

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*

Contents

The Prayer of the Destitute (1)	65
God Calling the Wicked to Repent (2)	
A Sermon by <i>John Kennedy</i>	68
Free Will (2)	
<i>Rev I D MacDonald</i>	76
David Brainerd:	
12. "Nothing Less Than Divine Power"	77
Why Pray?	
<i>John Flavel</i>	81
A Zimbabwe Clinic	
<i>Rev J B Jardine</i>	83
Necessity of a Great Spiritual Change:	
1. The Greatness of the Change	
<i>James Buchanan</i>	84
"No Other Gods Before Me"	
<i>Mr D P Rowland</i>	88
Congregational Contributions for 2025	92
Book Review:	
<i>Light From Calvary</i> by Robert H Ireland	94
Notes and Comments	94
Church Information	96

March 2026

Vol 131 • No 3

The Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland

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The Free Presbyterian Magazine

Published by The Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland (Scottish Charity Number SC003545). Subscriptions and changes of address to be sent to the General Treasurer, Mr W Campbell (for contact details, see above). The subscription year begins in January. Prices are on back cover. One month's notice is required for change of address. Queries about delivery of the magazines should be sent to the General Treasurer, not the printer.

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Editorial Board: The Editor, Mr F R Daubney, Mr D P Rowland, Rev D W B Somerset.

Deadline for sending material to the Editor: The beginning of the month previous to publication.

The Gaelic Supplement (quarterly): Editor: Rev A W MacColl MA PhD, 10 Achany Road, Dingwall, IV15 9JB; tel: 01349 866546. Available free on request.

Youth Magazine: *The Young People's Magazine*. Editor: Rev K D Macleod BSc.

Communions

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

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

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

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

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

June: First Sabbath: Perth; **Second:** Nkayi, North Uist, Santa Fe; **Third:** Uig; **Fourth:** Bulawayo, Gairloch, 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: Domoch; **Second:** Glasgow; **Third:** Chiedza, Singapore.; **Fourth:** Santa Fe.

December: Third Sabbath: Bulawayo.

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Volume 131

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The Prayer of the Destitute (1)

It is always true that God “will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer” (Ps 102:17). But this verse does not refer to absolute poverty in the things of this world; it refers to *spiritual* destitution, for in ourselves, there is nothing we can trust in for the salvation of our souls. We are altogether weak; we have no spiritual strength. We have absolutely no righteousness of our own. How emphatically Paul makes that point in writing to the Romans! He not only states, “There is none righteous” (Rom 3:10), but he follows the pattern of Psalm 14:3 in adding, “No, not one”. Everyone, in themselves, apart from looking to Christ, is altogether destitute of the righteousness that will satisfy the all-holy God.

Professing Christians in Laodicea took a totally different view of themselves; so they were warned by the Lord Jesus Christ: “Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked”. They were indeed destitute, but not in the sense of the verse quoted at the beginning of this article; these people refused to recognise the *truth* about their spiritual condition; they thought that their keeping of the law and their religious observances would earn them at least a degree of worthiness before God. Yet, although they were rejecting God’s provision for lost sinners, a gracious Saviour continued to call them. And, in the same words, He continues to call sinners today who refuse to recognise their destitute condition: “I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see” (Rev 3:17,18).

The spiritually destitute are called to come to Christ for spiritual riches which are perfectly pure. What do they need for their souls? Christ has purchased what will supply all their needs, but He brings them to realise that they are destitute, that they cannot provide for themselves. Do they need a new heart? Grace to help in time of need? Grace to resist temptation? Grace to turn from sin in true repentance? Grace to look to Christ as the Saviour of

sinner? They need all these, and more. Let them then, recognising their spiritual destitution, go to Him as the One who sits at the right hand of God the Father and makes continual intercession for guilty sinners. The Lord Jesus Christ is the only One who can supply all these spiritual blessings, which are so necessary, not only for this life but for that which is to come.

In particular, the spiritually destitute are naked; they need a righteousness which they cannot manufacture, a righteousness which is acceptable to God. How many, with a smattering of Bible knowledge, assume that their own good works – as they perceive them – are sufficient to cover their spiritual nakedness, even on the Day of judgement as they will stand before the perfectly righteous Judge! But they should recognise that the confession, in Isaiah 64:6, “All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags”, ought to be the confession of everyone, including themselves. John Calvin comments, “It is certain that [a filthy rag] denotes something which is vile and worthless, and which, on account of its filthiness, stinks in the noses of men”. But the point being illustrated is that sin of every kind, however trivial it might seem to be, stinks before God. We need to learn that every sin is extremely obnoxious to God, who is perfectly pure and holy.

