouch behind a dyke, watching the approach of deer. His brother officer came in that direction and mistook him for game and, firing suddenly, shot him dead on the spot.

It may readily be believed that there was no further interference with the prayer meetings at the Fort. But the Head of the Church had work for him in his native land. The regiment was soon afterwards ordered back to England, where Heywood obtained his discharge from the army. He is said to have laboured with success as a minister until his death. To Heywood, however, it matters very little whether his name is remembered or forgotten by his countrymen, for it lives on high among those who have turned many to righteousness and who shine as stars for ever and ever.

"As a preacher," in the words of the eminent John Kennedy of Dingwall,

“Mr MacPhail was peculiarly edifying to the people of the Lord. He could deal with their cases more closely and more tenderly than almost any other minister in his day. He does not appear to have been so careful in the composition of his sermons as some others of the fathers in Ross-shire. He was careful to feel, rather than to arrange, the doctrine which he preached, but what his discourses lacked of order was well made up by their unction and freshness. Having to preach on a Sabbath in Petty, and after a large congregation had assembled to hear him, he was in the wood without sermon or text wrestling with the Lord. The hour for beginning the service had long passed before Mr MacPhail was seen approaching the tent; but of all the remarkable sermons he ever preached, the one he preached that day was, perhaps, the most refreshing to God’s people, and the most fruitful in the conversion of sinners.

“Some of his own people were there and, wishing for their fellow parishioners the benefit which they themselves had derived and expecting a renewal of their former enjoyment, they requested their minister to preach the same sermon at Resolis. He did so, but those who had heard it before were this time greatly disappointed. [Someone] mentioning this to Mr MacPhail, he accounted for the difference by saying, ‘When in Petty, you were looking to the Lord, but in Resolis you were looking to me. There you got the manna fresh from heaven; here you got it after it had mouldered in my memory.’”

Petty, here referred to, lies between Fort George and Inverness. The minister, John Morrison, was distinguished for his piety and unflinching boldness in delivering the gospel message. MacPhail assisted at the communion there, and at such times people used to assemble from neighbouring parishes. The church could not accommodate half the crowds who gathered; so a wooden tent was commonly erected in a carefully selected spot for the convenience of the worshippers, before the preparatory services of the annual sacramental season. It was no wonder that the Petty assemblies should contain a good sprinkling of Resolis people. To some of them the distance would be only 13 or 14 miles, and people today travel much further sometimes to attend Highland communions, when a notable evangelical preacher officiates.

The accounts handed down of MacPhail’s deathbed sayings and experiences are what might have been expected of so devout and self-denying a Christian. His profound humility shone out in his life and, like the setting sun, gilded his closing hours with surpassing lustre. A much-loved elder, the godly Thomas Holm, came to see him in the beginning of the illness that proved fatal. As he stood by the bedside, Holm asked him if he expected to recover. “Yes”, said his pastor. “And what ground, may I ask, have you for the hope you are expressing?” “Well, that passage of Scripture, the message

vouchsafed to Jacob of old, has been occurring to me with much power and sweetness, ‘Fear not to go down into Egypt . . . I will also surely bring thee up again’.” “Good news, verily, for you, but sad, sad news for the people of Resolis and for the Church in Scotland,” was the sorrowing reply, “for it was Jacob’s corpse that was carried back.” “Yes, Thomas,” said MacPhail pleasantly, “you were ever ahead of me in discernment, and you have the advantage of me still.”

This is but one of many evidences of that lowliness of mind that esteemed others better than himself. One night, we are told, he was specially restless. His friends asked him if the cause was bodily pain or was any cloud coming between him and the Saviour in whom he trusted. Were his evidences of a saving interest in Christ darkened? Or what was the reason of his tossings to and fro on his bed? The memorable answer he gave was that he felt as much assured of being for ever with his Saviour as he was of lying on his bed, adding, “but I know not how I can look Him in the face, when I think how little I have done for Him”. His deep sense of unworthiness and indebtedness to free sovereign grace constrained him to say, “I am an unprofitable servant”. His death and burial, and the high estimate formed of him by contemporary worthies, may be left over for a concluding article.

“It Is Finished”¹

Matthew Henry

John 19:30. *When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, He said, It is finished: and He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost.*

It is finished, a comprehensive word, and a comforting one. (1.) It is finished, that is, *the malice and enmity of His persecutors had now done their worst*. When He had received that last indignity in the vinegar they gave Him, it was as if He said, This is the last; I am now going out of their reach, where the wicked cease from troubling.

