

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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Communion

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: 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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Receiving God's Testimonies

Psalm 119 speaks again and again about the Word of God; indeed only two verses out of 176 do not mention it under one name or other – including *word, commandments, precepts, statutes and judgements*. Another word the Psalmist makes use of is *testimonies*, as in verse 111. He addresses God: “Thy *testimonies* have I taken as an heritage for ever: for they are the rejoicing of my heart”. He is thinking of God bearing testimony to those who read the Psalm he was writing. We must remember that all God says is true; so every statement in Scripture is true. And in the same Psalm, we read, “Thy law [here another word for Scripture, not only for the commandments] is the truth” (v 142).

What a blessing to have a reliable revelation from God which gives us all we need to know about spiritual things! Whatever else we might wish to know, if it cannot be found in the Bible, we do *not* need to know it. The Bible is a complete revelation of all we need to learn so that we may get safely through this world and safely into heaven at last. In His great kindness, God has given us the Bible, and we therefore are under a responsibility to receive all of it as truth. To reject the Bible as “a lamp unto my feet” (Ps 119:105) as we take our spiritual journey through life is to commit ourselves to making the attempt in the deepest darkness. And sadly, that is how most people today are trying to get through life. What need the people of this generation have of the light that comes through the Scriptures.

God begins His testimonies by telling us that He is the Creator of all things; and that truth is confirmed many times throughout Scripture. For instance, in the Fourth Commandment He states, “In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is” (Ex 20:11). God’s testimony, in Genesis 1:1, to Himself as the Creator is fundamental to all that follows in Scripture; if we reject it, we have no basis for recognising the authority of God over us in all that He commands.

God further bears testimony to the fact of the Fall: that “by one man’s offence death reigned by one” (Romans 5:17); that is, by Adam’s first transgression, all his natural descendants suffer death – spiritual death and,

with very few exceptions such as Elijah, natural death, and are in danger of eternal death. For spiritually dead sinners, this is not welcome testimony, but those who have been brought into the kingdom of God are thankful to have been awakened to their spiritual danger, by the Holy Spirit applying such truths to their souls.

But no one who has a Bible need despair, for God has testified to His mercy, even in the Garden of Eden. He bore testimony to “the seed of the woman” who was to bruise the head of Satan. This was the first testimony to the coming of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, into the world, to save sinners. It appeared that Satan had the victory when he swept Adam and Eve out of the kingdom of God, but the testimony of the Word of God repeatedly indicates that Satan is now a defeated foe. We have the testimony of the Son of God about Himself recorded in the Word: “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).

Let us now remind ourselves of the Psalmist’s reaction to these testimonies: “Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever: for they are the rejoicing of my heart”. He received them joyfully as a heritage, what he could not earn; that was impossible for him. In an age when a printed Bible is within the reach of most people in large parts of the world, the mere possession of the Scripture is not the point at issue; it is taking possession by faith of such testimonies as have been quoted above – believing such truth and resting one’s soul on the work of the Saviour who gave Himself to suffer and die in the place of sinners. He is the One whose testimony is sure – as is the testimony of the whole Bible – that “whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life”.

Receiving this testimony “for ever”, by faith, is a guarantee of everlasting life. Though there is no escape, even for believers, from natural death, except for the last generation of human beings on earth, the Bible contains testimony to the reversal of death in the resurrection, when the soul and the body are reunited. By the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, spiritual life is created in the soul, and that life will never be lost.

By virtue of that spiritual life, believers are willing to receive God’s testimony as to how they should live. They have recognised that they cannot devise a way of life that is pleasing to God; they value the directions that are provided for them in God’s commandments – His testimonies as to what kind of behaviour is pleasing to Him. God testifies that His law is good (Rom 7:12) – it is good for us to have it and to obey it.

It is in the Scriptures that God bears testimony to His will for everyone to obey Him in every aspect of their lives. So God’s Word should be precious

to us, and we should be seeking that, for Christ's sake, the Holy Spirit would apply all of God's testimonies to our souls, and to apply them more and more as the years go by. God's children should seek to be like the Psalmist who took God's testimonies as his heritage, as his possession. They should indeed be to us a treasured possession, and we should indeed treat them consistently as such.

If that is so for the individual believer, it should also be true for the Church of God. This Scriptures should be the treasured foundation for the Church's doctrine and practice. In Scotland, this was very definitely so at the time of the Reformation. Today, sadly, it is far otherwise with the larger Protestant Churches. Their adherence to scriptural doctrine is tenuous to say the least.

Free Presbyterians ought to remember the importance of the doctrine of Scripture among the factors that forced the fathers of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland to leave the nineteenth-century Free Church of Scotland in 1893. Among the testimonies we have been considering in this article is the Bible's testimony to itself. We may say that Psalm 119 is one sustained testimony to the perfection of the Word of God. But in the late nineteenth century, a large section in the Free Church refused to receive the testimony of Scripture to itself – that it is without error of any kind, that it is absolutely reliable. Prominent among those who were rejecting that testimony were many of the teachers in the Free Church colleges. The original professors were men of the calibre of William Cunningham and James Buchanan, who fully believed the truth about the Bible. But later men, for example, A B Davidson, Marcus Dods and William Robertson Smith were, in varying degrees, undermining the accuracy and the authority of the Word of God.

The Westminster Confession of Faith provided the Scottish Churches with a reliable summary of the teachings of Scripture but the section in the Free Church that was rejecting Scripture's testimony to itself naturally became uncomfortable with the teaching of the *Confession* to which all the office-bearers in the Church had subscribed as the confession of their faith. We today should value the testimonies that God gives in His Word and seek, in dependence on God's grace, to pass them on to succeeding generations.

We may sum up what has been already said, in the words of W S Plumer's remark on the verse with which this article begins: "The great error of most who profess true religion is that they do not make enough of it. They do not habitually feel that God's favour is enough to compensate for all losses; that His word is an *heritage* sufficient to all the ends of a happy existence, even if we had nothing else, and that we may be *glad* in the promises even if providences seem to be against us."

God Calling the Wicked to Repent (1)¹

A Sermon by John Kennedy

Ezekiel 33:11. *Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?*

This message from God contains, in the form of an oath, a declaration regarding Himself, and, with earnestness most intense, conveys a call to the house of Israel. The *declaration* and the *call* are therefore the two things to which the text demands our attention.

1. In considering the **declaration**, we must first attend to the *meaning* and then to the *form* of it – attend to what God tells us, and to how He tells it.

(1.) The *meaning* of the declaration. It contains two statements. The first tells us what He has no pleasure in, and the second what He has pleasure in. Let us consider each of these separately.

(1) “*I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked.*” Yet the wicked dies. He who says, “I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked”, is He from whom the message came: “O wicked man, thou shalt surely die”. The death of the finally impenitent is taken for granted. It is the mind of God regarding that certain event which the text calls us to consider. This passage gives no support to the idea that the death of the wicked is inconsistent with the mercy of God; for here divine mercy is proclaimed right over it. In full view of this solemn fact, Jehovah asserts His benevolence.

Nor are we required to think of the death of the wicked as something less calamitous than eternal misery, in order to reconcile the death of the wicked with the character of God as good. Surely it is not mere temporary suffering, or annihilation, over which Jehovah is exhibiting earnestness so intense. Only those who do not know sin can be disposed to modify the retribution.

If a stranger visiting this country looked in on the homes made wretched by vice, some of which are not very far removed from the palace; or into the cells of our prisons throughout our land, which are so prominent and so costly as government institutions; or on the sad scene of an execution, at which agents of the crown were present – he would not be justified in coming to the conclusion that our Sovereign was not benevolent; or that such a state of things under her government was an evidence of our Queen’s lack of clemency. If the crime was ignored, on account of which the wretchedness, the bondage and the execution were elements in the condition of the kingdom,

¹This sermon, by the noted Free Church minister of Dingwall, has been taken from *The Modern Scottish Pulpit*, vol 1 (1883) and edited.

it would be no wonder if a conclusion adverse to the character of our Queen were drawn from these facts.

But take the crime into account; trace these instances of misery to crime. Then not a shadow of suspicion rests on the throne of our kingdom, nor on the name of our Sovereign. A ruler that would forbid the exact exercise of justice in dealing with crime would, in effect, be quite as oppressive as the most cruel of all despots. The mercy that winked at crime would produce more calamitous results than the sternest tyranny. Even goodness demands a restraint on crime and punishment for the convicted criminal.

