

The Free Presbyterian Magazine

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

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

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Communions

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

September: First Sabbath: Chesley, Sydney, Ullapool; **Second:** Halkirk, Munaka, Portree; **Third:** 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.; **Fourth:** Santa Fe.

December: Third Sabbath: Bulawayo.

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Prayer for More Labourers

At this point in the history of the Church, we should be conscious of its weakness and, in particular the weakness of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. And whenever another minister is taken away from the scene of his labours, we should feel the loss even more keenly, in the face of the cumulative effect of successive such losses.

In this instance, we lost Rev Donald A Ross on September 27, when he was taken away to, we fully believe, his eternal rest. He had spent several years as minister of our Bulawayo congregation in Zimbabwe; since then he laboured in the Laide congregation, in Wester Ross.

In these circumstances we should be specially conscious of the words of the Saviour, as He directed His disciples during His time on earth – and directs His followers in every generation – “The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth labourers into His harvest” (Mt 9:37,38). If the harvest was plentiful when Jesus spoke, it is far more plentiful now, given the vast increase in the world’s population since then.

It is the Lord Himself who calls men to preach the gospel; no one else has authority to give that call. In applying the teachings of these verses, David Dickson states, “True labourers and faithful preachers are God’s special gift to a land, worthy to be sought from God by prayer”. Again he says, “God Himself must fit men for the work of the ministry and must thrust them forth and give them their commission, for no man can further the harvest who is not sent”. God sends men to act as His ambassadors, to speak on His behalf, and with His authority. They go out to make known what their King did when He bore the sins of many, so that He might reconcile sinners to God. His ambassadors are to be faithful to the One who sent them; the Lord tells them, as when He sent Jonah to Nineveh, to “preach . . . the preaching that I bid thee” (Jnh 3:2).

Jonah was not, and today’s preachers are not, to present their own ideas to the people they address; they are not to present any secular philosophy, or mere morality to them. Yet, sadly, far too often today, professed ambas-

sadors ignore the gospel. The content of preaching ought to be more serious than philosophy or morality. Certainly, moral teaching is required, but it must be secondary to the central message of the Bible: the gospel.

Hugh Martin, that outstanding Scottish preacher of the nineteenth century, once told his congregation when preaching on Jonah 3:2: “The gospel, then, that is statedly preached to you . . . is the word of the unseen God – the thoughts and will of the King Eternal, Immortal, and Invisible. They come forth through His own Son as the original, the one and only authoritative, the perfect Prophet. They are now delivered – the message is handed on and handed round – from Him to the assemblies of His professing, worshipping people, by the lips of men, chosen from among themselves, and chosen by themselves. This is the singular and glorious treasure that is deposited in earthen vessels: the word of the only wise God. Unless unfaithful to our office, we preach the preaching that the living God hath bidden us.”

Then Martin warns: “But if this be true, mark the deplorable position in which unbelievers must find themselves placed; and everyone must be called an unbeliever who does not so embrace the message of alarm and of mercy as to flee from the wrath to come, repenting of his iniquity and turning to the Lord in newness of obedience”.¹

When the risen Saviour was going to leave His disciples, He told them: “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mk 16:15); they were to proclaim the *good news* that there is salvation for the chief of sinners. The good news can be summed up in the words of Scripture: “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn 3:16). What a wonderful expression of the good news we have here! The eternal God sent His only-begotten Son to take human nature and to suffer and die in the place of sinners who have rebelled against Him.

These truths are to be proclaimed to sinners everywhere and they are to be called to believe on Him – to trust in Him as the One who died, rose again and ascended triumphantly to the right hand of God. From there He reigns, especially for the good of those for whom He died. And His activity as King includes the authoritative call of men to go out and preach the gospel. When He was in this world, He called men such as Peter, John and Matthew to be His disciples. Today He calls men to become preachers of the gospel, making them willing to do so and preparing them with the gifts that they need so that they may effectively discharge the duties of the ministry.

From His throne in heaven, Christ also makes continual intercession for those for whom He died. He intercedes for the conversion of those who are

¹Hugh Martin, *The Prophet Jonah*, Banner of Truth Trust, 1966 reprint, p 254-5.

to be called to the ministry; He intercedes for the Word to be blessed to them, through the power of the Holy Spirit applying to their souls the truth about Jesus as a perfect Saviour, so that they trust in Him for their salvation. He intercedes also for their call to the ministry to be made effective, and His intercession for them continues while they are spared in this world and are carrying out the duties of their calling. He intercedes also for the Church to be protected from the evil one and to be preserved in existence.

We return now to the duty the Saviour laid on His disciples to pray for more labourers to be sent out to preach the gospel. It is a duty that God's people should feel particularly pressing when ministers have been taken home to glory. Their prayer should be a cry for help; so David cried: "Help, Lord; for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men" (Ps 12:1). This is a suitable prayer whenever any of the godly are removed from the Church in this world, but it is especially suitable when a minister is taken home. It is an acknowledgement that it is always God who must fill up the blank in the Church below. It is God alone who can bring sinners into His kingdom and continue the work of grace in their souls – till they are fit to be brought to the place prepared for them in heaven. Yet He uses human beings, especially ministers, as instruments in that great work. And, as already noticed, it is God alone who can *prepare* suitable labourers for the spiritual harvest field.

We should feel a time when the Church of God is weak – because the labourers are few – to be a time of trouble. So David prayed again: "Give us help from trouble: for vain is the help of man" (Ps 60:11). In any time of trouble, we are not – at least in the first instance – to look for human help but to cry to God, for the sake of Christ. And in a time when conversions are few and when few men are being sent out to preach the gospel, we should put our confidence, not on human power and effort, but on divine power, which is the only power that is truly and consistently effective.

Psalms 124 records David's reaction to powerful enemies who came against him; they would have "overwhelmed" him if God had not protected him. So he concludes the Psalm with the words, "Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth". David trusted in the Lord to help him – speaking of Him as One who had revealed His tremendous power in the creation of the whole universe. And He has further revealed His Creatorship in the Bible – not only at the beginning of Genesis, but time and again throughout the Scriptures.

Let us remember that God does hear prayer, and let that fact encourage God's children to pray earnestly and perseveringly for Him to send out many labourers into His harvest fields in the immediate future.

The New Birth and God's Kingdom¹

A Sermon by Rev D A Macfarlane

John 3:3. *Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*

E specially in the first portion of this chapter, that deals with Nicodemus, many of the outstanding truths of the Christian faith are set forth. What we are continually exposed to, in such a field of divine truth, is the danger of growing weary of meditating in it or of hearing about it with any degree of frequency. The successive truths as to the new birth, the kingdom – its mystery, yet its reality – and the death of Christ, and the love of the Father before that death and manifested in virtue of that death, all seem so unquestionable, so generally accepted, as to be beyond the shadow of a doubt. So, to a great extent, we hasten to agree that these great truths should receive due attention, and at once allow and encourage the mind to wander to fields congenial to our sadly disordered and diseased attitudes.

If the Spirit of truth is our guide and enables us in our time of need to receive the wisdom which is pure and peaceable, the Word before us will renew its youth in interest and freshness. It will be to us as a path loved because of its associations, in which we may walk and talk with our hearts, and come to know what is said of wisdom: “Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace”.

Let us note at the outset that, though we shall have especially before our minds this testimony of the Lord regarding the kingdom and admission to the presence of the King, we shall not restrict our remarks to this verse as such; but, as necessary, try to bring the substance of the record regarding the Saviour and Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, to bear on this central truth – a truth which continues to be proclaimed wherever the gospel is preached, and in all times of the Church's history till He comes.

We will seek to deal with these main aspects of the subject: (1.) The necessity of being born again; (2.) What it means to be born again; and (3.) The result of a soul being born again: that soul sees the kingdom of God.

1. The necessity of being born again. It is evident that when we hear about being born again and its necessity, we are not to take the language of the Teacher come from God literally, any more than we are to look upon Him as a door or gate, when He says, “I am the door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture”. Nicodemus apparently did not understand the Lord, and so most probably in unfeigned

¹Reprinted with editing from *The Free Presbyterian Magazine* for April 1916, during World War I. This explains the reference to the repatriation of soldiers on page 331.

astonishment he proceeded to inquire into the meaning of these words from a literal point of view: "How can a man be born when he is old?" Yet, though one can be born into this world only once and have only one such birthday, there is another kind of birth into another world or state of being. We must have an actual, heavenly birth into it, and a birthday connected with it – be it known or unknown to the soul at the time. This must take place while we are in this world; otherwise "that which is born of the flesh" will remain "flesh", not only in the world that now is, but also in that which is to come.

Why, the soul may ask, must one be born again? Why this unspeakably necessary change, so utterly beyond the power of a created being that it requires the exceeding greatness of the gracious power of God to perform it, so that the glory of this change will belong to Him for ever? It is because we are "born of the flesh". And so we inquire briefly what this word *flesh* means for us. A twofold use of the word will suffice for our present purpose. First it has a good meaning; and second it is used in a bad sense, or to convey a meaning of an evil nature.