(2.) It is finished, that is, *the counsel and commandment of His Father concerning His sufferings were now fulfilled*. It was a “determinate counsel”, and He took care to see every iota and tittle of it exactly answered (Acts 2:23). He had said, when He entered His sufferings: Father, “Thy will be done”. And now He said with pleasure, It is done. It was His meat and drink to finish His work (Jn 4:34), and the meat and drink refreshed Him, when they gave Him gall and vinegar.

(3.) It is finished, that is, *all the types and prophecies of the Old Testament*,

¹An extract from Henry’s *Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*.

which pointed at the sufferings of the Messiah, *were accomplished and answered*. He speaks as if, now that they had given Him the vinegar, He could not point to any word in the Old Testament that was to be fulfilled, between Him and His death, but it had its accomplishment: such as His being sold for 30 pieces of silver, His hands and feet being pierced, His garments divided. Now that this is done, it is finished.

(4.) It is finished, that is, *the ceremonial law was abolished*, and an end put to the obligation of it. The substance has now come, and all the shadows are done away. Just now the veil is rent, the wall of partition has been taken down, “even the law of commandments contained in ordinances” (Eph 2:14, 15). The Mosaic economy has been dissolved, to make way for a better hope.

(5.) It is finished, that is, *sin is finished*, and an end made of transgression, by the bringing in of an everlasting righteousness. It seems to refer to Daniel 9:24. The Lamb of God was sacrificed to take away the sin of the world, and it is done (Heb 9:26).

(6.) It is finished, that is, *His sufferings were now finished*, both those of His soul and those of His body. The storm is over; the worst is past; all His pains and agonies are at an end, and He is just going to paradise, entering upon the joy set before Him. Let all that suffer for Christ, and with Christ, comfort themselves with this, that yet a little while and they also shall say, It is finished.

(7.) It is finished, that is, *His life was now finished*, He was just ready to breathe His last, and now He is no more in this world (Jn 17:11). This is like that of blessed Paul: “I have finished my course” (2 Tim 4:7); my race is run, my glass has run out; “Mene, Mene” – numbered and finished (Dan 5:25). This we must all come to shortly.

(8.) It is finished, that is, *the work of man’s redemption and salvation is now completed*, at least the hardest part of the undertaking is over; a full satisfaction has been made to the justice of God, a fatal blow given to the power of Satan, a fountain of grace opened that shall ever flow, a foundation of peace and happiness laid that shall never fail. Christ had now gone through with His work and finished it (Jn 17:4). For, as for God, His work is perfect; “when I begin,” He says, “I will also make an end”. And, as in the purchase, so in the application, of the redemption, He that has begun a good work will complete it; the mystery of God shall be finished.

The leaving of the soul in the hands of Jesus is the very essence of faith.

Faith in God’s providence, instead of repressing our energies, excites us to diligence. We labour as if all depended on us, and then fall back upon the Lord with the calm faith which knows that all depends upon Him.

C H Spurgeon

Covetousness Dishonours Religion¹

For men to say their hopes are above, while their hearts are below; to profess to be above the stars, while they lick the dust of the serpent; to be born of God, while they are buried in the earth; how dishonourable is this to religion! The lapwing, which wears a little coronet on its head, and yet feeds on dung, is an emblem of such as profess to be crowned kings and priests unto God, and yet feed immoderately on earthly dunghill comforts.

“And seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not” (Jer 45:5). What, you Baruch, who are ennobled by the new birth, and are illustrious by your office, a Levite, do you seek earthly things, and seek them now? When the ship is sinking, are you decorating your cabin? Do not so degrade yourself, or blot your coat of arms! Do you seek great things? Seek them not. The higher grace is, the less earthly should Christians be – as the higher the sun is, the shorter is the shadow.

Thomas Watson

Aspects of the Ruling Eldership¹

1. The Scriptural Basis

R J Dickie

It has been said that “the eldership is perhaps the most distinctive feature of those Churches of the Reformation which honour the Calvinistic tradition”.² The focus of this paper is on the ruling elder within Presbyterianism. To say that there is a vast amount of literature on the subject is an understatement, so this paper can only touch on some of the issues. I will look at the following five areas: (1.) The scriptural basis for the office and duties of the ruling elder. (2.) Ruling elders between the apostolic Church and the Reformation. (3.) The continental Reformers and the ruling eldership. (4.) Scottish ruling elders from Knox to the Westminster Assembly. (5.) Changes affecting the Scottish ruling elder since the Reformation, including some of the controversies which have arisen in the Scottish Churches.

1. The scriptural basis for the office of the ruling elder. In the Scriptures the Lord Jesus Christ, the only King and Head of the Church, has revealed “a form of ecclesiastical organisation and rule”. Samuel Miller of Princeton Seminary notes that this form of ecclesiastical organisation and rule for the New Testament Church was . . . instituted by the Apostles and “was evidently

¹An edited extract from *The Ten Commandments*.