And let it never be forgotten that the death we are now considering, in relation to the government and character of God; is “the death of the wicked”. We must think of his crime when we think of his death – of his having resisted God’s will, disowned His authority, dishonoured His name, hated His being, and defied His power. Can we think of God as infinite in His being, glory and goodness, without being constrained to conclude that eternal death is the wages due to all who thus sin against Him? Could we worship a God who, in the full knowledge of what He is, would award a punishment less than this? A God who is not necessarily just to Himself, to this extent, could not be infinite and could not be worshipped. You must see, in God’s way of government, such solemn justice as finds expression in the eternal death of the wicked, before you can either revere or love Him who is “over all”. If you accept in faith the truth of God’s infinity, you must accept as true the solemn fact of the eternal death of all the wicked who remain unsaved.

The one difficulty is the existence of wickedness. While this fact must be assumed, it points to what must for ever remain to us an insoluble mystery in its relation to the will of God. But it is due to God, because of His infinite love of righteousness, that His relation to the origin of sin should be regarded without any suspicion. It is also due to Him, as Supreme Governor, that the perfect rightness of this relation should only be clear to His mind. We should deem it enough if the existence of sin appears to Him to be perfectly consistent with all the glory of His holiness and goodness. Into what awful darkness your mind must enter, if you presume to attempt to occupy any position in relation to this, except that of adoring silence!

Do not venture, with your imperfect conceptions of the Most High, to imagine that His way of dealing with sin cannot be right because it does not appear right to you. Ignorant of God, and therefore ignorant of sin, men often venture to pass judgement on the moral government of God, as if they had before them a finite being dealing with some trivial offence. All error has its root in ignorance of God; in ignorance of what may and should be known about God; in all feelings that interfere with our adoration of God and

our admiration of His ways; and in the pride which thrusts us beyond our place as creatures in considering the ways of God.

At any rate, the existence of sin gives an opportunity for the infinite display of the very attributes of God on which it seems to cast a shadow – His holiness and His goodness. The existence of sin forms a dark background before which the glory of Him who alone is immutable appears all the more brightly. Since that is so, let our thoughts regarding the relation of sin to Jehovah's sovereign will produce the calmness of adoring silence behind the awe which overwhelms us, as we think of the moral hideousness of sin and of its everlasting results.

There is no malevolence in God which could be gratified in the death of the creature He has made. It is not because He does not delight in mercy that sin has been permitted to exist and death has been appointed as its wages. This is sufficiently proved by His providence and by His gospel. Does He not cause His goodness to abound even to the evil and unthankful? Is not the earth a scene on which He makes manifest that He is long-suffering and slow to wrath, in His providential dealings with sinful men? Each moment between birth and death is a fresh proof of this. And if, after a life made up of moments, each of them brightened by the goodness of God, the wicked dies at last, this calamity must be traced to impartial justice, not to a lack of benevolence in God.

But how ample is the proof given in the cross that God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked! There the death of wicked people is seen dissociated from them, and being endured by the only-begotten Son of God. At the cross are seen the deaths of a countless multitude of wicked people in one great retribution. And in the light of that awful fire, in which the wrath of God is exhaustively expressed, you may read the lesson of this text. They must die, but they so die in Christ that they shall surely live. Their deaths are swallowed up in the death of Him who is their Substitute; and because He alone is crucified, they all shall live. At the cross we see God dealing with sin apart from the person of the transgressor; and instead of the guilty criminal, there stands at His bar One who is His own only-begotten Son. How infinitely strong is the proof this affords that it is from impartial justice, and not from malevolence towards the persons of the guilty, that the sentence comes forth which awards death to the wicked!

But there is more than this in the first statement, in God's declaration regarding Himself which we have in the text. It tells us that such is the character of God, as revealed in the gospel, that it is impossible for Him to find pleasure in the death of the wicked.

Now it is not by ignoring the stern aspect of His character, presented by

the law, that you can have before your mind the view of His character given in the text. Whatever was the character of God, it is and it must be for ever. He can never cease to be all He was revealed as being, in the days of old. And just as He revealed Himself then by the law, so He does now. You, as a sinner, have to do with Him under the same aspect of His character, and in the same relation, as Lawgiver and Judge, as they who were under the Old Testament dispensation. And only in a way which is quite consistent with all He was, and with all He claimed and with all He threatened, as the God of Sinai – only when He is so before you that you can recognise Him by the same glory which made awful the place of His presence on “the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire” – only then can you possibly attain to hope in His mercy.

Nor can you hope in His mercy by concluding that, because God is love, He loves all. Beware of being content with a hope that springs from believing in a love of God, apart from His Christ and outside of the shelter of the cross. It may relieve you of a superficial fear. It may excite a feeling of joy and gratitude in your heart. It may beget in you what you may regard as love to God. This love too may be the mainspring of very active movements in the bustle of external service; but it leaves you, after all, away from God, ignoring His majesty and holiness, dispensing with His Christ and enjoying a peace that has been secured by a cheating, instead of a purging, of your conscience.

Time was when men openly preached an uncovenanted mercy as the resort of sinners, and laid the smoothness of that doctrine on the sores of the anxious. “Universal love”, in these days in which evangelism is in fashion, is but another form in which the same deceit is presented to the awakened. This is something from which an unrenewed man can take comfort. It is a pillow on which an alien can lay his head and be at ease far off from God. It keeps out of view the necessity of vital union to Christ, and of turning unto God; and the hope which it inspires can be attained without felt dependence on His sovereign grace, and without submitting to the renewing work of God the Holy Ghost.

“God is love”; but when you hear this, you are not told what must imply the declaration that He loves all, and that He therefore loves you. This tells us what He is, as revealed to us in the cross, and what all who come to Him through Christ will find Him to be. It is on this that faith has to operate. You have no right to regard that love, which is commended in the death of the Son, as embracing you if you have not yet believed. It is only with the character of God that you have to do, not at all with His purpose, in the first instance. What right have you to say that He loves all? Have you seen into

the heart of God, that you may say He loves you, until you have reached, as a sinner, through faith, the bosom of His love in Christ?

But may I not think of God loving sinners, without ascribing to Him any purpose to save? God loving a sinner without a purpose to save him! The thing is inconceivable. I would reproach a fellow sinner if I so conceived of his love. Love to one utterly ruined, and that love commanding resources that are sufficient for salvation, and yet no purpose to use these resources! Let not men so blaspheme the love of God.

But may I not conceive of God as loving men to the extent of providing salvation and to the extent of purchasing redemption for them, without this being followed out to the extent of His purpose taking actual effect in their salvation? No, indeed. For the love of God is one, as the love of the Three in One. The one love of the one God is the love of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. If that love generated in the person of the Father a purpose to provide, and in the person of the Son a purpose to redeem, it must have generated in the person of the Holy Ghost a purpose to apply. You cannot assign one set of objects to the love of God as the love of the Father, and a different set of objects to it as the love of the Spirit. And there can be no unaccomplished purpose of Jehovah. "My counsel shall stand," the Lord says, "and I will do all My pleasure." The world which the Father loved and the Son redeemed, shall by the Spirit be convinced "of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgement". Thus the Father's pleasure shall prosper, and the Son's travail shall be rewarded, through the efficient grace of God the Holy Ghost.

You have no right to attempt to look in on the relation of Divine love to individuals, till you first attain, through faith, a place among His children. "Secret things belong unto the Lord"; do not then try to share them with Him. In considering the doctrine of the text, you have nothing to do with the question, Does God love the wicked? It is on the character of God that you are called to look, as He has revealed this in the cross of His dear Son. In judging of God's procedure, you have no right to be influenced by pre-conceived ideas of His counsels or of God Himself, but by the glory of His name, as He has been pleased to reveal it. He does not tell me that He loves the wicked; but when I look on Him as "He is love", I am assured that He has no pleasure in his death. The fullest exhibition of His character, and the overwhelming proof that He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, are given to us in the cross of Jesus Christ.

Yes, you say, but it is in fulfilling a sovereign purpose of grace that He has revealed Himself there. True, but it is infinite love which He has revealed. It is by this display of His love that you are to judge of the way in which it shall fare with you, if you come to Him in response to His call.

Faith has infinite love to lay hold on, in order to encourage you. For, whatever is His purpose, it is abundantly evident that “God is love”. That is the character of the One to whom you are called to return. That is the view presented to you of God, and this is what you have to do with. You may be all the more encouraged to return when you think of His special purpose of saving sinners. He has specially revealed Himself by fulfilling that purpose, and this is what assures you that a salvation both free and sure awaits you when you come.

God’s purpose in election casts no shadow on the infinity of His love, but it guarantees the certainty of the salvation which you are called to accept. He gave His only begotten Son for a people whom He accounted worthy of death. In providing salvation for them, He bought them by His blood, that He might save them by His power. You are called to meet that love in the Son, Jesus the Christ, and to present yourself, relying on His blood, as a suppliant for all the blessings of the covenant of grace. What more can you desire? What element of encouragement is lacking in this form of doctrine, which any of the systems of evangelical theology, or all of them together, can supply?