Accordingly we are to come to Christ for white clothing, for “the fine linen is the righteousness of saints” (Rev 19:8), which, as Matthew Henry’s *Commentary* states, God’s people “did not purchase by any price of [their] own, but received them as the gift and grant of [their] blessed Lord” – for in themselves they were totally destitute in spiritual things.

Finally, sinners are spiritually blind. They are called to look to Christ – to believe in Him – but they cannot do so. So they are to seek from Christ spiritual ointment; they need the gracious work of the Holy Spirit to give their souls the capacity to receive the revelation given in the Scriptures – they require the new birth, so that by faith they may look to Christ as the Saviour of sinners.

Another clear illustration of spiritual destitution is given in the Saviour’s parable of the Pharisee and the publican (in more modern parlance, a tax gatherer). The parable was directed to some who “trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others” (Lk 18:10). The two men had gone up to the temple to pray. First, we are given the Pharisee’s “prayer”. He assumed he had no needs to bring before the Lord by way of petition. In his own eyes, he certainly was not destitute. He proclaimed his own goodness before the Lord and he likely made sure that the people around him heard also; he was so much better, he claimed, than others, including the publican, whom he clearly despised. Yet in God’s perfect view of his real condition, the Pharisee was “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked”.

He did have real needs, but he was blind to them. He was on his way to eternity and he was blind to his need of the Lord's saving work, through which alone he could be prepared to enter heaven.

But what of the publican? He had nothing to say about any imaginary goodness; he knew he had none; he described himself as a "sinner". He could have no hope of a reward for the way he lived his life; he could only look for *mercy*. How suitable his prayer is to the needs of everyone: "God be merciful to me a sinner"!

Here we have two men: the first considered himself well-off spiritually, when the reality was that he was totally destitute of spiritual good; the other considered himself destitute when, in fact, he had the beginnings of spiritual riches. This is confirmed by the Saviour's conclusion: "I tell you, this man [the publican] went down to his house justified rather than the other". The one was justified. The other was not.

The publican was accepted by God, for Christ's sake, as if he had kept all God's commandments perfectly; he had entered the way which leads to everlasting life; he had found mercy. But the Pharisee was still under condemnation; he was still spiritually destitute; he had not found mercy, because he had never sought it; he was still on his way to a lost eternity.

As quoted already, God "will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer". The publican – as spiritually destitute, conscious that he had no spiritual resources – sent up the petition, "God be merciful to me a sinner". Accordingly we must believe that God heard his petition; He did not despise it. So the Lord had mercy on his soul, forgave him all his iniquities, put new life into his soul and justified him freely; indeed the Lord blessed him with the beginnings of all spiritual blessings. The Lord continued to let him feel his spiritual destitution – his lack of everything that would allow him to claim that he deserved any blessing – until the day of his death. But throughout that time, the publican has had every right to plead the Lord's promise, "He will regard the prayer of the destitute". And beyond death, he has had no needs – just perfect, continuous blessedness.

Still today, God regards the prayers of His people, those who cannot look to their own righteousness, for they know they have none; they know they can only be heard for the sake of the perfect righteousness of Christ put to their account. But we are encouraged – no matter how destitute we feel – to "come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need". And let us all remember that "there is nothing too hard for the Lord" (Jer 32:17), whether we pray for ourselves or others.

The Lord willing, we will return to this subject next month, to focus more on God *hearing* the prayer of the destitute.

God Calling the Wicked to Repent (2)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?*

(2.) He tells us *what He has pleasure in*: “that the wicked turn from his way and live”. The repentance of the wicked is an occasion of delight to God, for it is the first acknowledgment of His being “the true God”; the first tribute to His godhead from His creature; the first movement of a lost sinner from “the wrath to come”; the first rupture between him and that abominable thing which God hateth; the first act of homage to His Anointed, who is also His Son; the first fruit of the Spirit’s work of grace. It is grace returning to the fountain whence it came, and bringing a “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked” sinner back to be “filled” with “all the fulness of God”.