²The first part of a paper given at last year’s Theological Conference.

²George D Henderson, *The Scottish Ruling Elder*, James Clarke & Co, 1935, p 11.

taken, with very little alteration, from the preceding [Old Testament] economy". He proceeds to say, "We find the same plan closely copied by the churches for a considerable time after the apostolic age . . . until corruption, both in doctrine and practice, had gained a melancholy prevalence through the ambition and degeneracy of ecclesiastics".³

The words "presbyterianism" and "presbyter" are derived from the New Testament Greek word *presbyteros*, which means "older" or "elder". That Greek word appears 67 times in the New Testament and is used 20 times in the context of the Christian Church. It is virtually always translated in the Authorised Version as "elder", whether it relates to elders of the Jews or elders of the Christian Church.

It is important for us to ascertain the exact significance of the word "elder", as it is fundamental to ascertaining how the visible Church is governed. Questions of church government arose in the early days of the Christian era. These were documented in the Acts of the Apostles, and "theological debate about the nature, location, and exercise of authority, in the Church" has been ongoing ever since.⁴ Over the centuries and right down to the present day, contentions with other forms of church government have all contributed to an extensive literature which considers Presbyterianism in general, and the office and functions of the ruling elder versus the teaching elder in particular.

The ruling elder in the Old Testament. We cannot fully understand either the spirit, the facts, or the nomenclature of the New Testament, without going back to the Old Testament.⁵ The English term "elder" corresponds to the biblical Hebrew word *zaqen* and the New Testament Greek word *presbyteros*. These words literally signify an older person, especially with an implicit status arising from years of accumulated wisdom and experience. Over time, the term "elder" became an established title of office, and these men were inspectors and rulers of the people.⁶ Scripture records 70 elders over the nation, as well as elders over thousands, over hundreds, over fifties, and over tens.

These civic elders must not be confused with the elders of the synagogues, also known as rulers of the synagogues, whose function was purely religious. It is well known that the origin of synagogue worship and the establishment of rulers of the synagogue is not recorded in Scripture, but Jesus attended synagogue services and thus gave divine approbation of the system of synagogue worship with its ministers and rulers or elders.

³Samuel Miller, *The Ruling Elder*, Presbyterian Heritage Publications reprint, 1987, pp 18-19.

⁴Norman Doe, *Christian Law: Contemporary Principles*, Cambridge University Press, 2013.

⁵Samuel Miller, *The Ruling Elder*, p 31.

⁶Miller cites Exodus 3:16; 17:5; 18:12; 24:1,9; Numbers 11:16; Deuteronomy 25:7-9; 29:10; 31:9, 28 "and other passages".

More than once, we find single synagogues having “rulers” in the plural. The term “chief ruler” is applied to Crispus (Acts 18:8) and Sosthenes (Acts 18:17). That terminology confirms a point recorded universally by Jewish and Christian writers on Jewish antiquities, namely, that “in every synagogue there was a bench of elders, consisting of at least three persons, who were charged with the whole inspection, government and discipline of the synagogue; [and] who as a court or bench of rulers received, judged, censured, excluded and, in a word, performed every judicial act necessary to the regularity and welfare of the congregation”.⁷ The chief ruler was of the same rank or order as the other rulers: he had no other precedence among the rulers than presiding and taking the lead in their assemblies.⁸ Alternative names for the chief rulers were “heads of the synagogues”, “overseers”, “presidents”, and “orderers” or “regulators” of the affairs of the synagogues.⁹

The topic of Church government has been the subject of innumerable controversies, and at this point I will allude to the sixteenth-century Swiss physician and theologian, Thomas Erastus, who was nominally a Zwinglian. Erastus contended that there was no ecclesiastical government among the Jews distinct from the civil government, and hence taught that there were no rulers of the synagogue apart from the civil judges. The errors of Erastianism were comprehensively refuted by George Gillespie,¹⁰ Samuel Rutherford,¹¹ the Anglican bishop Edward Stillingfleet¹² and others.¹³

The ruling elder in the New Testament. When we come to the New Testa-

⁷Samuel Miller, *The Ruling Elder*, p 35. Miller mentions the Dutch, English and French theologians Campegius Vitranga, Gijsbertus Voetius, Johannes Marckius, Hugo Grotius, John Lightfoot, John Selden, David Blondel and Claudius Salmasius, whose sources were “Philo, Josephus, Maimonides, Benjamin of Tudela [also known as Benjamin ben Jonah], and the great mass of other Jewish witnesses, who are considered as holding the first rank among Rabbinical authorities”.

⁸Samuel Miller, *The Ruling Elder*, p 38.