Free Will (1)¹

Rev I D MacDonald

Introduction. In Scripture we find men compared to ships, “which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth” (Jas 3:4). Adapting this comparison to our subject of free will, and borrowing a little inspiration from John Bunyan, we may say that if the soul of man is the ship, then the faculty of the will is like the helmsman who steers it, thus providing the final cause of the direction it takes. On large ships, the helmsman is often informed and directed by the first mate, who often acts as the officer on watch, as to the best route to reach the desired destination. So in the soul of man, the will is informed and directed by the faculty of the understanding, which forms judgements on the best course to arrive at happiness and satisfaction. Both helmsman and first mate are under the supreme control and influence of the captain of the ship, and so the faculties of the understanding and the will are under the control and influence of the underlying moral disposition in the soul – whether a principle of holiness with innocent man, or sin with fallen man, or grace with regenerated man.

The will may be defined as the faculty of choice, either refusing or

¹The first section of a paper presented to the 2024 Theological Conference.

determining to perform an action proposed to it. The relation between the faculties has provided fertile ground for men of philosophical minds to debate the various dependencies and interactions between them. It is widely accepted that the will follows the last practical (as opposed to merely theoretical) judgement of the understanding, or to keep to our analogy, Helmsman Free Will is always informed and directed by First Mate Understanding. Some writers, such as van Maastricht and Girardeau, have been at pains to show that this rule holds true only where the moral disposition of the will is in sympathy with that of the understanding. This is of relevance when it comes to appreciating how total depravity resides in the will itself, and how regeneration includes an immediate work of the Holy Spirit in the will as well as in the understanding.

Interesting though these wider considerations about the faculty of the will may be, the scope of this paper is not “the will” as such, but “free-will”. It is notable that the chapter in *The Westminster Confession of Faith* which deals with this subject, chapter 9, is entitled, “Of Free Will”, not “Of the Will”. There is an important reason for this. Numerous heresies have arisen in the Church founded on an erroneous view of the extent of the freedom of fallen man’s will. These heresies include Pelagianism, Semi-Pelagianism, Arminianism, Amyraldianism, and Romanism itself, which all share the wicked aim of exalting the freedom of man’s will in redemption, at the expense of the free grace of God. It is not surprising then that William Cunningham states that the subject of free will is the connecting link between the doctrines of original sin and of divine grace, and that there is perhaps no subject which has occupied more of the time and attention of men of speculation.

It has been observed that the first man who dared to bring unscriptural views on the freedom of man’s will into the Church was Origen. Ever after, others have arisen to exalt free will, some raising it so high in imagined ability as to have, in effect, the place of a god. In his work on Arminianism, Owen describes the history of this new god, “free will”: “Origen is supposed to have brought him first into the Church; but among those many sincere worshippers of divine grace, this setter forth of new demons found but little entertainment. It was looked upon but like the stump of Dagon with his head and hands laid down before the ark of God, without whose help he could neither know nor do that which is good in any kind, still accounted but ‘a fig-tree log, an unprofitable piece of wood’.”²

Owen further observes that, after Origen, Pelagius arose like a stout champion challenging the whole Church of God, on behalf of free will, until

²J Owen, *Arminianism*, in *Works*, vol 10, p 114.

Augustine opposed him and cast him to the ground. The Romanists next gave free will their protection and built a temple for him in their religion, but at the beginning of the Reformation this temple was destroyed by men like Luther: "In the rubbish whereof we well hoped the idol himself had been so deeply buried as that his head should never more have been exalted, to the trouble of the Church of God".³

Arminianism, however, has at its foundation an attempt to resurrect the old Pelagian error on the freedom of the will, thus giving a new lease of life to the heresy. Luther, in his famous book on *The Bondage of the Will*, concludes by showing that the whole debate is about free grace versus free will. Free will, in the Arminian sense of it, is set up to bring down free grace, and free grace brings down free will to the dust. Luther's penetrating glance saw that what lies behind free will is the pride of man, which will not submit to a salvation which gives all the glory to the Triune God in redemption, as that is revealed in free grace flowing from the electing love of the Father, the merits of the Son in His redeeming love, and the irresistible grace of the Holy Spirit in His regenerating love. Free will is surely of the devil.

This paper seeks to show the importance of adhering to Scriptural limitations on the freedom of man's will, if the glory of God's grace in redemption is to be exalted. We propose to follow the order of chapter 9 in the *Confession*, on free will, considering: (1) the freedom which belongs to the will in every state; (2) what belonged to it in a state of innocence; (3) what belongs to it in a fallen state, (4) what belongs to it in a regenerate state, and then (5) what belongs to it in a state of glory.

1. The true limits of the freedom of man's will in every state. The true nature of the freedom of man's will may be explained in the light of the Saviour's words about John the Baptist in Mark 9:13, "They have done unto him whatsoever they listed". The word translated "listed" may well be given as willed, or determined, or pleased. Here we find a certain freedom of will described, and for our present purposes, isolating it from the sinfulness of their action, we have what is true of the will in every state. It is free to do whatsoever it lists. Therefore there is a certain sense in which even Calvinists agree that the will of man is free. This freedom is often described by theologians as spontaneity or natural liberty. Owen describes it as "a spontaneous appetite of what seemeth good unto it free from all compulsion". Or to put it more simply, the will is free to choose what it likes. This spontaneity is just the same thing the *Confession* describes in the first paragraph of its chapter, "Of Free Will", by the term "natural liberty": "God hath endued the will of man with that natural liberty, that it is neither forced,

³J Owen, *Arminianism*, in *Works*, vol 10, p 115.

nor by any absolute necessity of nature determined to good or evil" (9:1).

This amounts to a description of what some term *psychological*, as opposed to *theological*, freedom of the will, and no one denies that the will of man in every state possesses this spontaneity. Even in his fallen state, man is free to choose what he pleases, without any external compulsion upon him, nor any inward necessity of nature belonging to his faculties as such forcing him to sin. It should be borne in mind, however, that this spontaneity is never in isolation from, or opposition to, the underlying moral disposition of the soul.

Yet it is vital that a distinction be held between this natural liberty or spontaneity and the freedom which heretics such as the Arminians also grant to the will. Their contention is that the will of man, in every state, including that of unregeneracy, has a freedom beyond spontaneity. By the term "freedom" they intend an innate power of the will to choose between conflicting alternatives such as good and evil, often known as the freedom of contrary choice. Going further, they maintain that the will, independent of God's grace, and irrespective of the underlying moral disposition of the soul, has the ability to change its own bias and inclination, often termed the freedom of self-determining power. But this is not all. They also claim a freedom whereby the soul has no fixed bias at any time but is in a perfect equilibrium between good and evil, known as freedom of indifference.

Finally, they grant the will a power to determine all its own actions regardless of the decrees of God and His providence, making free will, not the Creator, to be the first cause of all that a man does, and this is known as the freedom of contingency. This freedom denies that all things in providence fall out according to God's decree, and limits His foreknowledge, as well as allowing that God's purposes may be frustrated by the will of man. While allowing the will to have the freedom of spontaneity, we deny that the actions of men are entirely contingent on their own wills, maintaining instead that God has rendered these actions certain by His decree and the power of His providence. This does not amount to a doctrine of necessity similar to that of heathen fate, but we leave the discussion here since this is really the domain of another chapter of the *Confession*, namely that on "God's Eternal Decree".

From all this we gather that, by the term "free will", the Arminian means far more than the spontaneity or natural liberty which the Calvinist allows. While denying that man in every state possesses freedom of contrary choice, self-determination, indifference and contingency, we grant full natural liberty or spontaneity to the will of man. We allow Helmsman Free Will spontaneity to steer the ship as he wishes, with no one forcing his hands on

the wheel, but we deny that he can decide on a course not approved of by first mate Understanding, or contrary to the commands of the Captain – that is, of the underlying moral disposition of the soul.

Pardoned and Accepted¹

Archibald Hall

It is clear that the sinner who believes in Christ is redeemed from the curse and has a complete righteousness in his glorious Surety. The awful threatenings of the law have been executed on his Substitute; the highest demands of the law have been fully satisfied by his Representative; and therefore the law demands no personal obedience from him, in order to confirm his right to God's favour. And the law expressly assures him that there is no condemnation to him who is united to Christ Jesus. Thus the believer becomes dead to the law as a covenant of works; when he understands his privileges, he joys in God through Jesus Christ, by whom he is delivered from the wrath to come.