Repentance is the turning of the wicked “from his way”. To this way he was before attached, for in it he gratified the evil desires of his heart. But the true penitent turns to God from “his own way”, as well as from all besides that is sinful. But he cannot do so without bringing the guilt and the source of his wandering with him when he comes. And he turns to God. To Him he desires to come – to be a debtor to His mercy for forgiveness; and for salvation to His grace; and to consecrate himself without reserve to His service. And he comes through Christ to God, for He is “the way, and the truth, and the life,” and “no man cometh unto the Father but by” Him. Christ, as “the way,” is all that God, in the interest of His glory, can desire, and all that is required to make Him perfectly suited to the sinner’s case. He who is “the way” is “the Word . . . made flesh”, made sin and made a curse.

Through His flesh – rent because of sin and by the execution of the curse, “a new and living way” was opened unto “the holiest”. The entrance to this way is near to sinners in the gospel – so near that, though the sinner can be brought nearer to it, it cannot be brought nearer to him. This way, no one but a sinner of our race may enter. It suits none else, and none besides is called. And his being a sinner is all regarding himself that is known to him who returns to God. It is not as a penitent; it is not as a loved one; it is as a “wicked” one that he comes, with all the guilt of his evil ways, and with all the corruption of the old heart. And when he comes to God through

¹The final part of a sermon which was taken from *The Modern Scottish Pulpit*, vol 1 (1883), and edited. The first main point, the *declaration* made in the text, is continued here, and the second, which concludes the sermon, is the *call* given.

Christ for salvation from all sin, “there is joy in heaven over” him.

It is pleasant to God that the penitent should “live”. God secures that he shall live, and live for ever. Finding the Son, he finds life, for he finds in Him a righteousness in which he is set free from condemnation, and has a right to all the bliss that flows from the favour of God. He has now a principle of spiritual life in him, and the Spirit of life Himself to preserve and perfect it; and even now, foretastes of life may be his through faith; while beyond, in the full view of God, and before the wistful gaze of his own dimmed eye, are the rest, bliss and glory of the perfect life in heaven.

There are three reasons, each infinitely strong, why this should be pleasing to God. As our greatest pains and pleasures reach our hearts through the love of others, the measure of love must indicate the capacity for joy. But who can conceive what must be the gladness resulting from the gratification of infinite love! And there is a threefold love of God, through the gratification of which He receives pleasure from the penitence and life of the wicked.

[1.] *God's love to His people.* He embraces one whom He infinitely loves, when the repenting sinner reaches the bosom of His mercy. The loved one was lost, and the loved one was dead; now the loved lost is found, and the loved dead is alive. It was only because this was ever present to His eternal mind, that Jehovah could have rested in His love to His chosen. But now the event is actual, and the divine joy is made known throughout all heaven. Think of joy in heaven over one whose sins made the Son of God “a man of sorrows”.

[2.] *His infinite love to His Anointed One.* Each case of conversion is an instalment of reward to Him for doing the will, and for glorifying the name, of Him who sent Him. The Father loves Him because He laid down His life that He might take it again; and this love He expresses in fulfilling the promise, “He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied”. This Christ sees when He sees “His seed” – when the Father draws sinners unto Him, and follows this up by giving them “all spiritual blessings” in Him, according to His intercession. To bestow such a reward on such a One must be, to God, the occasion of infinite delight.

[3.] *His infinite love to Himself and to righteousness.* “God is love”. He is so, when contemplated in the unity of the eternal Godhead. But love requires an object; and He who Himself is love is the first object of the love that He is. It is because His own infinite moral glory is ever present to His omniscience that, through His love, it yields to Him who is “over all” such delight that He is “blessed for ever”. And “God is love” as subsisting in a Trinity of Persons. “The Father loveth the Son”, and that Son is and ever was “daily His delight”. “I love the Father”, says the Son, and I was “rejoicing

always before Him". And the Holy Spirit, who "proceedeth from the Father" and from the Son, lovingly fulfills the purpose of the Father through the Son. O infinitely holy sphere! O sphere of infinite loving – the unapproachable sphere of the interrelations and fellowship of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost!

"God is love" to righteousness in His relation to His moral government. When He makes manifest to His people that He is love, He will ensure that in their salvation there shall appear to His view, to His infinite delight, all to which He is love. He will afford an opportunity of expressing what He is as love to Himself, what the mutual love of the Trinity is, and how He loves righteousness.