⁹Samuel Miller, *The Ruling Elder*, p 38.

¹⁰George Gillespie, *Aarons Rod Blossoming: Or, the Divine Ordinance of Church-Government Vindicated; so as the present Erastian controversie concerning the distinction of civill and ecclesiasticall government, excommunication, and suspension, is fully debated and discussed, from the holy Scripture, from the Jewish and Christian antiquities, from the consent of latter writers, from the true nature and rights of magistracy, and from the groundlessness of the chiefe objections made against the Presbyterianiall-government in point of a domineering arbitrary unlimited power*, London, 1646.

¹¹Samuel Rutherford, *The divine right of church-government and excommunication: or A peaceable dispute for the perfection of the holy Scripture in point of ceremonies and church-government*, London, 1646.

¹²Edward Stillingfleet, *Irenicum, a Weapon-Salve for the Churches Wounds; or, the Divine Right of Particular Forms of Church Government, discussed and examined*, London, 1659.

¹³Samuel Miller, *The Ruling Elder*, p 35.

ment, there are fundamental differences in the understanding of Scripture, which lead the Episcopalian to conclude that there are bishops, priests and deacons, with no ruling elders; the Independent to conclude that there are pastors and deacons, with no ruling elders, and the Presbyterian to conclude that there are four offices: ministers (or teaching elders), ruling elders, doctors and deacons.

The worship of the New Testament Church corresponds to the worship of the synagogue, and the two sacraments of the New Testament Church replaced the Old Testament ordinances of the passover and circumcision. There was such a strikingly close resemblance between all the features of the early churches and Jewish synagogues that “the heathen frequently suspected Christian churches of being Jewish synagogues in disguise, and accordingly stigmatised them as such”.¹⁴ It is therefore not surprising to discover that the officers of the Church corresponded to those of the synagogue. Looking particularly at the elders, we find that a plurality of elders was ordained in every church (Acts 14:23, Tts 1:5); the elders deliberated on contentious matters (Acts 15:4, 6); the elders were overseers of the flock (Acts 20:20,27); sick people were exhorted to summon the elders to visit them, so that the elders would pray over them and anoint them with oil (Jas 5:14); the elders were to feed the flock as humble and exemplary overseers (1 Pet 5:1-3); and in turn the people were to obey, honour and esteem their ruling elders (Heb 13:17; 1 Tim 5:17; 1 Th 5:12-13).¹⁵

Both the direction and the practice were to ordain a plurality of elders in every church, small as well as great. This is strongly reminiscent of the synagogue model. The number ordained exceeded what was needed for the purpose of public instruction. Rather, as in the synagogue, some were rulers who formed a body for governing the church.¹⁶ Texts supporting this view include Romans 12:8 (“he that ruleth”) and 1 Corinthians 12:28 (which speaks of an office of “government”), and most pointedly, 1 Timothy 5:17: “Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in word and doctrine”. John Owen says of this text, “A rational man, who is unprejudiced, who never heard of the controversy about ruling elders, can hardly avoid an apprehension that there are two sorts of elders, some who labour in the word and doctrine, and some who do not do so”.¹⁷ For clarity, “The advocates of the office of ruling elder do not contend

¹⁴Samuel Miller, *The Ruling Elder*, p 50.

¹⁵Samuel Miller, *The Ruling Elder*, pp 50-53.

¹⁶Samuel Miller, *The Ruling Elder*, p 53.

¹⁷John Owen, “The True Nature of a Gospel Church” in *The Works of John Owen*, Banner of Truth repr, 1968), vol 16, chap 7 (“Of the rule of the church, or of ruling elders”), p 116.

or believe that the function of ruling is confined to this class of officers. On the contrary, they suppose and teach that one class of elders both rule and teach, while the other class rule only. Both, according to the doctrine of the Presbyterian Church, are *proestōtes* [rulers]; but one [class] only ‘labour in the word and doctrine’.”¹⁸

Eastern Europe Mission News

Rev Dmytro Levytskyi

The situation in the south-western region of Ukraine has worsened since the Odessa region was recently declared a war zone. This means stricter rules and restrictions for those living there. It also means that all civil administrations in the region are subordinate to the military. Missile and drone attacks have become more frequent, and there are days when the alarm sounds every two hours. This is especially hard to bear at night; as a result, you are practically unable to work the next day. In addition we have a new Covid outbreak. At such times, one understands how weak one is, and the words of the Bible, “In Him we live, and move, and have our being,” become clearer.

Despite these difficulties, the Most High is merciful to us; we are still alive and continue our missionary work, preaching the gospel of Christ and distributing Bible literature. The congregation meets regularly, as much as possible under these circumstances – although in small numbers: five adults and three children. Sometimes, although very rarely, our friends and neighbours join us. We thank the Almighty for His mercy, that has preserved us. “It is of the Lord’s mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not” (Lam 3:22).