The bright hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promises in Christ, is still a noble and a powerful source of joy, obedience and long-suffering to believers; but to hope for heaven as the reward of their services, or to fear the wrath of God in hell as the punishment of sin, is to act as if Jesus Christ had not become obedient unto death. This is to be “alive to the law” and to be “under the law”. Believers are not under the law in this sense, because their hope of heaven and their security from hell stand only in Christ. Therefore they are said to be “under grace” – that is, in a state of favour with God, being pardoned and accepted in the everlasting righteousness of the Surety of the better covenant.

Those who represent believers as acting under the influence of mercenary hopes of eternal life, and slavish fears of everlasting destruction – of hopes, founded upon their persevering obedience, and of fears suggested by their offences – consider mankind as now placed in a state of probation or trial. Their scheme is self-consistent upon that supposition, because such hopes and fears can only be admitted where men are to make good their claim to heaven by their own conduct.

But this supposition is entirely subversive of the Scriptures, where it is a positive maxim that all the heirs of salvation are saved by grace through

¹Hall (1736-78) belonged to one of the Scottish Secession Churches and, for the last 13 years of his life he ministered to their congregation in Wall Street, London. This is an edited extract from Hall's *Treatise on the Faith and Influence of the Gospel*.

faith. All who adopt this unscriptural notion dishonour both the law of heaven and the gospel of Christ; and all who make this the highest principle of their religious services, are ignorant of the glorious liberties of the sons of God. Their hopes are from the law and not from the promises of a gracious God; their fears are from the law without any regard to the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Neither their hopes nor their fears can subsist in the soul that is living by faith on a suffering and risen Saviour.

Setting Out on a Long Journey¹

Rev Donald Beaton

I am setting out soon on a long journey and, by the time this issue is in the hands of many of my readers, I will have commenced the first stage. Naturally the prospect of setting out on such a journey awakens many thoughts and I may be permitted to lay before my readers some of these. The journey on which I am setting out, however, is short in comparison with a greater journey on which we all have set out already. As no one can contemplate setting out, without preparation, on a voyage even to New York – which, in these days of swift travel, is not so distant as it was 50 or 60 years ago, so ought preparation for the greater journey engage our serious attention.

1. *The preparation.* The shortest journey requires preparation and the longer it is the more consideration it requires. There are not many who fail to prepare for a voyage to New York, but there are thousands upon thousands who are quite unconcerned about their preparation for the greatest of all journeys. God has not left us without the knowledge we need for this journey. If we are to see His face in peace we must be clothed in the righteousness of Jesus Christ, and it is only through believing in Him that we can obtain this righteousness. The faith that receives Him is what He Himself gives so man has nothing to glory in in this matter.

2. *The Passport.* In a journey to other countries one has to acquire a passport. This passport is issued by His Majesty's Foreign Secretary. An unauthorised individual has no right to issue a passport to anyone, and if he did, the recipient would find it utterly useless when he most required it. The passport is carefully examined by the officers of the country to which one is going, and if it is not in correct form, there is no admittance into the country. A photograph with a description of the bearer forms part of the passport. We need a passport for admittance into the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ,

¹Reprinted from *The Free Presbyterian Magazine* for September 1939. Mr Beaton was then preparing to travel as church deputy to North America, initially.

for unless a man is born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom. No intellectual attainments, or sentimental religion beginning with emotionalism and ending there, will do. If we do not have the change announced by the Lord Jesus as indispensable, we need not deceive ourselves by thinking we are fit for the kingdom of heaven.

3. *The farewells.* No one who sets out to cross the ocean can be altogether free from emotion. Loved ones are left behind, and even the prospect of a return does not do away with the ever-present thought that many a change may take place before the hoped for reunion. But on the greatest of all voyages the farewells may be taken for ever. It is a very solemn thing when a godly father or mother takes farewell of their offspring, never to meet them again. This solemn and sobering thought has been blessed to many, and the bed-sides of dying parents have been places where God has more than once met with weeping children. Happy are those who, in parting, have the assurance that all is well. They are bound together in the bundle of life and they can look forward to a happy eternity where partings are for ever at an end.

4. *Drawing out from the shore.* I well remember the peculiar sensation I felt the first time I crossed the ocean, as the great liner drew out from the shore and turned her bow to the mighty waste of waters over which we were to sail for days on end. One cannot easily master that feeling – many thoughts come surging through the mind. What has that ocean in store for me? Are there storms to be met that will shake my confidence? Will everything go well? Such thoughts rise and seek one's attention with persistent insistence. There is a certain feeling of mystery about the sea even though it is a well-explored and charted ocean and even though thousands have voyaged over it before. But if it is the first time for you, the knowledge that ships are crossing and recrossing that ocean every day cannot altogether take away that feeling.

So when the time comes when the Lord's people draw out from the shore into that world of mystery beyond, is it any wonder that at times, like Christian in *The Pilgrim's Progress*, they are at a loss as to what is happening. If one has confidence in the Master, however, all things will be different. He has sailed over that mysterious ocean and, while no ship that has once left the shores of time ever returns, the believer is safe in the Master's hands. There are no shipwrecks reported when He is in charge and the passengers may confidently say, "All is well".

5. *The Ocean.* One who has never sailed over the ocean may think it must be very uninteresting. It is not so. There is a marvellous variety with a sameness, which is characteristic of God's works. The vastness of the waste of waters, with the great monsters of the deep and its myriad inhabitants, which

have their dwelling there, bring before one's mind the greatness of the Creator who has measured the waters of the seas in the hollow of His hand and sends food "in time convenient" to the myriads of creatures in the sea. Yet, as one of the Puritans put it, there was a time when He who created these mighty oceans and the flowing rivers had to say, "I thirst", and no water was given Him to drink.

6. *The prospects on the other side.* When one sets out across the ocean he has generally the prospect of meeting many friends who give him a very hearty welcome. It may be a brother or a sister and, in such a case, how affectionate the greetings are – parted for a time and now meeting again. But how infinitely more wonderful is the meeting when the Lord's people reach the other side of life's mysterious ocean! What a Friend is waiting! How beautiful is the home He has prepared for them – that death-free, sorrowless, sinless, tearless city where the peace of God reigns for ever. With what amazement will some of them open their eyes to behold the glory of their Saviour and hear for the first time the heavenly music, the song of which is, in its volume, like the sound of many waters. But how unspeakably solemn is it for those who shall reach that shore friendless, homeless and hopeless. There are thousands sailing out on the great ocean of time with no friend to meet them, with no home to receive them and with no hope for eternity that it will ever be otherwise.

7. *Safe arrival in port.* When one has crossed the ocean for the first time, it is with pleasurable feelings that land is sighted. High expectancy and delight in feeling the solid ground beneath one's feet, with the captivating sense of newness in all one sees around, produce sensations that are not easily described. So it shall be with the Lord's people. All the storms that swept over life's troubled seas are at an end, and they have reached the haven which they desired to see:

Then are they glad, because at rest and quiet now they be:

So to the haven he them brings, which they desired to see.

O that men to the Lord would give praise for His goodness then,

And for His works of wonder done unto the sons of men! (Ps 107:30-31)

No sin of yours will ruin you, if you believe; and nothing will save you, if you do not. Difficulties are for men, not for God.

The warrant to receive Christ is common to all. Though I had a voice like a trumpet that would reach to the corners of the earth, I think I would be bound by my commission to lift up my voice and say, "Unto you, O men, I call, and My voice is to the sons of man". None are excluded but those who exclude themselves. But the convert of yesterday is the young heir of glory.

Thomas Boston

The Rod that Budded¹

Henry Law

Numbers 17:8. *Behold the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi was budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds.*

A new miracle meets us now. It is God's work. It is the Spirit's record. Therefore it stands here for our souls' profit.

A withered rod, long severed from the parent stem, in which all vital juice was dried, sprouts in fresh verdure. Buds show their infant forms and clustering blossoms open, while fruit in bright luxuriance hangs.

This fact claims special thought, from its position in the sacred page. It raises a conspicuous head high in a vast field of miracle. Israel's whole journey is a chain of marvels. The falling manna, the guiding cloud, the flowing stream, prove heavenly care. Each day evidences that omnipotence is active for them. But here a fresh prodigy starts to life. God adds another sign to win confiding trust.

To us this story of the budded rod now comes. May He, who wrought the wonder, work wonders through it for growth in grace!

But before we view it with a nearer eye, we must not disregard what had happened before then. The faithless spies draw an appalling picture of the land they searched. The fortresses defy assault. The men are giants. Israel's hosts are less than insects at their feet. Such is their evil report. And it is received. Hearts quake. Blaspheming tongues reproach their guiding God.

Thus nature shows its proneness to doubt, to tremble and to distrust. But such unbelief brings misery in its train. It is a seed from which ill ever springs. It changes blessings into curse. It arms the hand of love with an avenging scourge.