As to its good meaning, a passage or two may be found in this Gospel to serve as examples. There are the well-known portions: "The Word was made flesh"; "The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." As used thus, the word obviously refers to the coming of the Lord into humanity and to the work of redemption in its full extent, which He undertook to accomplish. In this He was sinless, yet sin-laden. When therefore the word is used as above concerning Christ, it involves complete freedom from impurity and pollution. He took upon Him our nature, and made manifest to all ages that it is possible to have a body of flesh and blood, or flesh and bones, and yet be untainted with evil.

Before examining the word in its opposite meaning, we may here remark that it is very often used in what may be called a non-moral sense. This is especially common in the Old Testament. Adam said of Eve, when the Lord brought her to him, "This is now bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh". Many such instances might be given. The main meaning in such cases is what naturally belongs to rational being.

But the meaning which should be most closely attended to is, of course, moral evil – sin – involving the penalty of death, and that "filthiness of the flesh (literally) and spirit" which invariably accompanies it. It is not surprising that "flesh" should be employed to mean what is sinful, polluted in body and depraved in spirit. It is plain that, when lust first conceived and brought forth sin, the members of the body very effectually became instruments for evil of the perverse will and besotted mind. The lower passions and appetites

obtained dominion. Moral purity – native love of holiness – ceased on the entrance of sin, and the whole man now minded “the things of the flesh”. Self-satisfaction became the leading motive in action, the leading end in existence – even in matters otherwise quite lawful, not to mention what is forbidden. So, having been “sold under sin”, we desire to be independent of God, and if the depraved nature was permitted to do so, we would deprive Him of His eternal independence. “So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.”

This is true of all mankind since “sin entered into the world, and death by sin”. Adam, the first father and representative of the human race, “began a son in his own likeness, after his image”. Ever since – with the exception of the last Adam, the Lord from heaven – “that which is born of the flesh is flesh”. Now to be a sinful creature, as Nicodemus was until washed with the washing of regeneration, involves two things.

The *first* is that the Christless person is under the curse of his Maker, the Judge of all. This is indeed a sad truth. Who can understand, in its unsearchable depths, what it implies for a soul to be separated from the God of holiness and love? “Who knows the power of Thy wrath?” Yet we are plainly told that such a soul is under the sway of sin – unholy, unhealthy. It continues disobedient to Him to whom all rational creatures, by necessity of nature, owe loving obedience and that soul will inevitably remain outside of His gracious kingdom unless it is born again. So it will be an object of that holy displeasure which for ever is “the wrath to come”.

The soul continuing alienated from the life of God in Christ is God’s prisoner – a prisoner of divine, unchangeable law. A prisoner is one who is not allowed to go free until the law is satisfied as to his innocence, or until the penalty of his misdeeds has been paid. The way whereby we, as His prisoners, may go free is amply set before us in this portion of the Word, and the time may be nigh, even at our doors, when the gospel will cease to be proclaimed to us any more. “But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear Him which, after He hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear Him”.

The *second* truth is that the sinner is not only worthy of death but, in his moral nature, he is directly contrary to the nature of God. It is true that he is a rational being and continues to be so – accountable to the Creator. Sin does not deprive man of his rational faculties, but rather perverts him away from the God-honouring use of them. Without enlarging on our depravity in general and our lack of will to take any spiritual interest in God’s ways and works, house and kingdom, we may here rather seek to know that, while sin reigns in our mortal bodies, we remain unhealthy in soul and body. The

slave of sin is moribund; that is, full of death. The Psalmist recorded what is true, whether we are conscious of it or not: "There is no soundness in my flesh because of Thine anger: neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin. . . . I am feeble and sore broken: I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart."

Is not a change then necessary – one so great as to require new life, a new beginning, an entrance into a state of freedom which we do not enjoy, as "sold under sin", and into a nature like that of God? Otherwise we shall die in our sins Christ-less, faith-less, hope-less, life-less.

2. What it means to be born again. To be born after a natural manner means that a being different from all others is brought into the world. New life is there, and a new beginning; there is a need of care and cherishing. So it is spiritually. There is new life, and also – as the Lord tells Nicodemus – a mystery connected with the work of the Holy Spirit; just as there is mystery in the blowing of the wind, which "goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually". We do not see it nor grasp it, yet we do not deny its presence and power. The new life is real and spiritual, as its result duly shows, in a life and conversation becoming the gospel. But there must be something preceding the work of the Spirit of Christ in the soul in regenerating it and bringing it into the kingdom of God; otherwise there is no salvation. This preceding work is the specific work of the Redeemer, which He alone could perform, for all the ransomed are indebted to Him for redemption.

We may first of all direct attention to this work which the Father gave to the Son to carry out, and which the Son undertook to perform. We shall confine our remarks here to two essential things. First, that this Saviour is the Son of God; and second, that He is a Priest, in order to His being a Prophet and a King over the holy hill of Zion.

First, that He was, is and ever shall be the beloved Son of the Father, is a truth we do not thank God for as we ought. We have much reason for heart-grief to think how little we are amazed at the divine love, that it should please the Father to set apart the Son, the Ancient of Days, to be the Rock of salvation as well as the Rock that begat all things that exist. If we gradually realise how little we at most know – even though we may have reason to conclude that one has a saving knowledge of this theme of praise and thanksgiving, it surely becomes us to seek earnestly an increasing knowledge of Him who is God, with whom there is a fullness of grace and truth. He is the Saviour, born in the city of David, who is Christ the Lord, who became what He was not, but never ceased to be what He eternally is.

May the eyes of our understanding be opened to view the abounding

excellence of the Mediator of the better covenant. How changed we all would be if we were engrossed more in all that He is in Himself, and in what He became and accomplished in order that sinners might eventually be with Him where He is and behold His glory! What manner of persons we would then be in all holy conversation and godliness! May He grant us hearts to know Him, so that we too may be permitted to sit at His feet and, in spirit and in truth, drink in the doctrine that drops as the rain and the speech that distills as the dew!

Second, let us observe that Christ, the Son of God and Lord over all, blessed for evermore, became a Priest in order that He might be a Prophet and a King in a gracious way. If God has a kingdom of grace, mercy and peace, and the Son rules over this kingdom, wearing a crown that shall flourish for ever, it is because He, the Son of Man, was lifted up “even as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness”. It is because He was “given” as a surety, a sacrificial victim, a Lamb to take away the sin of the world. Hence the work of the Lord Jesus in offering Himself, without spot to God, comes first, that He might be a King, to subdue and hold sway – and be a Prophet, to bless His people with bread and advance them for evermore.

There is much that merits attention in meditating on such a subject as the Priesthood of the Lord. Such an Epistle as that to the Hebrews is taken up with it. Meantime, let us keep in view some of its main features. Foremost among these is the fact that the Lord was the called One, and the One consecrated by the Father, to do this foundation work of salvation. To that end He received the Holy Spirit without measure. In the human nature, the Son-servant acted on behalf of all for whom the Father, in His sovereign authority, delegated Him to act as surety, as near kinsman, as the heaven-chosen and heaven-qualified propitiation. This is a truth evidently set forth in the Word of truth. Secret things belong unto the Most High and, while this is rightly so, we are called to wait patiently on Him alone and to use the means which are set before us in His Word for our salvation.

Let us also bear in mind that Christ, the Priest of the Most High God, offered the sacrifice of sacrifices only once. His obedience began with His being made flesh, and it embraced His pouring out His soul unto death in bearing sin away by enduring the penalty due to it. It was an obedience unto death, and included His being buried and coming under the power of death for a time, so that He might abolish death and bring life and incorruptibility to light through the gospel. By one offering He has for ever perfected them that are sanctified, and has become the author of eternal salvation to all who believe on Him. For if any soul does not receive Christ as Saviour from the guilt, stain and being of sin, it is not due to the lack of worth in His infinitely

meritorious work – He being a Person of infinite dignity. But it is rather because that soul will not come to Him to have life. He offers Himself, whole and undivided, to every sinner to whom the tidings of great joy come. May He enable us to receive Him, that we may be made whole!

Such are some of the outstanding truths concerning this foundation work of the Son of God, who “shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His throne, and He shall be a Priest upon His throne”.

What is it then to be born again, in view of the Lord of glory being lifted up on Calvary's cross and dying without the gate, in the place of the unclean? The one who is born again comes as a guilty creature, morally unclean, to the Lord Jesus Christ, for salvation from death and for cleansing from all unrighteousness. He comes in order to be made whole by Him, that he may love, serve and obey Him who is the good Master, and able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God through Him. This coming is the exercise of that faith whereby we appropriate to ourselves, or receive, Him as all our salvation and all our desire; whereby we rest upon Him wholly, finally for salvation as He is offered to us in His revealed will.