The Lord graciously preserves us; so drones and missiles pass us by. The recent missile strike on a farm warehouse nearby flew over our heads, and windows were blown out in neighbouring houses. People’s reactions to these strikes and explosions vary: some go to church, buy Bibles and try in every way to get closer to God. They are afraid of death but, as often happens, they come to Christ not for eternal life, but for temporal relief. They are like Pharaoh, in the book of Exodus, who wanted God to “take away from me this death only”. However, there are those for whom the Bible is the Word of God, and the deeds of His good providence are a sign of His mercy.

Almost every week we hear mines exploding on the seashore, as the entire coast is mined and many mines come ashore during storms. Many beaches along the Black Sea coast of Odessa are closed to recreation; people are

¹⁸Samuel Miller, *The Ruling Elder*, p 67.

prohibited from swimming in the sea. However, people continue to come to the beaches as if there was no war in the country and as if it was safe to swim in the sea and sunbathe. They break the law and deny the fact that their fragile lives depend on the Lord, and tragic deaths are evidence of this. "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom 8:6-7).

We pray to the Almighty that He will raise up those who will take up the banner of gospel truth and raise it up as a testimony to the people of this country. "Therefore said He unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He would send forth labourers into His harvest" (Lk 10:2).

Book Review

The Revival of Religion, Calvary's Mournful Mountain, by John Bonar and others, published by the Banner of Truth Trust, hardback, 463 pages, £18.50, obtainable from the Free Presbyterian Bookroom.

This book, which was first published in 1840, contains 14 addresses by Scottish Evangelical leaders which were delivered in Glasgow that year. Many of these Addresses were given by men whose names are well known to us: John Bonar, Jonathan Ranken Anderson, Alexander Moody Stuart, Robert Candlish, William Burns and Patrick Fairbairn, to name but a few. The concluding Biographical Notes provide us with a helpful summary of each of the speakers. However, the material on Anderson is inaccurate, his views were fully in line with *The Westminster Confession of Faith*.

Even though none of those men could remember the revival at Kirk of Shotts, which was not much more than 200 years before this (1630), nor the revival at Cambuslang about 100 years before (1742), yet the time when their addresses were given was one of blessing in our land, and so the men who delivered them were speaking from an experience that we do not have today.

It is clear from the introductory statements to these addresses, as well as the Preface by William Maxwell Hetherington (1803-65), that the men chosen to give them were also given the subjects on which they spoke. There is clearly an order to them. Address One by John Bonar is entitled: "The Nature of a Religious Revival, State of Religion requiring it, Effects which it is calculated to produce in the Church and on the World, Vindication from Misapprehension and Prejudice". Address Two, by Jonathan R Anderson, is entitled: "The Work of Christ in connection with the Revival of Religion –

His Atonement, Righteousness, and Intercession”, and Address Three by Alexander Moody Stuart is entitled: “The Work of the Holy Spirit in the Revival of Religion”. One can see from those mentioned that the scope of these Addresses was wide and, while there was inevitably some overlap, there was not a great deal of it.

What is there in those addresses for ourselves in our day? They certainly highlight the need for a revival, as brought out by John M’Naughtan in his Address on “The Necessity of the Revival of Religion in the Present Circumstances of the Church”. And if what he was saying was true at that time, how much more is it so in our days when the Cause is so low in our land.

In his address on “The Sovereignty of God as connected with the Revival of Religion”, Michael Willis reminds us of the words of the Lord through Moses: “The Lord did not set His love upon you . . . because ye were more in number than any people . . . but because the Lord loved you and because He would keep the oath which He had sworn unto your fathers”. Willis gives many examples from God’s Word and subsequent history, of His grace in choosing nations and individuals, while passing by others.

The fact of God’s sovereignty however, does not cancel out our responsibility, as Willis is careful to emphasise. “Let us not for a moment suppose that election denotes God’s sovereign choice of one or another from among those that seek His face, to the passing by of the rest. The election will be found to embrace all who truly seek God: yea, as election takes effect only by our calling, and as effectual calling implies the outward or common call of the gospel, addressed to every hearer of the word of life; so it is just by hearing and believing, not otherwise, that any man can know his election. The earnest believing seeker is the very sign of his interest in God’s eternal purpose of grace. Nay, it is election which is the cause of all; nor, but for God’s merciful determination to renovate the corrupt will of the sinner, would he ever have asked in earnestness, or so much as knocked at the door of heaven” (pp 93,103-4).