So wrath instantly goes forth. The murmuring hosts are doomed to turn their back on the home just reached. The wilderness must be re-entered. They now must wander up and down for 40 years. Thus their bright prospects end in darkest night. Their hopes of rest, almost attained, are gone. They must wear out in woe their dismal days.

Distrust, truly you are the parent of all woe! My soul, never distrust; cleave fast to God; cast deep your anchor is His Word; bear all things; suffer all pains, but never let one rebel doubt arise.

Pause now, and pray, O Spirit of the living God, never withdraw: do not leave me to the fears which my senses and folly would excite. "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief."

Surely the downcast host of Israel will now tread tremblingly on their

¹Taken with editing from Law's *Christ Is All: Numbers and Deuteronomy*.

backward path; their lips will now be sad with penitence and shame. They who so reason are yet blind to the deep roots of sin. As there is no mercy which man's heart will not abuse, so there is no judgement which it will not proudly scorn. Open rebellion soon follows these murmurs and this punishment. Korah and his company dispute the rule of Moses. They challenge it, as usurpation and arrogance. Thus God's authority is dethroned. But these leaders of Israel are leading at His call. Therefore to revile them is to revile His will.

Instantly terrific vengeance vindicates God's ways. Moses proclaims the near approach of remarkable wrath; and when he ends, "the ground clave asunder that was under them: and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods. They, and all that appertained unto them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them, and they perished from among the congregation" (Num 16:31-33).

Again we are disposed to cry, Surely now rebellion must be buried in that grave! Surely obedience will now meekly walk with God! But we soon find that sin has seeds so deep and fibres so far-spreading that, while most withering judgements are descending, it still will germinate and bring forth its weeds.

The morrow dawns, but not to see contrition in each face. Rather, it finds one flood of universal rage. The camp is mad against the servants of the Lord. The whole assembly raises the cry, "Ye have killed the people of the Lord". But sin cannot thus sin and wrath not multiply to punish. A slaying plague speeds forth. It rapidly mows down the God-defying host. Moses beseeches Aaron to rush forth. He grasps his censer, fills it with incense, adds the altar-fire, and takes his place between the living and the dead. God sees the mediating high priest – a type of His dear Son. The sight of it checks wrath. But still a plague-struck pile of bodies stands, as a monument of what sin deserves.

Now, at this moment, God gives the miracle of the budded rod. Another sign now shames unbelieving doubts and pictures gospel truth. The people had scorned Aaron's priestly rights. God's overflowing love selects this very time to give confirmation of His choice. Twelve rods are taken. Each bears the name of a chief ruler of a tribe. They are deposited before the ark. Thus the night passes.

When the morrow comes, Moses re-enters. Eleven rods lie as they were placed: withered, lifeless, dry. The twelfth, engraved with Aaron's name, is changed – most marvellously changed! Greenery adorns it – but not only greenery. No branch was ever so enriched. Blossoms are joined to buds.

And amid blossoms, ripe fruits swell. Man's hand has no share here. The proof of God's immediate power appears in every part. The rod, thus made alive, is to be kept as a constant sign. God's voice commands, "Bring Aaron's rod again before the testimony, to be kept for a token against the rebels" (Num 17:10).

Let us now advance from the ancient record to the still-living gospel to be found in the fact. The rod in many graphic tints shows Jesus. The very name is caught by raptured prophets. Listen to how they announce Him: "There shall come forth a Rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of His roots" (Is 11:1). "Behold the man whose name is The Branch; and He shall grow up out of His place, and He shall build the temple of the Lord . . . and He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His throne: and He shall be a Priest upon His throne" (Zec 6:12,13). Thus faith gleans lessons from the very title: Rod.

But the grand purpose of the type is to reject all rivals. It sets Aaron alone upon the priestly seat. The parallel proclaims that, similarly, Jesus is our only Priest. God calls, anoints, appoints, accepts and ever hears Him – but Him alone. Only in His hands do these functions live. He sprinkles the true mercy seat with ever-pleading blood. He bears His people's name upon His breast. He perfumes all their petitions, praises, service with meritorious fragrance. He intercedes, and they are pardoned. He blesses, and all blessings crown them. But He does not share the glory with a colleague. They, like Korah, who seek God with censers of their own, scorn the only way of salvation; like Korah they rush to ruin. My soul, be satisfied with Jesus. Say, None but the consecrated God-man; He is my total Priest; I need no more.

Next, the constant luxuriance has a clear voice. In nature's field, buds, blossoms, fruit soon wither. The trees in the garden – lovely in spring, laden in autumn – soon droop. Not so this Rod. Its rich abundance was for ever rich. Its growth was for ever green. Its fruit was ever ripe. Beside the ark it was reserved in never-fading beauty. Here is the ever-blooming Priesthood of our Lord. "Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek" (Ps 110:4). "This man, because He continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood" (Heb 7:24). What joy, what rapture fills the heart of faith when, with adoring eye, it looks aloft and sees its ever-living High Priest on the throne! At every moment Jesus stands in all the freshness of salvation's vigour.

Our prayers are oftentimes cold and languid. Our lips are dull to speak. Our thoughts stray far away. Petitions are as an intermitting stream. The channel sometimes is quite dry. It is not so in heaven. There ever is a full tide of priestly mediation. Here is the cause why saints prevail and grace survives. Hence Satan with all his host of legions is beaten back. Hence faith's tiny

vessel rides on the crest of mountain-waves and safely reaches the blest haven. Hence plans for gospel progress triumph. Because Christ ever lives, ever loves, ever prays and ever works, His kingdom swells.

So it shall be while the need remains. But when the last of the redeemed is safely gathered in, then heaven shall no more hear the Priest interceding. Then the one sound from the vast throng shall be, Hallelujah. Thus the Rod, ever fresh, shows Jesus ever mighty in His priestly power.

Mark, moreover, that types of Jesus often include the Church. It is so with these rods. The twelve at first seem all alike. They are all sapless twigs. The same grove saw their birth. Man's eye sees but one likeness in their dry forms. But suddenly one puts forth loveliness, while the others remain worthless and withered. Here is a picture of God's dealings with a sin-slain race. Since Adam's fall, all are born lifeless branches of a withered stock. Many abide so, and thus pass as fuel to the quenchless fire.

But in a chosen remnant, a new birth occurs. The sapless puts forth buds. Blossoms appear. Fruit ripens. Whence comes the difference? It is not nature's work. No dry stick can restore itself. No withered helplessness can deck itself with greenery. This cannot be. When any child of man arises from the death of sin and blooms in grace, God has arisen with divine almightiness. Free love decrees renewal. Boundless power achieves it.

Believer, the budded rod gives another warning. It is a picture of luxuriance. Turn from it and look inward. Is your soul thus richly fertile? Is life in you abundant life? Where are the almonds? They are rare. Instead of fruit, you often yield the thorn. Should it be so? "Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be My disciples" (Jn 15:8). Whence is the fault? Why is the stem thus bare? The fertilising means abound. Perhaps they are little heeded. "Abide in Me and I in you: as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in Me" (Jn 15:4).

Perhaps your neglectful soul departs from Christ. Thus fructifying sap is checked. Thus the bloom is nipped. Thus early buds fall off. You leave the sunny slopes of Zion's hill. You stray into the chilly marshes of the world. Then blight and mildew mar the expected fruit. The Word is not the daily food. Hence the roots drink not renovating moisture, and the withered leaf drops off. Meditate in God's law day and night, and you "shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of waters, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper" (Ps 1:3).

But if the budded rod rebukes the scanty fruit in the newborn soul, what is its voice to unregenerate worldlings. Alas, these are a forest of sticks, wholly dry. The curse which fell on Eden's garden blasted their nature to the

core. Thus the worldlings were born withered. Thus withered they continue. What will their end be? That end draws near. What then awaits them? Can they be beams and rafters in the palace of heaven's King? No. The decree is sure. Faithfulness has warned. Almighty power will execute. "That which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned" (Heb 6:8).

Four Letters¹

Thomas Boston and Henry Davidson

Letter from Boston dated 14 December 1724.

I rejoice to hear of the success your affairs, which you take as you ought from Him who keeps the balance of trade, as well as of crowns and kingdoms, in His own hands. O but the management of the kingdom of grace must be a great thing, and our Mediator must be well furnished for the managing of it, since the vast and extensive kingdom of providence is put into his hand as a subordinate, there to administer in a subserviency to the kingdom of grace and to carry on its glorious purposes! He sits enthroned in Zion; and as Zion's King, His power reaches through the whole earth, the sea, heaven and hell. All power is given Him everywhere. His subjects in Zion are few; but the whole world is rolled hither and thither for that kingdom. For their sakes He sent to Babylon, and brought down the Chaldeans, whose cry is in the ships; for the sake of that kingdom, the Babylonian, Persian, Greek and Roman monarchies were brought down.