In believing on the Lord Jesus, a change occurs in a moment. The sinner, hitherto a prisoner of God, is now made free for ever, and is accounted righteous with the righteousness of Christ. The sinner now stands upon Christ's merits, and knows no other stand. The Judge will remember his sins and iniquities no more. May our entreaty be that many will be washed in the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness; that many, in view of such a gracious provision, may be espoused unto such a Bridegroom; that this man and that man there may be born in Zion and be enrolled among those who say, “I am the Lord's”, and surname themselves by the name of Israel.

But not only is the soul brought into a state of freedom, in virtue of union to the Head of the Church, but he becomes partaker of the nature of the first-born among many brethren. Now Christ is the alone fountain of His people's holiness as well as the source of their righteousness. He puts a new heart and a right spirit within them and gives them a heart of flesh. They become lovers of God, of moral purity and of His truth, and are taught by Him in many wonderful ways what sin is and what its dire effects are. They grow in the loathing of sin and its false pleasures, as they grow in their knowledge of Himself, their physician and source of health. Thus they are endowed with new life and begin to live unto God.

This life is holy life and deathless life. No person, no power, no thing opposed to God and His kingdom can reach those who have attained to this life to cause them irretrievable harm. Death has no power over this rich life. Just as there is progress in natural life and need of daily sustenance, so there

is progress in the spiritual sphere and daily need of the bread of life and of an appetite for it, and of being guided and preserved in all our goings, by the keeper of Israel, who slumbers not nor sleeps. As an instance of such development and fruit-bearing unto holiness, the case of Nicodemus himself may be cited. He is found, on the death of the Lord, with Joseph of Arimathea wrapping the body of the Saviour in the bundle of myrrh and aloes and laying the body in the new tomb in the garden. In this he was honoured in being permitted to do what he could. His work was a labour of love, and all like minded will likewise be heirs of the kingdom that does not fade away.

There is a truth that might again be adverted to and emphasised before passing on to the closing part of our subject. It is that while a soul, willingly and consciously, believes savingly in Christ and becomes a debtor to the grace of God for salvation, yet it is God by His Spirit, all unconsciously to the soul and most mysteriously, who prepares the heart to receive Christ. The heart of man is in His hand “as the rivers of water; He turneth it whithersoever He will”. By His almighty gracious power He disposes the man to seek, and empowers him to lay hold upon, Christ. To receive the Son is to receive the Father, for “he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent me.”

No one of himself desires to forsake sin with its delusions and service. May we learn this and be diligent in the use of the appointed means, waiting for and expecting deliverance right early, for the Mediator’s sake – if we have no reason to conclude that we possess it now. “I love them that love Me; and those that seek Me early shall find Me.”

3. The result of a soul being born again: it sees the kingdom of God.

When a man is born again. He receives Christ through the Spirit, as his all-in-all. As Prophet, Christ lives for ever to show the soul the path of life. In His capacity as Priest, He opened up the new and living way into the holiest of all, with His blood, which cleanses from all sin. As King He leads sinners into that way and guides them in it, bringing them at last to the full enjoyment of the kingdom that cannot be moved. This part of the subject leads to a large sphere. A few chief truths about the kingdom may be noted here.

First, this kingdom of Christ is especially gracious and immovable. God is “in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them”. He rules over the chosen ones and causes all things here below to work for His glory and their good. Though it is an immovable kingdom, it is, in certain aspects, transitory – in as far as it is limited by present conditions. The world and the fashion thereof pass away, and when His kingdom in this world reaches the bounds which in God’s secret will are appointed to it, it will cease to exist in its present form. His children now enjoy an earnest in the abiding inheritance, but when He comes without sin unto salvation,

the gospel will cease to be proclaimed – as will the sacramental bread and wine eaten and drunk in His house. Yet in its main features, this kingdom is immovable. For as “the Lord shall reign for evermore,” so also “His kingdom hath none end at all; it doth through ages all remain”.

Second, in this world there is no personal perfection, though souls are brought into the number and have a right to all the privileges of the sons of God. We see in our day British prisoners freed from an enemy country, but sad to say, coming home broken down in health. They are free from imprisonment, yet sorely require restoration to health. So with the soul in the day of mercy: it is freed as a bird out of the snare, yet it is to a great extent in spiritual ill-health, and has repeated occasion to lament, “O wretched man that I am”. Yet the renewed man can, in gratitude and good hope, add, “I thank God”. The believer is being restored to health, is dying unto sin, is learning of the greatness of the great salvation and, in the day of Christ, will be without spot or blemish or any such thing.

In conclusion, let it be an encouragement to know that, whereas an earthly monarch cannot be expected to know more than a few of his subjects in a personal way, not to mention their needs and frailties and goodwill toward him; this King, eternal, immortal, invisible, having our nature in union with His glorious person – and the otherwise bridgeless gulf between Creator and creature so spanned – knows each one of His own: “I know them, and they follow Me”. Not one of them will be outside the kingdom in the day when He makes up His jewels. He knew them helpless, godless, willful, dead. He knew them when quickening them that they may call upon Him. He knows them in their frailty, despondency, and mourning their felt distance from the kingdom of God. He knows them in their repentance, love and new obedience, for they are indebted to Himself for all heavenly growth. And in the great day when the good work among men begun in Eden will be brought to completion, He will confess them before the Father and before the holy angels: “Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given Me”.

May we be among them in that day, and now obtain repentance toward God and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ. “None perish that Him trust.”

God loves to shine upon His people when the world frowns most. *Thomas Brooks*

If you be more able to rely on mere free grace than you have been heretofore, then your faith is not less, but increased rather. If you be now more able to be contented with your condition than you were heretofore, if you can let God in Christ alone to use His own means about you, if you can leave the events and successes of things more unto God than you could heretofore, then your faith is not failed, but rather increased. *William Bridge*

Hector MacPhail of Resolis¹

3. Last Days

Robert MacDougall

In many modern sermons there is no adequate expression of the evil of sin and no suitable acknowledgment of the believer's indebtedness to free, sovereign grace. The old Highland divines resembled the English Puritans in their increasing acquaintance with the plague of their own hearts. They would readily echo the words of the prince of American theologians, Jonathan Edwards: "I have had a vastly greater sense of my own wickedness and the badness of my heart since my conversion than ever I had before. It has often appeared to me that, if God should mark iniquity against me, I should appear the very worst of all mankind of all that have been since the beginning of the world to this time, and that I should have by far the lowest place in hell."

From such exercises of soul arose MacPhail's ever-deepening humility. As he lay in weakness and suffering on his deathbed, he dreamed that he stood lonely and miserable outside the New Jerusalem, gazing wistfully at the closed gateway. Suddenly a cloud of witnesses appeared, among whom he recognised Noah, Abraham and other patriarchs. For them the shining gate opened wide, and they had an abundant entrance into the joy of their Lord. At once the gate was closed, and he was left outside, forlorn and wretched. Then he heard another procession. There they were before him: Moses, Samuel, David and the prophets. For them the gate swung open – amid rapturous melody they entered their Father's house. Again the gate was closed, to open again for the apostles and early Christians and, at their welcome, the bells of the city rang for joy. But still the despairing dreamer was left outside.

Next the Reformation heroes, martyrs and confessors passed on triumphantly, but he did not share in their triumph. A fifth company pressed forward. He saw friends and acquaintances who slept in Jesus. But though they seemed to touch him with their shining garments as they passed, he could not venture to join them. The gate again was shut, leaving the trembling minister sinking into utter despair. But hark, the footsteps of a solitary pilgrim behind him! He looked up. It was Manasseh. Hope revived. He had barely strength enough to creep behind him. He knew that the gate had again opened, and as the glory of heaven flashed in his face and he heard the gate closing behind him, he awoke to find it a dream. It was the life-long sense of his utter unworthiness asserting itself strongly in this vision of the night.

¹The final article in the series, reprinted with editing from *The Free Presbyterian Magazine* for March 1916. The previous article last month described some fruits of MacPhail's work.

A like humility clothed the eminent Ronald Bayne, of Kiltarlity, near Inverness, whose successful ministry closed on 31 January 1821. "In his latter days," writes John Kennedy, "Dr Bayne was in the habit of speaking his thoughts, so that one who was unawares beside him heard what was intended for no ears but his own. Standing at the window of his room one day, and thinking he was quite alone, one who happened to be present heard him repeating the words, 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief'. After a pause he said, 'Paul, what do you mean by saying you are the chief of sinners? Do you mean that you are of all sinners, in all ages, chief? If so, I cannot agree with you, for Ronald Bayne is a greater sinner than you were. But do you mean that you are chief of all the sinners who shall be saved? If so, then there is no hope for Ronald Bayne, for he is a greater sinner still. But if you mean, as I think you do, that each saved sinner regards himself as chief, then there is hope for Ronald Bayne, and you and he can both agree.'"