The importance of praying for a revival is emphasised by Alexander Cumming in his address on “Prayer . . . as connected with the Revival of Religion”. After connecting numerous revivals over the years with the prayers that preceded them, Cummings goes on to stress the importance of earnestness in prayer. “There is a degree of importunity in prayer, which God expects us to reach, and which is represented by the wrestling of Jacob, who saith, ‘I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me’. Doubtless one of the most remarkable lessons taught us by that transaction is the amazing condescension of God. That the wrestling was corporal is evident from the fact that Jacob’s thigh was out of joint as he wrestled with the angel; this injury which was

inflicted was intended to show him that he had not overcome the angel by his physical energy, but that He had lingered beside him, soothed and delighted by the melody of his supplications.”

Cummings goes on, “The high and Holy One who inhabiteth eternity stooped from His august elevation above all creatures, to permit a creature to lay a restraint on him; and indeed He has used the remarkable phraseology, ‘Concerning the work of My hand, command ye Me’. Moses commanded God when the latter exclaimed, ‘Now, therefore, let Me alone that My wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them’. Never do we honour God so much as when our faith towers to such a heroic pitch of trust in Him as prompts a boldness which will not be satisfied with anything short of the boon that is implored, for we believe there is so much love in the yearnings of His paternal bosom that He will not continue to repel our requests. And it is at the time when we confer the greatest honour on Him that He honours us most in permitting us as it were to lay fetters on His omnipotent arm” (pp 135,6).

Much more could be quoted from these addresses on the vitally important subject of “The Revival of Religion” than is brought out in this review. “The Symptoms and Fruits of a Revival of Religion” by Charles J Brown, for example, speaks of “an unusual thirst for the preaching of the Word, and unusual meltings of soul under it; the prevalence of anxious enquiries about salvation; an earnest general desire to give vent to our feelings in prayer, secret and social” (pp 298-301). The address by Patrick Fairbairn, “Hindrances to the Revival of Religion”, also has much to teach us as well as to warn us against.

If we are the Lord’s people, surely nothing will cause us greater desire than a revival of religion, one that will not only awaken the dead but revive the living. For such people these addresses will be of particular interest and help.

(Rev) *W A Weale*

Protestant View

“His Bishoprick Let Another Take”

The correspondence between Ahithophel, Judas and the Pope makes it appropriate to explore parallels between them. One of these is the direction given in Psalm 109:8, “Let another take his office”, which is applied by Peter to Judas in Acts 1:20, in the form, “His bishoprick let another take”. As a result, Matthias was chosen by lot and “numbered among the eleven apostles” (v 26). Some have thought that the apostles acted prematurely in this, and should

have waited for the calling of Paul, but the subsequent acknowledgment of them as “the twelve” (Acts 6:2) confirms that they had been guided by the Holy Spirit in the step that they had taken.

In its original context, Ps 109:8 refers to the death of Ahithophel, David’s counsellor (2 Sam 15:12), who had turned against David, advised how to defeat him, and hanged himself when his counsel was not taken. David was the author of Psalm 109, and the instruction given in verse 8 by the Holy Spirit was obeyed when Ahithophel was replaced as David’s counsellor by Jehoiada, the son of Benaiah, and Abiathar (1 Chr 27:33,34). Thus David’s household was restored to its full complement, and the wicked Ahithophel was not missed.

The New Testament Church is “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone” (Eph 2:20). The number of apostles – twelve – is the number of “perfection” in Scripture, and corresponds to the number of the tribes of Israel. The defection and death of Judas had reduced the number of apostles to eleven and spoilt this perfection, and it was to rectify this that Matthias was chosen. With the foundation of the Church restored to its state of perfection, the Holy Spirit was poured upon her in the next chapter of Acts. The spiritual truth that is being emphasised here is the perfection of the foundation that Christ had laid in His work on earth, and it was on this perfect foundation that the New Testament Church was built from Pentecost onwards.

The Pope and the Church of Rome occupy an anomalous position in the Christian Church. They appear to be a part of it because the Pope is described as sitting “in the temple of God” (2 Th 2:4), but in truth they are not part of it at all. Before the Reformation, the Church of Rome became deeply corrupt; and since the Reformation she has departed entirely from the truth. Should we be mourning over her and yearning for her restoration? Will part of the Christian Church seem to be missing when eventually the Roman Babylon is cast down and “found no more at all” (Rev 18:21)? Will the true Church be like the Children of Israel when the tribe of Benjamin was absent, and they were asking: “Why is this come to pass in Israel, that there should be today one tribe lacking in Israel?” (Jdg 21:3)?