How the beauty of His holiness, to which He is love, appears in its having pleased Him to bruise His Well-beloved, that there might be healing for diseased sinners, and peace to the guilty! How infinite must be His delight in this display of His glory! And how intent He must be on salvation when this joy was seen in securing it! Never did so much of His glorious character appear in any of His works as in the cross of Christ; but all this came forth in pursuing a scheme which bore on the salvation of sinners. True, all redemption work is before us in the cross. But the further bearings of that work must be considered. Actual salvation is the terminating part of the divine scheme of grace, and each step of it must be brightened with the glory that shone forth in the course of events which led to it.

If "truth met with mercy" in the cross, it was with a view to their coming forth together, from the presence of God on His throne, in the glad tidings of the gospel, to guide a sinner to "the holiest", where alone He can obtain the blessing. If "righteousness and peace embraced each other", it was with a view to God being righteous to Christ, in giving peace, for His sake, to those who deserved to die. To this new occasion of expressing Himself, He comes in all the glorious brightness of His name, as revealed in the cross. And in how many ways, in His work of grace, resulting in the penitence and life of the wicked, He manifests the glory of His power, wisdom, faithfulness, holiness and love!

How salvation provides an opportunity of exhibiting the mutual love of the Persons of the Godhead! The Father's love to the Son appears in His having delivered all things into His hand; and you are called to look, in the light of the gospel, on this demonstration of that wondrous love. The Son desired that the world should know how He loved the Father, by His obedience unto death, even the death of the cross. O infinite wonder: the demonstration which the Son has given to the universe, of His love to the Father, is the blood which tells you there is peace for a sinner! And the Spirit, as the

Comforter, takes the things of Christ and of the Father and, in fulfilment of the Father's purpose, and of the purpose of the Son's death, shows them to the sinners who are made heirs of salvation!

How exhaustive, even as a revelation of divine glory, is the expression of His love of righteousness given in the death of His Son! The sins of a people eternally beloved, are imputed to Him who is His only-begotten Son; and for those sins, He dies the death of the cross! How could any other exercise of justice, or all acts of justice that can occur in the course of His moral government, express His love of righteousness as much as the atoning death of His dear Son has done? Only once did God, in the exercise of retributive justice, deal with One who was "His fellow", and only then could He, in one final transaction, give an exhaustive display of His righteousness. O sinner, all that God is, as He "is love", takes the side of His mercy, when He receives and blesses the sinner who, at His call, comes to Him through Christ crucified!

(2) *The declaration is in the form of an oath*: "As I live, saith the Lord." It is fitting that such a declaration should have such a form. Only thus could earnestness, springing from infinite love, express itself fitly in words. What a proof this gives you of God's intense desire that you should believe what He declares! He swears by Himself in declaring to you that He has no pleasure in your death, but that He has pleasure in the repentance and life of all who turn to Him. Ought you not to be afraid of remaining an unbeliever? Is this divine earnestness to be met by indifference? Can you dare to present to it a heart of stone? Are you to be unmoved and callous before this display of infinitely intense divine earnestness? Are you to sleep on, while this oath from heaven, uttered by God's voice, strikes on your ear? Does He not give Himself, in all the reality of His being, glory and blessedness, as security for the truth of His declaration? How real to God He Himself is!

But as He consciously lives in what He is – as infinite, glorious and blessed – so is He true in the declaration of the text. What higher, firmer ground of assurance can even God give you than this? O sinner, it is enough! You might suspend on this ten thousand times ten thousand souls, each one as lost as the one soul you have, and you would run no risk. Do not give in to the unbelief that would dare to charge with perjury the One for whom it is impossible to lie.

Does He not give Himself, in all the infinite resources that are His as God, pledging action according to the declaration of the text? Does this not suffice? Can more be asked? He shall cease to be, before He can fail to be the God of salvation to you, if you return to Him at His call. What condescension is here! How can you be at ease while the infinite Jehovah is thus bending over you in intensest earnestness? Lie in the dust before Him, as He ap-

proaches you in this marvellous act of condescension, and do not resist Him as He lays the weight of His oath on your heart, to press out of it all its doubts about His truth and grace

2. The Call. From the midst of divine glory, from off the divine throne of grace, and intense with divine earnestness, comes the call to the house of Israel: "Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways." Whence, whither, how to turn, are the questions which these words require us to consider.