During the earlier part of 1774, MacPhail continued in extreme weakness of body, but strong in the faith, giving glory to God. On January 23 he entered into the joy of his Lord. Devout men carried his remains to the churchyard of Cullicudden in the upper end of Resolis, "and made great lamentation over him". It was felt all over the North of Scotland that a prince and a great man had fallen in Israel. On the flagstone that covers his grave there is still legible the inscription: "Here lies the body of the holy man of God and faithful servant of Jesus Christ, Mr Hector MacPhail, minister of the gospel in this parish, who died 23rd January 1774, aged 58 years".

Reference has been made in the first of these articles to James Calder, so often and so honourably associated with MacPhail. Calder was the grandson of Liliass Campbell, an eminent lady of the Covenant who with her husband suffered sore persecution for the cause of Christ. His father, John Calder of Cawdor, was eminently blessed in his brief ministry in the beginning of the eighteenth century. James Calder was every way worthy of his distinguished ancestors. In early life he became the subject of a remarkable work of divine grace. A very notable revival of religion took place during his earnest ministry at Croy, and his *Diary*, published from the original manuscript in 1875, gives evidence of the deepest and richest Christian experience, humility, prayerfulness and unwearied devotion to the cause of Christ. In the *Diary* there are frequent references to the high esteem in which he held MacPhail, who was in the habit of assisting him at communion seasons at Croy and of receiving similar help at Resolis in return.

Thus on Saturday, 6 July 1765, there is the entry: "This being the (communion) preparation day, worthy Mr MacPhail preached a most suitable,

seasonable sermon on John 3:16, 'God so loved the world'. The Lord helped Him greatly. It fell to poor me to preach immediately after him; but I had so little to say after the great things that were declared that I was really ashamed to step up to His place; and yet the Lord was pleased to give some countenance to the most unworthy of all His servants and afforded some new things that I know were from Himself, and such things have been blessed by Him."

Assisting at the communion in Resolis, Calder records of the Monday thanksgiving service: "Mr MacPhail preached one of the best sermons my ears ever heard from Titus 2:13, 'Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing . . .'. Thus the solemn work was brought to a happy and comfortable [comforting] conclusion, through the good hand of the Lord on us and with us."

"7 January 1774. Heard today with sorrow that my very dear and worthy brother Mr Hector MacPhail was extremely low and weak in body, and not likely to live any time. Happy, inconceivably happy, will that change be to him, whatever time it comes. But O what a loss to his flock, his family, the Church, and to me! Help, Lord, for Jesus' sake! Amen."

"Sabbath evening, 23 [Jan]. When I began family worship this forenoon, with singing at the beginning of Psalm 103, in our ordinary course, I was very much impressed with it that my dear and heavenly brother Mr MacPhail had begun his everlasting song with Christ in Paradise. The impression became stronger in time of prayer, and upon retiring after worship I could not help breaking out into a flood of tears and sighs and complaints [lamentations] and sorrows, for my sweetest, dearest and most precious friend; not for himself, but for my own great and, in appearance, irreparable loss and for the loss of his family, flock and the Church of Christ; yet could not conclude absolutely that he was gone."

"Tuesday, 25th. Received the mournful news of what was so strongly impressed on my anxious mind Sabbath morning, namely, the much-to-be lamented death of the most eminently pious, zealous, active, laborious minister of Christ I ever saw, and the most lovely image of his adorable Lord and Master that ever I was acquainted with. Alas, a brave standard-bearer, a great prince is fallen in Israel – a blank, a breach made on this declining Church, and in this poor corner in particular; the sorest, the most affecting I ever saw of the kind. 'Help, Lord, for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men.' Lord, sanctify this mournful breach to his family and flock, to me, to mine, to all; and, Lord, repair it in due time, of Thy rich grace and infinite mercy. Amen. . . . O that the Lord would give me power and ability, as indeed He has given me will and inclination, to be a father to the children of the best of brothers, the best of friends, the best of

men. He was exceeding high in the sphere of grace below, and now he is exceeding high in the regions of glory. He will have many a jewel to adorn his pastoral crown, and to rejoice his honest heart."

In less than two years James Calder followed his like-minded brother to the saints' rest, joining sweetly a little before his departure in singing Psalm 138. His last words were, "He's coming, He's coming;" and when someone asked, "Who is coming?" he answered, "Precious Christ".

In full confirmation of Calder's high estimate of MacPhail's apostolic character is the valuable contemporary testimony of Lachlan McLauchlan, teacher and catechist at Loch Ness-side. McLauchlan was born in 1729, was in early life brought to a saving knowledge of Christ, and was widely known as an eminent instructor of high mental endowments and great Christian experience. For MacPhail, whom he frequently heard, he entertained profound veneration, and at his lamented death poured out the pent-up grief of his bereaved heart in a Gaelic elegy of 228 lines.

The poem begins with the utterance of the deep and widespread sorrow that pervaded the Church in the North. It then gives a high-toned eulogy on MacPhail's Christian and ministerial nobility of character. It tells of the fiery furnace of soul-anguish in which the evangelist was prepared to be the means of comforting the broken-hearted and dealing with distressed consciences. It declares that the brightest light of the North will no more shine in their communion gatherings, and asks if anyone knew any other minister whose labours were so abundantly blessed? "Of unsurpassed pulpit power, he was instant in season, out of season, seeking to benefit every soul that came within his reach. Distinguished by uncommon faithfulness in every department of his office, he was valiant for truth in Presbytery, Synod and General Assembly. How bright his crown!"

MacPhail was married twice. His first wife, the pious Elizabeth Balfour, died soon after the birth of her only child Isabel, in 1757. In October 1759, he married Anne Cuthbert, by whom he had four sons and three daughters: Jean, Paul, Magdalene, George, James, Elizabeth, William. James, born in 1766, became minister of the parish of Daviot, near Inverness, where he died on 1 July 1839. The youngest child, William, was under three years at his father's death. He became assistant to the eminent John Erskine of Edinburgh, and was a preacher of distinguished ability. In November 1802, he received a unanimous call from the large and influential Scots Church of Rotterdam, where he long ministered with great acceptance. He refused repeated urgent invitations to become minister of the Scots Church in Amsterdam. On Wednesday, 20 July 1814, the day of thanksgiving for peace, William MacPhail preached an excellent sermon on 1 Samuel 12:24, which was afterwards

published, and was thus described by the famous Robert Hall: "It is an able, judicious performance, in some parts eloquent. It evinces a forcible mind."

Keep the Heart, Mouth, Eyes and Feet¹

Charles Bridges

Proverbs 4:23-27. *Keep thy heart with all diligence (above all keeping, margin); for out of it are the issues of life. Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee. Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established (all thy ways shall be ordered aright, margin). Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil.*

These rules are invaluable as our safeguard. Assaulted as we are at every point – the heart, the mouth, the eye, the feet – every inlet of sin must be strongly guarded.

First, *the heart*: the citadel of man, the seat of his dearest treasure. It is fearful to think of its many watchful and subtle assailants. Let it be closely garrisoned. Let the sentinel never sleep at his post. "Take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently" (Deut 4:9).

But the heart must be known in order to be *kept* effectually. Nothing is more difficult, while nothing is more necessary. If we do not know our hearts, we know nothing to any purpose. Whatever else we know, to neglect this knowledge is to be a fool at the best. If we do not know our weak points, Satan knows them well – the sins that most easily beset us.

Then when I know my heart and feel it to be so dangerous and in such dangers, the question forces itself upon me: Can I keep my heart? Certainly not. But though it is God's work, it is man's agency. Our efforts are His instruments. He implants an active principle and sustains the unceasing exercise (Phil 2:12,13; Jude 21,24). Conscious faith commits the keeping of the heart to "a faithful Creator" (1 Pet 4:19; Ps 25:20). This done, make diligent use of all the means of preservation, in His strength and guidance. Watch unto prayer. Cherish a humble, dependent spirit. Live in the atmosphere of the Word of God. Resist the admission of an evil world, even in its most plausible forms (Jdg 8:22,23; 2 Ki 5:5,16). Here lies the conflict to the end.

"The greatest difficulty in conversion is to win the heart to God, and after conversion to keep it with Him."² "What is there", asks Joseph Mede, "that will not entice and allure so fickle a thing as the heart from God?" Above all

¹An edited extract from Bridges' *A Commentary on Proverbs*.

²Flavel's *Saint Indeed* – a searching and valuable treatise.

keeping, exhorts the wise man, *keep thine heart*. Here Satan keeps special watch, here therefore we must keep special watch. If the citadel is taken, the whole town must surrender. If the heart is seized, the whole man – the affections, desires, motives, pursuits – all will be yielded up. The heart is the vital part of the body. A wound here is instant death.