Not at all: “his bishoprick let another take”. Judas was not missed, and the Church of Rome is not missed either, nor will be missed at the end of the world. The places of Ahithophel and Judas were easily filled, and the gap left by the Church of Rome was soon filled by the spread of the gospel. At the last, the true Church will be found “foursquare” (Rev 21:16), with no part missing. Christ will bring “forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it” (Zec 4:7).

The holy Jerusalem that John saw “had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: on the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb” (Rev 21:12-14). She was complete. Christ will be able to say of all His people, as He said of His little flock in the days of His flesh: “Those that Thou gavest Me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled” (Jn 17:12).

DWBS

Notes and Comments

Movers and Shakers

We live in profoundly serious times! Today, many have banished the living and true God from their thoughts, as if He did not exist; they reject His Word, the Holy Bible, as utterly irrelevant.

Most people today are influenced by the secular humanists they encounter on various social media platforms. They all appear capable of effectively and enjoyably advocating, leading and persuading their audiences on how to live, what to like, and what actions to take to gain acceptance in modern society.

These new and dominant channels of mass communication are the new movers and shakers in society: the Church, the Bible, and God have been (by many) entirely dismissed as completely irrelevant, and they would be, if it were possible, fully eliminated from people’s thoughts.

In previous centuries, churches proclaimed the gospel of salvation and the entire truth of God. The Bible was widely consulted and quoted as the authoritative Word of God, and it was accepted as the divine rule by which all our thoughts, words and actions should be judged.

Today, things are quite different. It seems as if the primary rejectors of Christianity have transformed themselves into a new class of movers and shakers, who, using extreme, exaggerated, and often hysterical language, bombastically attack everything within their reach with their often-illogical, ungodly, foolish and libertine views. Such atheistic (God-defying and God-denying, and thus Satanic) perspectives are frequently intertwined with visual and auditory displays of greed-driven attractions, designed further to allure and ensnare man’s lustful nature.

We must not be ignorant of Satan’s devices (see 2 Corinthians 2:11) and thus need not only to recognise the dangers surrounding us, but also to warn

others of the serious threats posed by the evils of the ungodly society in which we live. We must humble ourselves before God, pray for our people as Daniel did for his (see Daniel 9), confess our sins and the sins of our nation before God, and beseech Him to return in mercy and grace.

The words of the Lord Jesus Christ, the King and Head of His Church, are as relevant today as they were when first uttered, “He said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mk 16:15).

DPR

Grief

It has been known for some time that people can die of a “broken heart”. Takotsubo syndrome, as it is officially called, is characterised by an early death after bereavement or significant emotional stress. The heart muscle changes shape and suddenly weakens, often after the death of a loved one. We have probably all known of an elderly person dying shortly after losing their life-long companion.

Dr David Gamble of the University of Aberdeen has studied the syndrome and presented his findings at the European Society of Cardiology congress in Madrid. He said: “We know that patients can be affected for the rest of their lives and that their long-term heart health is similar to people who have survived a heart attack. These results further highlight the importance of ‘the brain-heart axis’. In a world-first trial, patients who received cognitive behavioural therapy or participated in an exercise programme improved their heart health compared to those who received standard care.

Sadly, we live in a secular society, and at no time was the power of prayer mentioned as a method of relief from the grief of bereavement. There is no acknowledgement that the Most High God has said, “I am the Lord that healeth thee” (Ex 15:26), but the child of God knows by experience that great solace can be found by pouring out his or her heart at the throne of grace. There is a comfort and consolation that can be felt when rising from one’s knees after seeking help from the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort, through the Lord Jesus Christ.

In Psalm 69:20 the Saviour is brought to cry out, “Reproach hath broken my heart”. We cannot begin to understand all that this meant to Him. He was forsaken of His Father; He looked for some to take pity, for comforters, but He found none. He suffered all of this, even the cursed death of the cross, on behalf of His people so that they might be redeemed from the curse, that they might be able to come boldly to the throne of grace to obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. “And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness” (2 Cor 12:9). *FRD*

Mitochondrial Eve and others

The use of genetics in genealogy is advancing apace, with vastly more data becoming available, and with people using DNA to identify potential distant relations. The easiest lines to identify through DNA are the direct male line and the direct female line (with the Y-chromosome being passed down the male line and the mitochondrial DNA down the female line). Most or all Europeans are thought to be descended from the Emperor Charlemagne, but because his direct male line has died out, not much is known about his DNA.

Biblical genealogies can be studied in the same way, and “Mitochondrial Eve” is the name given to the “matrilineal most recent common ancestor of all living humans”. In other words, she is the most recent woman from whom all living people descend in an unbroken line of their female ancestors. In biblical terms, she is the “matrilineal most recent common ancestor” of the three wives of Noah’s sons. We are not told in the Bible who this woman was. It may have been Eve herself, but possibly not, depending on how closely related the three wives were to each other.