Continue to follow your business in the actual faith of this taking place; and as, when there is a prosperous turn in it, you willingly acknowledge that you are your Mediator's debtor for it; and so, when there comes about an awkward-like turn at any time, labour to believe the same hand does it for

¹These letters between Boston and Henry Davidson of Galashiels, are taken, with editing, from *The Christian Treasury* for 1856 and were first published in *The Gospel Magazine*. It was probably the editor of *The Christian Treasury* who added the following note: "How this simple, affectionate correspondence between two gracious men more than 100 years ago seems to lift up a veil from the past. Yes, 100 years ago there were troubles and trials, sickness and death, sighs and sorrows, as now; and there was the same God and the same Jesus and the same blessed Spirit and the same sure promises and the same sweet deliverances. Sighs and songs, prayer and praise, castings down and liftings up were, then as now, in the houses and hearts of the righteous. And though we believe and know it was so, yet to see them portrayed in letters written under the sense of present feelings, gives it a lifelike vividness, and brings it before us with a breathing power which carries with it a deeper effect than a more distant representation."

the best, for this reason, that He never does anything but what is best done, which will one day be demonstrated beyond contradiction.

As for the discourse on the covenant of grace, I have long ago ended that subject; but I am so engaged otherwise that I cannot take it in hand² for some time to come, for aught I yet see; and my years now appear to me in a manner more than merely uncertain. And I would wish to do so, as the Lord is pleased to enable, what I conceive might be of great usefulness, as long as life is continued with strength.

Letter from Boston dated 25 April 1726.

I understand by your letter, that your wife continues in her ordinary tender condition. May it be sanctified by grace to her and you. The different states of persons in respect of health and infirmity is a piece of sovereign disposal which the afflicted are to reverence and adore. Our Lord Himself was “a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief”, and if we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him. The heaviest burden of affliction is but light in respect of the weight of glory we have in hope, and the affliction that is of such continuance, that the person has forgotten prosperity, is but for a moment compared with the eternity of that weight which faith has a view of.

My wife has now kept her bed these five weeks and, together with her ordinary distress, she has had a fever, with a great inflammation, which began in her face and went over her head; but He who delivered her in six troubles has delivered her in the seventh also, and it has gone off; but she is very weak. My youngest daughter was frequently ill this winter, but since the return of the spring and warmer weather, she has been better. The rest are as ordinary. But my weakness is nevertheless so felt as to occasion thoughts of heart. This is an account of our hospital [for his manse saw so much sickness]; but sometimes the voice of melody, of joy and praise, is heard among us. We are cast down, but not destroyed; perplexed, but not in despair; and are aiming at being resigned. This morning the latter part of Psalm 71 was very sweet to me.

Letter from Davidson dated 30 December 1730.

I have often resolved to acknowledge receipt of your kind letters, three of them with Mr Glass’s pamphlet. The delay has been much owing to bodily illness, by no means to a lack of due respect and gratitude. My long silence, after your writing once and again, made it appear necessary to me to say so much by way of apology.

The whole of our time is divided between summer and winter, heat and

²Probably for publication. Boston’s *A View of the Covenant of Grace* was published later.

cold, night and day, a constant revolution of storms and calm. There is a shining beauty in the conduct of providence that we are not always fed with honey, nor is our cup always filled with gall and wormwood. There is a wise mixture of light and shade in our lot, as there is in ourselves of flesh and spirit. There is the mixture of anger and love in the trials of the Lord's children, not the anger of an enemy intending ruin and hurt, as flowing from hatred and revenge; but the anger of a father which is guided by wisdom and tempered by love, intending the good of His offending child.

It is a piece of royal prerogative to have the power of life and death, which God reserves to Himself. Only He knows when the appointed work is finished; He alone is fit to give the sailing orders, and to assign the time when the tossed and shattered vessel shall be laid up in a safe harbour.

Letter from Davidson dated 25 February 1732.

Your several letters came safely to hand, and were very acceptable. This comes to inform you that the good old woman, my mother, went home to her own, the better, country this morning, between three and four o'clock. She took to her bed on the Lord's Day evening; she had a pretty high fever, but retained all her senses to her dying hour. How cruel is our love! How blind and inconsiderate is our affection! We would prefer the small advantages or greater gains we reap from their abode with us, to their entire satisfaction and complete happiness – a very great but common mistake in true friendship we are often guilty of.

However frightful and ill-favoured death may appear to the eye of sense, it is viewed by faith as the messenger of our heavenly Father; and when the Christian opens death's hard, cold hands and looks into them, there are to be found gracious letters, full of love, bearing an invitation to come home, a call from the new Jerusalem to come up and see. When death, with one hand, covers our eyes and deprives us of the light of the stars, with the other hand it tears the veil in pieces. Thus it makes way for us to be set immediately under the refreshing beams of the Sun of righteousness, without the least appearance of a cloud through the long days of eternity.

Now, as His way is in the sea and His path in deep waters and His footsteps are not known, we must believe that loving-kindness is in all the mysterious events of providence. We shall in due time be able to see a wheel within a wheel, and be taught how to decipher the dark characters; we shall, with agreeable surprise, perceive an all-wise providence in intricate and seemingly contrary motions to have been a faithful servant to the divine promise, so that we must say, Amen, to heaven's disposals and cry out in the dark and gloomy night, Hallelujah. . . .

Zimbabwe Mission News

Rev J B Jardine

Mr Hugh Mackenzie. The Jewish and Foreign Mission Committee were saddened by the passing of Mr Mackenzie, Mission Co-ordinator, in early November 2025. Mr Mackenzie had been involved in the work in Zimbabwe for many years and, before that, in Kenya. His input led to greater efficiency in the Mission's management through the creation of the various Mission Boards. He assisted in completing many beneficial projects in Zimbabwe over the years, helping to modernise various aspects of the Mission's infrastructure. He worked closely with the Mission Administrator in Zimbabwe and with our Mission supporters in the Netherlands. He was also involved in developing and presenting the annual Budget and Development Plan, which outlines the Mission's needs for the coming year. Our thoughts are with his widow and family at this time. "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: the Lord make His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: the Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace" (Num 6:24-26).

Zimbabwe Visit. Dr R J Dickie (an elder from Stornoway, who is a retired medical doctor) and the Rev J B Jardine visited Zimbabwe for three weeks in November 2025. Although travel was challenging at times, they were able to visit each sanctioned charge and to assist with taking services in numerous congregations. They were also able to visit each Mission institution (that is, the Mbuma Hospital and clinics, John Tallach High School and some primary schools, and Thembisio Children's Home) and to attend a meeting of each Mission Board. A fuller account of their visit will appear in the Synod reports.

Budget and Development Plan. The annual Budget and Development Plan was drawn up in November and December 2025, and representatives of the Jewish and Foreign Missions Committee hope to meet with the Mbuma Zending Committee in the Netherlands at the end of January 2026. The Plan outlines the amount of money that will be spent on the Mission in 2026 and the capital and donation projects that will take place.

Zimbabwe Youth Conference. This Conference was held in early December at the Lobengula church in Bulawayo, with 73 young people attending. Several others were unable to attend due to work commitments, and transport difficulties affected those living farther away. The Conference went well, and there were many reasons to be thankful to the Most High. We hope that the various papers presented will prove profitable to the young people. "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Prov 22:6).

Zimbabwe Deaths. There have been several sad deaths associated with our congregations in Zimbabwe. Those deaths and the passing of long-term supporters of the Mission in Scotland should bring us to reflect more deeply on the solemn realities of eternity and the need for the rising generation to step forward and bear the burdens of our generation and the heat of our day.

Reflections. Mission work in Zimbabwe reminds us that the gospel is for every soul. Jesus commanded, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mk 16:15). Missionaries carry this message throughout the world, showing forth the same saving truth that must also shine forth from our own homes.

The gospel that transforms lives in Zimbabwe is the same gospel that our neighbours need. Christ calls us to action: “Ye shall be witnesses unto Me . . . unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8). That “uttermost part” includes distant nations but also the people living right next to us. When we support mission work abroad, we are also reminded that evangelism begins wherever we live. The world needs Christ, and that includes our neighbours.

Book Review

The Minister's Self-watch & the Minister's Fainting Fits, by C H Spurgeon, published by the Banner of Truth Trust, booklet, 47 pages, £3.50, obtainable from the Free Presbyterian Bookroom.

This booklet contains two addresses which have been selected from C H Spurgeon's well-known *Lectures to My Students*. In 2008 the Banner of Truth published, from a series of four books, all 32 lectures in one volume of some 900 pages.