Whence are you to turn? "From your evil ways." Every way in which you depart from the fellowship and service of God is "evil". Forsaking God is the great evil. It appears so to God as He looks on His infinite glory, and on the provision of His everlasting love. How? Because of His love to Himself and of His zeal for His own glory, His holy indignation must rise into an infinite flame, against that sin on the part of the creature of His hand.

How wonderful – in the full view of all this evil, and in His immovable resolution to deal out to all sin a full, just retribution – it is that God should call the sinner from his evil ways, to be embraced in the bosom of His mercy! But the call is issued through the rent flesh of His own dear Son. The precious blood of His Lamb is before Him, as He calls the sinner from his evil ways. And to the praise of all He has revealed about Himself, He can call the sinner to His mercy seat. What the great High Priest presents to God meets all His indignation as it demanded the infliction of the curse. In gracious dealing with the wicked, it can be brought to bear, for His sake, as a consuming fire on the sin from which the guilt sprang which atoning blood removed.

From all your evil ways you are called to turn, for there can be no turning to God if there is any reserve of sin. Each evil way is infinitely opposed to the will of God. Sometimes the conscious reserve is reduced to one evil way, under the pressure of conscience. What eager cries come from the flesh, for that one reserve, and only that one. What attempts will be made to come to terms with God, while still cleaving to some darling sin! But it cannot be. All sin must be forsaken by the will that inclines towards God. How can His holiness admit of any reserve? To cover any sin with your embrace is to place yourself naked before the sword of God. He must strike at sin.

Beware lest He strike at sin through you! Come in your desire, away from all sin, quite out of it, to God. Cut off your right hand; pluck out your right eye, rather than pass on to the fire that shall never be quenched. And how can Divine grace admit of a reserve? Salvation from all sin is the boon which grace confers. Nothing less than this can express its bounty, and nothing ought less than this can suffice for you. Less than this you cannot have from the hand of God. He cannot give you salvation to the dishonour of the law of Christ, as the one authoritative rule of life. His holy grace undertakes yet

to give to the law, even in that form, its claims in full; and it begins to do so by bringing a sinner, with a heart broken from all sin, under its holy yoke.

But must I rid myself of my guilt and of my evil heart, before I come back to God? Indeed no. You are called to come as you are, in the midst of your evil ways, with all the guilt that lies on you, and with all the fountain of evil that is in you. You are called to receive all the pardoning mercy and all the saving grace you need – as you are burdened and filled with sin, having no righteousness to cover your persons, with no excuse to hide your guilt, and while there is nothing in all your consciousness but sin, all over and all through, having no ability in yourself but the grim power to transgress.

2. *Whither* are you to turn? God calls you to Himself. To Himself as revealed in the declaration going before, to Himself as on His throne of grace, to Himself through Jesus Christ. Beware of a godless Christianity, as well as of a Christless religion. Souls, having only the uneasiness caused by the fear of death, are anxious only for something that will take their blind dread away. They have not known God in His awful glory as Lawgiver and Judge, and they do not care to realise Him in the person of the Saviour. They do not feel their need of a divine Saviour to remove the guilt of sin and to subdue its power. They do not ask to be admitted into the mystery of the cross, under the Spirit's teaching, to see a way for sinners unto God. The glory shining from the face of Jesus does not draw them through the Mediator to God. And they shrink from the pressure of God's authority on their conscience.

But "he that believeth on Me", says Christ, "believeth not on Me, but on Him that sent Me". By Christ you must "believe in God, that raised Him up from the dead, and gave Him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God". "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

If you thus believe, God shall be before you in such an aspect of His character, and in such a relation to sinners through Christ – in such marvellous love, and in such readiness to bless you when you come – that you will be sweetly subdued into compliance with His call, and you cannot but choose to come. Divine glory, shining from the face of Jesus on a quickened soul, melts the heart and causes it to flow down to the footstool of the throne of mercy. The very view of God, which wins his confidence, secures the homage of the penitent sinner. This soul must appreciate His solemn righteousness as displayed in the cross, as well as realise His majesty, before he can have hope. What he requires to encourage him, is sufficient to subdue him into an unreserved surrender of his whole being to God. The life that moves towards Him in hope bows to His sovereign will and lies in adoring worship at His footstool.