Correspondingly, “Y-chromosomal Adam” is the most recent man from whom all living people descend in an unbroken line of their male ancestors. This is certainly Noah, rather than Adam. The scientists give us estimates for when Mitochondrial Eve and Y-chromosomal Adam lived, but these estimates vary with different theories and discoveries and are not at present worth much attention.

Other figures of genetic interest are “Y-chromosomal Abraham” and “Y-chromosomal Ishmael”, although they are not so easy to define. Abraham was to be “a father of many nations” (Gen 17:4), and he had numerous sons including Isaac, Ishmael and Midian (Gen 25:2,9). Ishmael, too, was to have a seed that “could not be numbered for multitude” (Gen 16:10). His descendants are generally identified with the Arab nations. Genetic studies of Arabs, Jews and others are likely to point back to Ishmael and to Abraham.

Attempts to identify “Y-chromosomal Aaron” through studies of people with the surname *Cohen* (the Hebrew word for *priest*; they are thus assumed to be descendants of Aaron) have had mixed success, and attempts to identify “Y-chromosomal Levi” have similarly had mixed success. One difficulty is the tendency of scientists (and human beings generally) to jump to premature conclusions; another is that anything that tends to confirm the Bible is bitterly opposed by Satan and his “seed”, who find every fault in it that they can. Nevertheless, it is interesting that while some are denying the historical existence of these people in the Bible, others are busy identifying these people’s genetic profiles.

DWBS

Church Information

Theological Conference

This year's Conference will be held in Inverness on Tuesday, October 28 and Wednesday, October 29, DV, with Rev K M Watkins as Chairman. The following speakers and subjects have been agreed:

The Doctrine of Alexander Comrie

Mr J Freeke

Tuesday 2.15 pm

Good Works (Westminster Confession, chapter 16)

Rev J B Jardine

Tuesday 7.00 pm

Israel and the Church

Rev J D Smith

Wednesday 10.00 am

The Influence of Societies (SSPCK, GSS, etc.)

on the Spread of the Gospel in the Highlands

Dr A H Ross

Wednesday 2.15 pm

Typology

Rev D W B Somerset

Wednesday 7.00 pm

Catering: Meals have been arranged for both days of the Conference, before the evening papers. Bookings are required and anyone wishing to attend these meals should contact Miss N Morrison for further information, on 0141 332 9283 / norma.morrison@fpcoffice.org by Friday, October 9.

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

Home Mission Fund

By appointment of Synod, the second of this year's special collections for the Home Mission Fund is due to be taken in congregations during October.

W Campbell, General Treasurer

Acknowledgement of Donations

The General Treasurer acknowledges with sincere thanks the following donations:

Estate of late Mrs A MacLeod, Strathpeffer: *Ballifeary Home*, £1000; *Bookroom Fund*, £21 250, *College & Library Fund*, £21 250; *Home Mission Fund*, £21 250; *Jewish & Foreign Missions Fund*, £21 250; *Leverburgh Home*, £5000.

Jewish & Foreign Missions Fund: Deep Spring Strict Baptist Chapel, North Carolina, for Thembiso Children's Home, £717.93.

Congregational Treasurers acknowledge with sincere thanks the following donations:

Creich etc: Anon, £70 per WC.

Dingwall & Beaully: D Smith, £100; Anon, £260; F Cooper, for CDs, £30 per Rev AWM.

Duirinish & Bracadale: *Communion Expenses (Struan)*: Anon, £100.

Fort William: Anon, £100, £60 per WC.

Glasgow: *Eastern Europe Fund*: Anon, £80, £80, £80, £80, £80, £80, £80, £80, £80, £90.

Sustentation Fund: Anon, £2.95.

Laide: *Outreach Fund*: Anon, for Bookvan work, £150.

London: Anon, £400.

Stornoway: *Manse Communion Expenses*: Anon, £200.

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. **Beaully** (Balblair): Sabbath 6.30 pm, Thurs 7.30 pm. Rev A W MacColl MA PhD, 10 Achany Road, Dingwall, IV15 9JB; tel: 01349 866546.

Dornoch: Sabbath 11.30 am. **Bonar:** Sabbath 6 pm. Wed 7.30 pm (alternately in Dornoch and Bonar). 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; Wed 11 am; or as intimated. Manse: 5 Main Road, Luncarty, PH1 3EP. 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 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 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. Rev G G Hutton BA PhD, 3 Martin Crescent, Junction Hill, NSW 2460; tel: (02) 6644 6174; e-mail: graffton@internode.on.net.

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

New Zealand

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

New Canaan: Church. Rev T Mwedzi.

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