In the Publisher's Preface, the reason for publishing this booklet is given: lest “some who desperately need it may miss out on the help and encouragement ‘the Prince of Preachers’ has to offer”. It is also in order to “whet the appetite of the reader to explore that magnificent tome”. The two lectures selected are directed at “two of the most common reasons for men leaving the ministry today . . . moral failure and depression or ‘burn out’”.

The first of these, “The Minister's Self Watch” is based on the text: “Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine”. Spurgeon's first point is, “It should be one of our first cares that we be saved” (p 10); and the second, “It is of the next importance to the minister that his piety be vigorous” (p 16). Under this second point, Spurgeon says: “We have need of very vigorous piety because our danger is so much greater than that of others. . . . Upon the whole, no place is so assailed with temptation as the ministry. Despite the

popular idea that ours is a smug retreat from temptation, it is no less true that our dangers are more numerous and more insidious than that of ordinary Christians. Ours may be a vantage-ground for height, but that height is perilous, and to many the ministry has proved a Tarpeian rock” (a rock or cliff, used by ancient Rome as a site of execution) (p 19).

The third point is: “Let the minister take care that his personal character agrees in all respects with his ministry” (p 21). “Holiness in a minister”, says Spurgeon, “is at once his chief necessity and his goodliest ornament. Mere moral excellence is not enough, there must be the highest virtue; a consistent character there must be, but this must be anointed with the sacred consecrating oil, or that which makes us most fragrant to God and man will be wanting” (p 24).

The second lecture is entitled, “The Minister’s Fainting Fits”. After stating, “Is it not first, that they are men?” Spurgeon goes on to say, “Our work, when earnestly undertaken, lays us open to attacks in the direction of depression. Who can bear the weight of souls without sometimes sinking to the dust? Passionate longings after men’s conversion, if not fully satisfied (and when are they?) consume the soul with anxiety and disappointment. To see the hopeful turn aside, the godly grow cold, professors abusing their privileges, and sinners waxing more bold in sin – are not these sights enough to crush us to the earth? The kingdom comes not as we would, the reverent name is not hallowed as we desire, and for this we must weep. How can we be otherwise than sorrowful, while men believe not our report, and the divine arm is not revealed?” (p 35).

The writer goes on to tell us that certain times are most favourable to fits of depression, making it clear that in this he is speaking from personal experience. He mentions “the hour of great success”, referring to Elijah after his experience on Mt Carmel as well as Paul after being caught up to the third heaven. He then refers to various times: “Before any great achievement”, “In the midst of a long stretch of unbroken labour” and “when troubles multiply, and discouragements follow each other in long succession, like Job’s messengers etc” (p 43).

This booklet is clearly designed for ministers of the gospel, and I would be surprised if any of our ministers does not have a copy of all of Spurgeon’s lectures to his students. For any who do not have a copy, the reviewer would highly recommend obtaining and reading all of these excellent lectures.

(Rev) *W A Weale*

[God] has also declared that His highest glory, the glory of His justice and mercy, of His wisdom and His power, is in saving all who come to Him through Jesus.

George W Bethune

Protestant View

Another Jubilee Year

One of the characteristic traits of Romanism is that of introducing Old Testament ceremonies into her worship and practice. This is seen in her false priesthood and the “bloodless sacrifice” of the mass and also in the wearing of special garments. Another example is the observation of Jubilee years. The Jubilee year in Israel was a very precious type of the freedom which the gospel of Jesus Christ brings to sinners from the slavery of sin and the oppression of Satan. Occurring only every 50 years, the Jubilee would be eagerly anticipated by the poor and needy. The glorious gospel of Christ now goes forth declaring the glad tidings of salvation throughout the nations. There is therefore no need for man-made Jubilees, as the whole New Testament period is a spiritual year of release to the redeemed people of God.

The end of another Jubilee year in the Roman Catholic Church was marked on 6 January 2026. This time it was only an “ordinary” Jubilee, not an “extraordinary” Jubilee year as in 2016, or a “great” Jubilee as in 2000. Special “holy doors” have been opened as “doors of mercy” for pilgrims to pass through, not only in the city of Rome but nowadays in every diocese. It has been estimated that as many as 33 million people visited Rome for the Jubilee in 2025. To gain the Pope’s indulgence, the people are required to confess their sins, to pray for the Pope, to visit four churches in Rome daily for a certain period and to perform charitable acts. By these human works, many poor, deluded Romanists are deceived into thinking that their sins will be fully forgiven.

It is not without deep significance that the introduction of Jubilee Years in 1300 took place at the very same time as the corrupt notion that there was a “treasury of merits” at the Pope’s disposal was first foisted upon the world. Jubilee years and their deceitful promises of pardon have thus been ever linked with the idea that the Pope has the power to indulge sinners with forgiveness in response to their acts of obedience. This is one of the deepest and most soul-destroying errors of Popery and was, as we know, the initial cause of the Reformation in Germany. And, as Martin Luther pointed out then, if the Pope is so merciful that he can grant indulgences from the treasury of merits at his disposal some of the time and for certain conditions, why can he not grant full pardon to his flock all of the time?

In reality, the forgiveness of sins is only through faith in the merits of Jesus Christ alone, not through a complex system of human works obscuring the freeness of the grace of God in the true gospel. Those who are truly set

free from sin through the blood of Christ have no need of the deceitful Jubilees and indulgences devised by antichristian Rome. *AWM*

Notes and Comments

The UK's Lost Christian Compass

For much of its history, the United Kingdom has been shaped – socially, morally, and institutionally – by Christianity. The spiritual benefits to those who have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ to the saving of their souls are incalculable, but the effect of centuries of biblical teaching in church and school has also had a restraining influence on society. Christianity provided a shared morality: a general agreement regarding our sinfulness and need of a Saviour, an acknowledgement of the sovereignty of God and consequently a public calling upon Him in times of trouble. In recent decades, however, Britain has lost this Christian compass and without it there is a vacuum in public and private life.

Historically, the moral law and a Christian ethos underpinned our legal, education and welfare systems: the sanctity of life, care for the poor, the dignity of work, and the importance of the family. The decline in church attendance and belief since the mid-twentieth century has therefore been not just a religious change, but a civilisational one.

The causes of this decline are complex. Secularisation accelerated after the Second World War, driven by scientific progress, rising affluence, and cultural liberalism. The sexual revolution, individualism, and suspicion of authority weakened traditional religious institutions. Scandals within churches, alongside a failure to communicate faithfully the gospel of Christ, further eroded trust. Immigration and multiculturalism have diversified Britain's religious landscape, and now Christianity is treated as one voice among many.

Without a shared moral reference point, public discourse has become fragmented, argumentative and brittle. Political arguments are often shortsighted and appeal to emotion, identity, or short-term gratification, rather than moral principles. Concepts rooted in Christianity, such as moral absolutes, rights and wrongs, sit uneasily in a culture that prizes rights over responsibilities. Rising loneliness, mental health crises, and social breakdown confirms that material prosperity alone cannot sustain a sense of meaning or belonging. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Mt 4:4).

Some ethical instincts, inherited unconsciously by secularists from the Christian past persist; but detached from their roots, these values can become

unstable. Ideas like human dignity or equality, once grounded in the belief that all are made in the image of God, risk becoming slogans rather than convictions, vulnerable to redefinition or erosion when inconvenient.

Many in the nation would argue that a return to Christianity is neither possible nor desirable in a diverse, modern society. They point to historical injustices and scandals committed in the name of religion and stress the importance of secular governance. But can countries afford to ignore the moral reference points that Christianity provides? Can this nation ignore the fact that God is sovereign and ruling over all? The answer is, *No!* A day of reckoning is coming, when the fool who has said, “There is no God”, shall be brought before the terrible and righteous tribunal of God to account for the deeds done in the body.

It is reported that in recent years some younger people, disillusioned with consumerism and online life, are rediscovering “faith”, tradition, and ritual. Others seek religious substitutes: ideologies, activism, or wellness movements. Augustine of Hippo said, “Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee”. But “how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?” (Rom 10:14)

That the UK has lost its Christian compass is a judgement upon us. How much we should fear that God will remove His candlestick from amongst us and how much we should pray and mourn with Jeremiah, “Turn Thou us unto Thee, O Lord, and we shall be turned; renew our days as of old. But Thou hast utterly rejected us; Thou art very wroth against us” (Lam 5:21-22). *FRD*

The Tsunami of Evil and God’s Judgement

However one looks at it, the world situation at present is increasingly serious. There are wars, threats of war and uprisings across the globe. Many governments appear weak, divided and indecisive, unsure which way to turn; some are forming alliances they hope will prove helpful; others seem strong and resolute, acting independently. Yet amid all the agitation and the resulting confusion, there is (sadly) no acknowledgement of God, no humbling of ourselves before the Most High, and no calls for days of prayer. As in the days of the Judges, everyone is doing what is right in his own eyes (see Jdg 21:25), and hence the widespread alarm and turmoil among the nations that is currently so apparent.