Thus, spiritually as well as naturally, *out of the heart are the issues of life*. It is the great vital spring of the soul, the fountain of actions, the centre and the seat of principle, both of sin and of holiness (Mt 12:34, 35). The natural heart is a fountain of poison (Mt 15:19). The purified heart is a well of living water (Jn 4:14). As is the fountain, so must the streams be. As is the heart, so must be the mouth, the eyes, the feet. Therefore, above all keeping, keep thine heart. Guard the fountain, lest the waters be poisoned. Many have been the bitter moments as a result of neglecting this guard. All keeping is vain, if the heart is not kept.

But with this keeping, let us not forget to guard the outlets of sin! (Prov 13:3). What a world of evil the heart pours out from the froward *mouth*! (Jas 3:5,6). Commit therefore both heart and mouth to God's discipline (Ps 19:13,14; 141:3,4). Then let prayer and faith be the practical principles of Christian watchfulness. Not only shun, but *put away* (even far away) *from thee . . . perverse lips*. Their evil, be it remembered, extends beyond ourselves. Even if the peace-speaking blood should speak peace to ourselves, the painful sense of injury will remain to our fellow creatures, perhaps without remedy.

Next to the heart and mouth, *keep thine eyes*, "the light of the body" (Mt 6:22), the faculty of the soul that directs. Yet too often they are a most dangerous inlet for sin (Gen 3:6; 6:2; 39:7; Mt 5:28). Therefore, like Job, make a covenant with them (Job 31:1). Place them under heavenly restraint (Ps 119:37). *Let them look right on*, like someone ploughing, who must not look back.³ Look *straight before us*. Had Eve done so, she would have looked on the command of her God, not on the forbidden tree (Gen 3:3-6). Had Lot's wife looked *straight before* her, instead of behind, she would have been a monument of mercy, like her husband (Gen 19:17,26). Achan was ruined by neglecting this rule of wisdom (Jos 7:21). David's bad example calls the holiest of us to godly jealousy of ourselves (2 Sam 11:2). In asking the way to Zion, be sure that your *faces are thitherward* (Jer 50:5).

The pleasure of sin and the seductions of a tempting world do not lie in the road. They would not therefore meet the eye looking right on – straight before us. They belong to the by-paths on the right hand and on the left, or to some backward track. It is therefore only when the Christian lingers, turns aside, or turns back that they come in sight. Take the runner's motto: "This

³Thomas Cartwright. See Lk 9:62.

one thing I do". Eye the mark, and press on to it (Phil 3:12-14). Onwards, upwards, heavenwards.

Lastly, *keep your feet*. Has not experience, no less than Scripture, shown your need of a circumspect walk? (Eph 5:15). Snares are laid out for every path; yes, for every step in your path; for your meat, your drink, your calling – perhaps more than all for the service of God. What deep pondering should there be in a path so beset with danger! Every step should be carefully weighed (Gen 24:5; Ps 39:1; Dan 1:8; 6:3,4). *Joseph pondered* and thereby *established his way* (Gen 39:9,10). Peter, neglecting to ponder, was fearfully sifted (Mt 26:58,69-75). David also, when he did not *ponder* the direction of his path, brought shame upon himself (1 Sam 27-29), like the trouble which Christian made for himself in the smooth By-path meadow instead of following the rough and narrow road. "The habit of calm and serious thinking makes the real difference between one man and another."

Here then is the voice of wisdom. Beware of mistaking presumption for faith, temptations for providential appointments. Never forsake a plain for a doubtful command (1 Ki 13:18-22). Estimate every step by its conformity to the known will of God. Do not dare to advance one step without God (Jos 9:14). *In His path* you may "tread upon the lion and adder" without hurt (Ps 91:11-13). But who shall venture into a path of his own choosing without a wound? See that your feet are straight, like those of the cherubim (see Ezek 1:7; see also Heb 12:13). "The pleasures of sin" lie *on the right hand and on the left*. The eyes therefore, *looking right on*, escape the sight of these pleasures. The foot of the one who ponders is established in steady perseverance; and by marking small deviations, and never turning out of the straight path to avoid a cross, it is removed from evil.

May we all have grace and wisdom to ponder these sound, practical rules! The man of God must only have one standard (Is 8:20). He must "know no man after the flesh" (2 Cor 5:16). He must often put aside the Church, no less than the world, that he may listen more closely to the command: "Walk before Me" (Gen 17:1). He must discern and crush the first motions of corruption, guarding every avenue of sin: the senses, the memory, the imagination, the touch, the taste. He must walk by the straight rule of the gospel, or else he will not only bring discomfort upon himself, but stumbling to the Church (Gal 2:11-14). A single eye, steadily fixed on the one Object, will make the path luminous (Mt 6:22). *Straightforward* progress will ensure prosperity (Deut 17:20; Jos 1:7,8) – keeping the middle path and daily lifting up the voice for restraint and guidance (Ps 119:37; 143:8-10). "Thine ears shall hear the word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left" (Is 30:21).

Aspects of the Ruling Eldership¹

2. From the Apostolic Church to the Reformation

R J Dickie

2. Ruling Elders between the Apostolic Church and the Reformation. I shall now look at the history of the Early Church to ascertain the Church's practice regarding the ruling elder. The evidence comes from uninspired written accounts and does appear to show that in part, anyway, the Early Church shared what we would understand as our [Presbyterian] interpretation of Scripture.

In the first two centuries after Christ, all the Church Fathers apart from Tertullian (c155 - c220), from the Roman province of Carthage, wrote in Greek. They generally used the Greek word *presbyteros* to designate an elder. Several authoritative Fathers wrote of a plurality of elders who ruled, and some of these writers distinguished the plurality of elders from the singular overseer (*episkopos*) of the congregation. The word, *episkopos*, was, of course, taken over by Prelacy and became "bishop" in English, with all the connotations of hierarchy. However, the "bishops" of the Early Church – and there were many in Italy and North Africa – were simply what we would mean by "minister".

Continuing for the moment to look at the use of words, we find that the later Fathers, who wrote in Latin, used the Latin word *senior* – it means "elder" and is the equivalent of the Greek word *presbyteros*. Some of the older Scottish Reformed documents use the word "senior" to mean "elder". In passing, the Latin word *senior* is derived from the word *senex*, Latin for an "old man", and *senex* is the root of the word "senator" which was used by some of the Reformers – particularly the Continental Reformers – when they wrote about elders.

Without tracing the steps which took place, we can note that the post-Apostolic Church gradually changed the function of the different offices. Probably in accommodation to the prevailing heathen religions with their priesthood, the word "presbyter" (elder) became "priest". "Deacons" gradually became preachers and assisted the "priests". And the "overseer" – the *episkopos*, who had been the minister of an individual congregation – became a "bishop", with a hierarchically superior authority over the "priests". As the Church became more corrupt, further ecclesiastical positions were added – such as archdeacon, sub-deacon, archbishop, rector, canon, dean and sub-dean, for example – and none of these had any warrant from Scripture.

¹Another part of a paper given at last year's Theological Conference. Last month's section outlined the scriptural basis for the office of the ruling elder.

As the scriptural “elder” had become a so-called “priest”, the concept of a ruling elder disappeared from the Roman Catholic Church and would not resurface until the Reformation.

3. The Continental Reformers and the Ruling Eldership. The centuries which followed the post-Apostolic Fathers have been well named the Dark Ages. Despite that, light was not totally extinguished. Roman Catholics and some Independents have repeatedly asserted that ruling elders were unknown in the Christian church until Calvin invented the office about the year 1541 and introduced it into the church of Geneva. This was not so, as there were ruling elders as well as ministers among the Hussites of Bohemia and the Waldensians of north-west Italy.

Let us now look briefly at the mainline Continental Reformers. I will restrict my comments to Luther and the Swiss Reformers. Although Martin Luther and the Lutheran Church did not incorporate ruling elders, he wrote about the meaning of the word. “I mentioned that ‘elder’ is ambiguous in the Greek. Does it mean one who is older or an official? I take it to mean one who is generally an older person even though one may take it as a minister.”

Let us turn our focus now from Luther to other Reformers, who were more directly relevant to the ecclesiology² of the Scottish Reformation. Huldrych Zwingli of Zurich predated Calvin and indeed died several years before Calvin arrived in Geneva. Zwingli concluded from Acts 15 that the elders “are to be considered as senators or counsellors. It is evident that the *presbyteroi* mentioned in this place were not ministers of the word; but that they were aged, prudent and venerable men, who, in directing and managing the affairs of the Church, were the same thing as the senators in our cities.” Oecolampadius of Basel, who also predated Calvin, expressed similar views, as did Martin Bucer of Germany, Peter Martyr of Italy, John à Lasco of Poland and Hungary, and many others.