From a spiritual perspective, the solemn situation in which we find ourselves should not be a surprise. We and the nations of the earth have repeatedly provoked the Lord by rejecting the divine authority of His Word. We have despised the riches of His goodness, forbearance and long-suffering,

forgetting that the many benefits we receive from Him should lead us to humble ourselves before Him in repentance. Instead, sadly, we have arrogantly hardened our hearts against Him in impenitence, clearly treasuring up for ourselves the wrath of God (see Rom 2:4,5).

The times in which our lot is cast are especially evil; increasingly, wickedness abounds on every side – no longer so much in secret but blatantly publicised for all to see and hear. The forces of evil have, like a horrendous tsunami, flooded across our land and the other nations of the world, destructively sweeping away all that lies before them – especially if it has Christian roots. They have left nothing behind in their wake, but a disastrous, ruinous and murderous wasteland.

All the different forms of media we have access to seem to be explicitly designed to dredge up all that is unpleasant and regrettable. They seem to be designed to display them before us in as entertaining a manner as possible, to distract us and impress our minds and hearts with the baneful enticements of the evils of the world around us. Regrettably, for the most part, they do not inform us of what is wholesome and of profit, but of what will subtly and perniciously ensnare the spiritually unguarded with all the evil ways of the powers of darkness.

Until recently, such disturbing examples of human wickedness were almost unimaginable. However, today it is in these extremes of evil that so many rejoice and delight, ruing the fact that they are unable to obtain even greater and more overwhelming measures of these luxuriant vanities of the world. These poor men and women of all ages appear to have wholly lost, not only all sense of decency and propriety, but also all consciousness of distinguishing between right and wrong, and between truth and error; so hardened and callous are their consciences.

This apparent lack of any sense of God and truth is, however, only as things may appear outwardly. Deep down in the consciousness of every individual, however sinful they may be, and whether or not they profess to believe in God, there is something they cannot comprehend: a most perplexing conundrum, and one that therefore is vexing and gnawing. They know the very reality of the being of Almighty God, of His holiness and righteousness, and of their individual and personal accountability to Him as their Judge. But rather than humbling them, this knowledge only enrages them into greater enmity against God and His truth. (See Rom 1:18-32, particularly noting the last verse, “Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them”.)

There is no question that as individuals and as nations, we deserve the

anger of God, and we ought not therefore to be surprised at His anticipated judgements: “For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted” (Is 60:12).

The people of God, though grieved and concerned by the ungodliness around them, are to continue in prayer, knowing that in these times of trouble, God is their refuge, their strength, and their very-present help (see Ps 46:1). They know that the Lord of Hosts is the Sovereign God of heaven and earth, who, for the glory of His name and the good of His Church, continuously oversees, in infinite detail, all the multitudinous affairs of His creation. “So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west, and His glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him” (Is 59:19).

Though the day is solemn, though evil abounds, and though we do not know what lies before us, we have the comfort and consolation of the Holy Scriptures and the many exceedingly great and precious promises contained in them, which assure us of the victory that the Church has in our Lord Jesus Christ, whose glory is yet to fill the whole earth, even as the waters cover the sea (see Hab 2:14). This should encourage us all to persevere earnestly in praying, “Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven” (Mt 6:9,10). DPR

The Swiss Tragedy

The Swiss tragedy – a fire in a nightclub in the early hours of New Year’s Day in which 40 people died and 116 were injured – will touch the heart of every parent. Many of the people involved, both dead and severely injured, were teenagers. They were not spending their time at all wisely, but many others were acting as the victims of this tragedy. How fragile is our happiness in this life and how quickly and easily God can take it away, either directly or through our dear ones. The only solid and lasting happiness is in Christ. He alone is “that good part, which shall not be taken away” (Lk 10:42). DWBS

Uncleanness in Newspapers

Several of the more conservative newspapers and magazines publish material critical of some of the national sins; and yet in the same issue can be found indecent pictures or articles by open adulterers and homosexuals, unashamed of their conduct and sometimes boasting about it. Uncleanness is also a sin and is as wicked and destructive as the sins which these publications are condemning. Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed as “an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly” (2 Pet 2:6). “Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge” (Heb 13:4). Those that “partake” or

associate with adulterers will perish along with the adulterers themselves, unless they repent (Ps 50:18). *DWBS*

Church Information

Synod Committee Meetings

Synod committees will meet, DV, as follows:

Tuesday, March 17:

- 09.10 - 09.40 Church Interests Committee
- 09.50 - 11.20 Training of the Ministry Committee
- 11.30 - 12.30 Sabbath Observance Committee
- 12.40 - 13.40 Overseas Committee
- 13.50 - 14.50 Outreach Committee
- 15.00 - 17.00 Religion and Morals Committee
- 18.00 - 19.30 Publications and Bookroom Committee
- 19.40 - 20.40 Welfare of Youth Committee

Wednesday, March 18

- 10.00 - 13.00 Finance Committee (Rev) *K M Watkins*, Clerk of Synod

Bookroom Fund

By appointment of Synod, the Special Collection on behalf of the Bookroom Fund, is due to be taken in congregations during February.

W Campbell, General Treasurer

Acknowledgement of Donations

The General Treasurer acknowledges with sincere thanks the following donations:

General Fund: Anon, £115.

Congregational Treasurers acknowledge with sincere thanks the following donations:

Creich etc: Anon, £70 per WC. *Communion Expenses (Dornoch)*: Anon, £70. *Manse Communion Expenses*: Anon, £50.

Dingwall & Beaully: Anon, £30, £30, £65. *Sustentation Fund*: Mr & Mrs D Smith, £50.

Glasgow: Anon, £100. *Eastern Europe Fund*: Anon, £80, £80, £80, £80, £80, £80, £80, £80, £80, £80. *Outreach Fund*: Anon, £15. *Sustentation Fund*: Anon, £500; Anon, Ps 60:4, £40. *TBS*: Anon, £50.

London: Anon, £100, £100; Anon, to assist in providing Synod Reports for the congregation, £100. *Sustentation Fund*: Anon, to help with supply expenses, £100.

North Harris: *Communion Expenses*: Anon, £50; KM, £150 per Rev JBJ.

North Tolsta: *Door Collection*: Anon, £80, £30, £80, £30, £80.

Perth: *Sustentation Fund*: Anon, £3000. *Communion Expenses*: Anon, £100. Anon, for pulpit supply, £300.

There is such a thing as repenting in sin, rather than from sin; that is, merely to get ease, with no determination to forsake sin. The one is Satan's delusion; the other is from the Holy Spirit. *H Budd*

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; **Strathly:** 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.

Kinlochervie: 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 I D MacDonald; tel: 01478 612110.

Laide (Ross-shire): Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm; Wed 7.30 pm as intimated. Manse tel: 01445 731340. Contact: Rev A W MacColl; tel: 01349 866546.

Lochcarron: Sabbath 11 am, 6 pm; Wed 7 pm. Manse. Contact: Rev I D MacDonald; tel: 01478 612110.

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 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 I D MacDonald; tel: 01478 612110.

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: Mr K C MacLeod; tel: 01854 612805.

England

Barnoldswick: Kelbrook Road, Sabbath 11 am, 6 pm; Wed 7.30 pm; **South Manchester:** Sabbath 6.00 pm, in Upper Room (second floor), 11 Wilmslow Road, Cheadle SK8 1DW; (entrance is from the car park at the back of the building); Wed 8 pm, alternately in Sandbach and Gatley. Contact Mr R Middleton, 2 Emerald Drive, Sandbach, CW11 4ND; tel: 01270 761673.

Broadstairs: Sabbath 11 am, 5 pm at Portland Centre, Hopeville Ave, St Peter's; Tues 7 pm at Friends' Meeting House, St Peter's Park Rd. Contact Dr T Martin; tel: 01843 866369.

London: Zoar Chapel, Varden St, E1 2AW. Sabbath 10.30 am, 5.30 pm; Wednesday 7.15 pm. Manse. Contact Mr Hugh Campbell; tel: 01923 442497.

Canada

Chesley, Ontario: Church and Manse, 40 Fourth Street SW. Sabbath 11 am, 7.30 pm; Wednesday 8 pm. Contact: Mr David Kuiper; tel: 519 363 0367. Manse tel: 519 363 2502.

USA

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 Levyskyi; tel: 00 38 067 457 02 18; e-mail: dlevyskyi@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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