Strasbourg is an important link for us in tracing the ruling elder. Certain laymen there were assigned powers of discipline and spiritual authority, and in 1534 Martin Bucer identified them with the elders of the New Testament. In 1536 Calvin settled in Geneva, already a Protestant town, but could not get his views accepted and was banished in 1538. For the next three years, Calvin lived in Strasbourg, where he learned a lot from Bucer and, in particular, was impressed with the eldership there. When Calvin was invited back to Geneva, he proceeded to shape the church of the city, and instituted the four offices within it – pastors, doctors, elders and deacons.

Calvin designated elders as “pastors and all those who are appointed for the government of the church. But they called them presbyters or elders for

²The doctrine of the Church.

honour's sake, not because they were all old in age, but because they were principally chosen from the aged, for old age for the most part has more prudence, gravity and experience."

Calvin's *Institutes*, book 4, chapter 3 is headed: "Of the teachers and ministers of the church, their election and office". He deals with the Scriptural authority for elders and concludes: "From the beginning, therefore, each church had its senate, composed of pious, grave and venerable men, in whom was lodged the power of correcting faults. . . . Moreover, experience shows that this arrangement was not confined to one age, and therefore we are to regard the office of government as necessary for all ages." Calvin regarded the elder's office to be "of perpetual duration" – that is, unlike the office of evangelists and prophets – and that the office of eldership was "necessary for all ages". In Geneva, election of elders was annual, like in France and England.

God's Mercy¹

A Letter from Rev Neil Cameron

I was pleased to have received your letter and to learn that you were able to rise and go about a little every day, also that your household were all well. So we can say truly: "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us".

When we consider our fruitlessness in the past and the Lord's mercy and goodness which followed us all our days, we must say with the Psalmist: "With us He dealt not as we sinned, nor did requite our ill". The goodness of the Lord is as far beyond our thoughts as the heavens are above the earth. No man can measure that distance, neither has any man ever found out the extent of God's goodness and mercy. To open a way for this mercy to guilty men, the only begotten Son of God came into this world of sinful, lost men, and by His obedience, sufferings and death, He opened a way for mercy to the guiltiest man on earth.

But, alas, God's mercy is despised and rejected. Is it not an infallible proof that sin is madness – as it is written: "Madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead"? I have been thinking of the awful condition of guilty men, even in time, if it were not that Christ crucified is held forth, as an Almighty Saviour, in the gospel. If the conscience of any man should be awakened to feel the wrath of God against sin,

¹This is the second of a series of letters written to John Maciver of Scoraig, in Wester Ross. Written on 24 June 1926, it was first printed in *The Free Presbyterian Magazine* for April 1938. A footnote to a previous letter describes him as "a gracious man who lived to the patriarchal age of over 100 years". The first of these letters was reprinted in June 2024.

would he not fall into despair, without Christ set forth in the gospel? So that we should say from the depth of our heart: "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift".

May the love of God fill your heart in believing that it was out of electing love He sent His Son into the world, to call sinners to repentance, and that it was the same love which moved the Father and the Son to send the blessed Holy Spirit to convince *you* of sin, and to enable you to place all your hope in Christ I hope you and all yours are well.

An Answer to Spiritual Difficulties¹

Ralph Erskine

Your letter came into my hand a considerable time after the date of it, and also at a time when I was obliged to lay it aside unanswered. But lately, having again taken it into my hand, I thought it my duty to gratify your desire by giving some answer. I am glad that the Lord has made any poor writings of mine refreshing to you. Meantime, I see by your letter that you are afraid lest, notwithstanding the advantages you have enjoyed, you have no more than a head knowledge of religion. And you express several other grounds of jealousy about yourself, in which you desire I may deal plainly with you.

Though it is hard for me to write on this head to one that I know no more of than just what your letter relates; yet there are some things mentioned in it which, if they are told me from an upright, ingenuous heart, they may give some handle to show that the seed of grace may really be sown there, and that the Lord is humbling you in order to heal you in due time.

First. You state that you lack the sealing testimonies of the Lord's grace, which you judge you would have if you belonged to him. As to this, it may be in mercy that the Lord is withholding the seals of His love, and the comfortable feelings of it, until you are brought to find it, in an easier way of believing His love. It is said in Ephesians 1:13, "After that ye believed, ye were sealed". The only sure ground of faith is the word of grace and truth spoken of there, and not our feeling. The felt sealing of the Spirit of promise is not to be expected before we believe the word of promise. If we should have anything like a feeling of His love before we believe His love, we would be ready to build our faith upon transient feelings and frames and influences, and not on the sure word of promise.

Though the revealing work of the Spirit opening the Word is prior to faith,

¹An edited extract from a letter to Sarah Fisher, dated 19 January 1742 and taken from *The Life and Diary of Ralph Erskine* by Donald Fraser (Edinburgh, 1834).

yet the sealing work of the Spirit is after it. Many are deluded that rest on feelings and build their faith of God's love, not on what God has said, but merely on what they have felt; and as these feelings are up and down, so is their faith. It will therefore be a mercy if the Lord is withholding what you call the sealing testimonies of His love, till you are made to give Him the glory of His truth by believing His love as revealed to you in His Word. Then you may expect the comfort of it to be sealed to you in your heart. The woman with the issue of blood was not conscious of virtue coming from Christ till she touched the hem of His garment by faith (Lk 8:43-48). If you expect and wait for feelings to be the foundation of your faith, they are mercifully denied you, that you may build upon a surer foundation, namely, Christ speaking in the Word as the ground of your faith, before you have any feeling of Him in your heart for the *encouragement* of faith.

Second. You tell me you can hear others talk of sweet communion with the Lord, and of their longing to die and to be with Christ, while the thoughts of death are terrible to you. At the same time you complain of deadness, coldness and carnality, fearing you lack love to Christ and that these things are not the spots of God's children.

If you have a view of the plagues of your own heart and are indeed kept poor, needy and empty, and humbled under a sense of your need of all grace and goodness in yourself, desiring that Christ and His fulness may be more precious and acceptable to you; you have the advantage over those who are enriched with greater enjoyments if they are lifted up with them (Mt 5:3-6, Is 66:2). I hope this is the case with you, because of what you also say in your letter: that sometimes you can rejoice at the doctrine of God's everlasting love to His chosen ones, though you cannot see your own interest in it; and are sure that, if ever you are saved, the crown must be upon the head of Christ. This looks like the language of one whom God is humbling in order to exalt her, and emptying in order to fill her in due time (Pss 9:18, 10:17, 113:5-7).

Third. You speak of having been under many temptations, but that you do not remember any promise to have come with power for your deliverance. Dear friend, if deliverance has come to you from time to time according to the promise, even powerful and merciful deliverance, whether sudden or gradual – though the promise itself has not come to you with such power, or in such a manner, as you think it has come to others – you should be thankful. The Lord's way of bringing home the promise to the heart varies. However, I know little difference between a promise poured in sweetly upon the heart, and a heart poured out sweetly upon the promise. The latter may be as sure and safe as the former.

If the promise has, in holy providence, only come to your mind – whether by hearing, reading, or musing – so that you have been helped to make it a matter of prayer and pleading before the throne of grace, be content and bless God for it. Many are ready to depend more upon the felt power and sweet influence, by which the promise comes to them, than upon the promise itself. And hence, when the power and influence are withdrawn, faith has to be sought. They cannot rest upon the bare word of God, the bread on which the soul should live, unless, like little children, they get the butter and honey of some sweet influence spread upon it.

This disposition, in any godly soul, is much due to the sad remains of a legal temper that makes them seek for a ground of faith and hope, more in themselves, and in what is done by them, and wrought or felt in them, than by going out of themselves to what the Lord is in Himself, and has wrought for them and spoken to them. Faith is strongest, when it can live on a bare promise, without the supports of sight. Endeavour, through grace, to trust on a promising God, giving credit to His truth; and you shall find Him, in His own time, to be a performing God, giving comfort to your heart. Seek rest – not in streams of blessings and comforts only, that come from Him and take various turns – but in Himself, the fountain, who is still the same.

But I fear I have said too much. If you want, I will further explain anything written here; you may let me know by another letter. I have not in the least tried to flatter you; I have no temptation to do so, as I am quite ignorant of you, beyond what you have told me. If you wish to let me know your outward situation in life, whether it is high or low, it will be agreeable to me. I shall wish I may be able to serve your soul; and if what I have written here is in any way useful to you, and suits the case you wrote to me about, I will be glad if you let me know that you have received this letter. If it comes in time to answer any difficulties you may yet be under, you will the more readily pardon and excuse my having been so long in sending it. May the Lord bless all His means of grace, and make your soul prosper!

Book Review

Learning from the Word, by Angus Smith, published by Reformation Press, 247 pages, hardback £21.75; and paperback, £14.70, obtainable from the Free Presbyterian Bookroom.

Learning from the Word contains 40 brief articles originally written by the late Rev Angus Smith for a religious magazine titled, *Our Inheritance*. The articles really read like short sermons, and it is not surprising to learn that

they were based on sermons which he preached throughout his ministry.

Those who had the privilege of hearing Mr Smith preach will recognise his unmistakable style and not a few of his favourite themes. The articles cover a wide variety of topics, each based on a text of Scripture, carefully expounded in Mr Smith's usual manner. In reading the book, one is reminded of the rich theology, original insights, experimental balance, and faithful defence of the truth which adorned and characterised Mr Smith's preaching.

In one article, when the excellence of spiritual worship is being opened up, we have the striking thought "that Solomon made harps of al mug wood, which would last, but God makes instruments of true spiritual praise of sinful people, the most intractable material ever, to be in His heavenly temple for evermore" (p 12). In the same passage there is the profound observation that "our praise is pleasant to Christ, for He is the One who earned it as a reward from God for His finished work".

Mr Smith once stated his opinion that the most liberty he ever enjoyed as a preacher was as a divinity student preaching in Glasgow on the words "the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up". It was especially interesting then to find an article on this text in the book, in which the following solemn words are found: "Christ was angry, and He made it known. His anger was pure and holy, and such is the anger which His foes will meet at the Great White Throne eventually. It will be both divine and human anger" (p 19). The depths of suffering which the Divine Redeemer endured is a frequent theme throughout. We are told, for example, that Christ "met eternal damnation and was enveloped by the curse of God. Owing to the virtue of His divine Person He was able to take His human nature to the bottom of this bottomless pit and through a whole eternity of demands of inexorable, unbending justice within the bounds of thirty-three years" (p 47).

It was no light and superficial religion which Mr Smith possessed himself, and he knew the cost of a true profession of Christ. In describing what it is to take up the cross and to follow the Lord, he warns, "To take up the cross is a deliberate thing. It involves a death sentence in the eyes of the world, and of the worldly church – the church of Cain, which misses out the Lamb; the church of Ishmael which mocks the child of promise; the church of Esau which despises the spiritual birthright. It seems an inexplicable course of action in the eyes of those who do not know what the love of Christ is and what obedience to Him really is. There are many who can preach of love who do not know this love nor its necessary obedience in cross-raising" (p 55).

One example of the remarkable light which he was given on the truth is found in an article on prayer. He observes in it that "true prayer can always be summed up by the phrase: "Avenge me of mine adversary" (Lk 18:3).

The explanation follows, “The Christian now has the just, loving, patient and true Judge, or God, on his side, and as he is accepted in Christ he can pray, ‘Avenge me of mine adversary’, or, ‘In Thy justice, put all my affairs right. Sin has spoiled all, and, although justified, the child of God has the intercession and groan of the Holy Spirit in his soul, desiring that all the harm done by sin be put right, in himself, in the Church, and elsewhere” (p 76).

Mr Smith, though possessed of a strong assurance himself, was not unsympathetic to the poor tried believer who is much assailed with doubts and fears as to his salvation. On faith and assurance he says, “Faith is a resting upon Christ. It looks at Christ alone for salvation. Christ is God the Saviour. Sometimes the poor believer groans if he fears something may be lacking in his faith. There are those who scorn such, for they themselves feel sure of their salvation. However, salvation does not lie in us being sure of our salvation. The Pharisees were sure of it too. We must never boast over a poor believer beset by doubt” (p 84).

There were only one or two negatives. In the fourth article, on “Blessed is the man that heareth Me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors” (Prov 8:34), the application seems to be entirely to the regenerate, with nothing for the seeking sinner, who is surely to find encouragement to seek Christ in these precious words. Then in the article already referred to on taking up the cross, there is a statement to the effect that when the believer sins, his will is not involved in it since “his God-renewed will only has one bias, and that is to holiness”. It will be sufficient in highlighting the problem with this view to quote the words of the *Confession* 6:4: “When God converts a sinner, and translates him into the state of grace, He freeth him from his natural bondage under sin; and, by His grace alone, enables him freely to will and to do that which is spiritually good; yet so, as that by reason of his remaining corruption, he doth not perfectly, nor only, will that which is good, but doth also will that which is evil”.

However, these points are not intended to detract from the overall quality of *Learning from the Word*. It is a book well worth reading and we would encourage our people to purchase it, and to seek grace “to be followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises” (Heb 6:12).

(Rev) I D MacDonald

Protestant View

King Charles at Mass

The recent funeral of Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Kent was the first Roman Catholic funeral of a member of the Royal family since the Refor-

mation. The King, the Prince and Princess of Wales and other members of the Royal family were present at this event, during which a letter of condolence to the King from Pope Leo XIV was read by the papal nuncio.

The attendance of our professedly-Protestant Monarch at this funeral is a significant public step in the spiral of national religious decline. In 1994, the Duchess of Kent was the first member of the Royal family to join the Church of Rome in recent times and, since then, a number of her own immediate family have followed her. Her move to Romanism is reported to have been approved at the time by the late Queen. The consequences of such approval are apparent now in the King's attendance at the abominable idolatry of a royal Roman Catholic requiem mass. Such attendance is a flagrant breach of the King's accession and coronation vows to uphold the Protestant religion. Support for the Antichristian Church of Rome includes attendance at its services and necessarily undermines the profession of loyalty to Protestantism which King Charles has so solemnly sworn.

The late Duchess said that the firmness of Roman Catholic teaching was an important factor in drawing her into the Romanist fold. This itself was a tacit condemnation of the laxness and ambiguity of modern Anglicanism. It is sad when Rome – with all its scandals and perversions – is regarded as providing firmer moral guidance than Protestant Churches.

The current royal house came to the throne of Britain in 1714 for the sole reason of maintaining the Protestant Succession and has been kept in possession of it until now, as professedly Protestant. But the more that Rome makes inroads among some of the most influential members of our society, the worse it will be for the nation and for those precious souls ensnared by Rome's deadly errors. And we clearly see once more how little sympathy with the principles of the Word of God and the Reformation so many of the leading figures in British society have shown over the years. "From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises and putrifying sores" (Is 1:6).

AWM

Notes and Comments

A New Archbishop of Canterbury

On Friday, October 3, Downing Street announced that His Majesty the King has approved the nomination of the Bishop of London, Rt Rev Sarah Mullally, as the next Archbishop of Canterbury. She will be the one hundred and sixth Archbishop of Canterbury and will be the first woman to hold the office. She will legally become Archbishop of Canterbury at a ceremony in

Canterbury Cathedral in January, followed by an enthronement service at a later date where members of the royal family are likely to be present.

Sarah Mullally has been the Bishop of London since 2018, the first woman appointed to that role also, and before that was Bishop of Crediton in the Diocese of Exeter. Prior to her ordination in 2001, she was the Government's Chief Nursing Officer for England – the youngest person ever to be appointed to that role, at the age of 37 – having previously specialised as a cancer nurse.

The Crown Nominations Commission (CNC) for Canterbury nominated Sarah Mullally following a process of public consultation that began in February this year. The Canterbury CNC was made up of representatives from across the Church of England, the global Anglican Communion and the Diocese of Canterbury.

The Global Anglican Future Conference (Gafcon) said, "The news has finally arrived after months of prayer and long waiting. But it is with sorrow that Gafcon (Gafcon claims to be steadfastly orthodox and to be rooted in Scripture) receives the announcement today of the appointment of Dame Sarah Mullally as the next Archbishop of Canterbury. This appointment abandons global Anglicans, as the Church of England has chosen a leader who will further divide an already split Communion. . . . However, due to the failure of successive Archbishops of Canterbury to guard the faith, the office can no longer function as a credible leader of Anglicans, let alone a focus of unity. As we made clear in our Kigali Commitment of 2023, we can 'no longer recognise the Archbishop of Canterbury as an Instrument of Communion' or the 'first among equals' of global Primates [that is, archbishops].

"Although it would appear that there are many who welcome the appointment of a female Archbishop of Canterbury, the majority of the Anglican Communion still believes that the Bible requires a male-only episcopacy." Gafcon also say, "More concerning is her failure to uphold her consecration vows. When she was consecrated in 2015, she took an oath to 'banish and drive away all strange and erroneous doctrine contrary to God's Word'. And yet, far from banishing such doctrine, Bishop Mullally has repeatedly promoted unbiblical and revisionist teachings regarding marriage and sexual morality".

As Presbyterians we have no truck with Episcopacy; it is unscriptural. The Scottish Covenanters were persecuted, hounded to death and executed without mercy for resisting Episcopacy and the King's insistence on control over the Church of Christ.

However, it is the established church in England, and it is sad that they have slipped their anchor, which is the Word of God. In 2023, the present

Archbishop-elect was asked whether sexual intimacy in a same-sex relationship is sinful, and she replied that some such relationships could, in fact, be blessed. She also voted in favour of introducing blessings of same-sex marriage into the Church of England. That Church's own Article XX says that it is not lawful to ordain anything that is contrary to God's Word. The Church cannot bless or affirm what God has condemned (Num 24:13). What God has condemned is precisely what Bishop Mullally advocates.

Not only will this appointment further divide the Anglican Church but sadly will cause an even more pronounced departure to the welcoming arms of the Church of Rome.

FRD

Yet Another Fossil Discovery

The latest fossil discovery exciting the evolutionary world is three skulls said to be a million years old. The skulls were found in China around 1990, but have recently been identified as belonging to one or more supposed "species" of early man. This may imply, it is claimed, that man (*homo sapiens*) "began to emerge at least half a million years earlier" than had been thought, and in China rather than Africa. Once again, this discovery "totally changes our understanding of human evolution and, if correct, it would certainly rewrite a key early chapter in our history". One commentator enthusiastically remarks: "60 years of paleo-anthropology dogma has just been thrown out the window."

These "upheavals" in evolutionary theory have been going on all the present writer's life, and much longer than that. Meanwhile, the simple account of creation in the Bible continues unchanged, century by century. Although supposed by the Higher Critics and their successors to be extremely "primitive", and cobbled together from ill-assorted myths and legends, it stands the passage of time. In a few hundred simple Hebrew words, it identifies and accounts for everything that is important in the world and in human life: light; day and night; the sea and the dry land; the plants; the sun, the moon and the stars; the sea animals and birds; the land animals; and man himself, with his pre-eminence over the animals, and his moral and spiritual nature. Along with these we have the seven-day week and the Sabbath; gold; the two sexes; marriage; Satan and temptation; sin; loss of communion with God; nakedness; a cursed earth; the hope of redemption; false religion; murder; bigamy; and so on. A few chapters later, we have the Flood, the rainbow and the covenant with Noah, and the races of the world. A little further still and we meet Israel.

The Bible unerringly picks out all the things that matter, once and for all. We have no doubt that the "paleo-anthropology dogma", after its innumerable

upheavals, will eventually conform itself to the account in the Bible, given us by the One who made all these things. *DWBS*

God's Truth: the Standard Even in an Age of Relativism

We are constantly surrounded by a vast array of news and media reports, offering different perspectives on world events, each vying for our attention. We need to pause, reflect and ask repeatedly, amidst all this confusing and conflicting mass of information, What are we warranted to believe? Often we feel compelled to turn away, from the vivid and contradictory presentations before us, confused and concerned. But we should not despair; there is a God in heaven.

The Lord's people have One to whom they can continually flee. Their Lord and Master in heaven knows all. He is their refuge, strength and very present help (see Ps 46:1). He is Jehovah Jesus, the Son of God, with all authority and power in heaven and earth, who has declared that, although we may be foolish, simple and lacking in understanding in many ways, He – and no other – is, definitively, Wisdom, Understanding and Knowledge (see Prov 8:12,14). At His feet, all the humble followers of Almighty God may cast themselves, knowing that everything – every single one of the countless billions of events happening simultaneously around the world at all times – is (like the wheels within wheels in Ezekiel's prophecy) completely known and entirely under His power and authority, as the eternal and almighty Lord God, before whom all things are naked and open (see Heb 4:13).

Amid the overwhelming and satanic spiritual darkness, terrible evil, and incredible wickedness that seem to pervade the world today, the Christian's life must be firmly rooted and grounded in the love of Christ – He who is the way, the truth and the life. We must openly confess that there is no room for self-righteousness or complacency. We are all subject to temptation, and the same dreadful evils that surround us dwell within our own deceitful and desperately wicked hearts (see Jer 17:9), in seed form if (in the Lord's mercy) they are not manifest before the world in open and blatant wickedness.

Despite all the unbelief and rebellion in the world, we must remember that in heaven there is the one true and living God, who reigns over all. He is the Creator and Sustainer of the world, the One in whom “we live, and move, and have our being” (Acts 17:28). Everyone and everything is completely subject to Him, and He is holy and righteous: He abhors all sin and evil.

Our God, the Triune God, is the true God. He is truth itself (see, for example, Deut 32:4; Is 65:16; Ps 31:5). As the truth, God has given man the Word of truth (Ps 119:43), the authoritative, divinely inspired and preserved Holy Scriptures, to be the sole and supreme rule of truth amongst men. This

written volume of truth (see Ps 40:7 and Heb 10:7) is perfect and sufficient, as the *Westminster Confession* states clearly and concisely in the chapter titled, “Of the Holy Scripture”, part of which reads: “The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man’s salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men” (1:6).

This firm stance of the Christian sharply contrasts with the nonsensical wanderings of the worldview of those who do not tremble at the Word of God (see Is 66:5). All who identify as atheists, agnostics and secularists, along with followers of all pagan religions, wickedly deny the absolute authority of God in the Holy Scriptures. They reject God’s truth and replace it with a perspective where nothing is absolute, accurate or authoritative. At best, their understanding of truth is relative and ultimately devolves into ludicrous and fanciful versions of “my truth”, “your truth” and “their truth”! Such a position is marked by the vague, vaporous and fleeting authority of individuals who, whether acting alone or collectively, seem consistently to uphold their supposed authority in a domineering, overbearing and intolerant manner, as history has shown us.

If God is the true God, who is Himself the truth, and has given us the Word of God as the written revelation of truth, then anything that does not fully conform to that divinely objective standard must be rejected as untruthful, false, not of God, and consequently harmful to mankind. Thus, in the Lord’s gracious providence, we have in the Holy Scriptures a divinely inspired, infallible and wholly objective standard against which man can test all things (see Is 8:20), for “let God be true, but every man a liar” (Rom 3:4) if man’s word does not fully conform to the truth of the Word of God.

We are to have a Biblical worldview and examine everything that we hear, read or see by the infallible and inerrant Word of God. “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (Is 8:20).

In a day so heavily overwhelmed by information that is often confusing and contradictory, the Christian’s duty is both simple and profound: they are to be valiant for truth; humbly, prayerfully and diligently seeking grace to live their lives in obedience to the discriminating teaching of the Holy Scriptures, so that they may fulfill their chief and highest end – living wholly to the glory of God and fully enjoying Him throughout their lives. By consistently assessing every activity and encounter – news, opinions and daily decisions – against the unwavering standard of Holy Scripture, they will both protect

their hearts from sin and folly, and humbly witness to the world around us whose we are and whom we serve (see Acts 27:23).

Let us prayerfully and earnestly seek, and anticipate the fulfilment of, the Church's great worldwide privilege and duty, as described by the King and Head of the Church: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations . . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Mt 28:19,20). Let the Church do so, in order that we and future generations may, by His grace, witness the days when "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Hab 2:14).

Finally, may we live close to Christ and each day have His Word as a lamp to our feet and a light to our paths (see Ps 119:105)! DPR

Church Information

Day of Humiliation and Prayer

On the motion of Rev D A Ross, seconded by Rev R MacLeod, the Synod in May 2025 agreed the following:

"The Synod appoints a Day of Humiliation and Prayer to be observed throughout the Church on Wednesday, 3rd December 2025. Such an appointment is highly appropriate since we live in times of increasing spiritual darkness and ought therefore to pray more earnestly. There is much reason for thankfulness to the Lord, when we have a degree of freedom to continue with our gospel activities and enjoy a measure of blessing. However, at times we feel as if we have laboured in vain. The Word of God appears largely to fall on deaf ears. With the emboldening of the kingdom of darkness, we are more than ever conscious of the truth in Ephesians 6:12: 'For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places'. What need, therefore, that we more earnestly plead God's precious promise to build up Zion, by granting a greater outpouring of His Holy Spirit to bless His Word. Truly, without this our gospel labour is in vain. May we therefore humble ourselves before God, confessing our sins, our shortcomings in His work, and plead earnestly for His gracious saving power. 'Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it' (Psalm 127:1)."

(Rev) Keith M Watkins, Clerk of Synod

In the gospel grace appears; in the gospel grace reigns; but it reigns not on the ruins of law and justice, but in the more glorious establishment of both; it reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. Robert Haldane

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 or as intimated. 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: sydneyfpcchurch@protonmail.com.

New Zealand

Auckland: 45 Church Street, Otahuhu. Sabbath 11 am, 6 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. Rev J D Smith, 9 Pedlar Place, Conifer Grove, Auckland; tel: 022 092 2136.

Carterton: 124 High Street North, Carterton. Sabbath 11 am, 4 pm; Wednesday 7 pm. Contact: Mr Hank Optland, P O Box 150, Carterton, 5743; tel: 02 7432 5625.

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

Tauranga: For services, contact Rev J D Smith; tel: 022 092 2136.

Singapore

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

Ukraine

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

Zimbabwe

Bulawayo: Lobengula Township, PO Magwegwe, Bulawayo. Rev S Khumalo, F P Manse, Stand No 56004, Mazwi Road, Lobengula, PO Magwegwe, Bulawayo; tel: 00263 9407131, e-mail: skhumalo.byo@gmail.com.

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

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

New Canaan: Church. Rev T Mwedzi.

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