How are you to turn? In willingness to accept the terms proposed by God, as terms of salvation and of service. You may feel that you cannot come back to God – that, unless He, in His almighty grace, comes for you, you cannot come to Him. Even if you should shrink from asking Him to come, if you only turn in the distant darkness to Him who is the way, and to God through Him, willing to owe Him the turning and drawing that you may come, as well as the blessing when you have come, He “will pour out” His “Spirit unto you”, and make known His “words unto you”. Turning thus, you will verily be debtors to His grace for all you need. And you may be hoping debtors, for He raiseth the poor from the dust; He bringeth the fallen from out of the horrible pit, and He gathers, as He calls, outcasts from the very ends of the earth.

Surely then God may ask the question, “*Why* will ye die?” You have this question to answer. The reason for your dying is not on God’s side. He has abundantly shown this. And on your side it is not found in your fall in Adam, nor in the ruin resulting from that fall. It is not in your helplessness, for you are called to lie under the gracious power of God to be saved by Him. It is not in the influence of the world, insidious and mighty though that is, for it cannot constrain you to be aliens from God. It is not in the might of the great enemy, nor in the multitude of his hosts, nor in the depth of his cunning, nor in the greatness of his cruelty; for though he is a “strong man” and a “murderer”, he cannot for one moment keep you away from Him who calls you, if you are disposed to come.

Then “*why* will ye die?” God meets you where you are, and as you are, with this question. You are bound to give an answer, for only your own unwillingness to return can slay you. Are you to remain unwilling? If so, how can you justify yourself? My unwillingness, you say, is just the lack of something which I can only have from God, and if He does not bestow it, what can I do? But do not think of your unwillingness as a mere negation. It is positive wickedness, sinful madness. It is an insult to God, implying contempt of His love, of His Son’s precious blood, of His great salvation, and of His glorious name. To remain unwilling is to remain a rebel, disowning God’s authority, bidding defiance to His power. Are you to choose this, rather than submit to be saved, ruled and filled by God?

But my unwillingness is the result of my being in a state of death as an alien from God, under the guilt and power of sin; how, then, can I help myself? But, friend, the question is not how you can help yourself but, Will you be indebted for all help to God? Will you die in your pride, even when confessedly helpless, rather than let Christ be “all in all” to you, rather than let the grace of God do all for you? You are closed in to this point, and this leaves

your unwillingness exposed in all the nakedness of excuseless rebellion.

“Why will ye die?” Whatever may befall those who never heard the call to return to God, “why will ye die, O house of Israel?” “Precept upon precept; line upon line . . . here a little and there a little,” have been given you, and is death to be your end? But the gospel has been preached to the Gentiles, and to Gentiles also God has granted repentance unto life. To each gospel hearer therefore this question is addressed by God. “The Son of man”, who came “to seek and to save that which is lost”, has come to you in your sinful helplessness – offering Himself to be to you all that you need, in order to your everlasting salvation – and will you die after all?

And “why will ye *die*? What is there in death that you should choose it rather than life? Yet every sinner who remains impenitent is charged with choosing death. God charges you with this when He addresses to you this question. You are charged with choosing death because you love it, for He says, “He that sinneth against Me wrongeth his own soul; all they that hate Me love death”. Rejecting the gospel is sinning against Christ. You cannot do so without wronging your soul. And you do this because you hate Christ. You would not sin against Him as you do if you were merely indifferent. To consider your own interest would turn the scale, if there was an even balance.

It is not indifference, but hatred, that is how you feel towards Christ. You cannot hate Him without loving death. No, you say, I cannot love death; I shrink from shame and agony, and both are implied in death. True, you would willingly escape from what you regard as death. But, in the view of Christ, it is death to be away from God. And you love to be away from Him. In loving this, you love death. Such is your love of death that you will not abandon it, though God tells you – and your conscience whispers to you – that if you continue an alien, you must perish for ever. You know that the death you love is linked to the woe from which your conscience makes you shrink. You know that you cannot cleave to the one without keeping hold of both.

You never have any portion of time but the passing moment; so you always stand at the brink of hell. There you keep fast hold of what must bring you down. O “why will ye die?” Is there anything in outer darkness to commend it to you, so that you would choose to be there? Or is there anything in the devouring fire and the everlasting burnings to induce you to dwell there for ever? Do you care to be in the bonds of despair, where the worm “dieth not”. “Why will ye [thus] die?” To God, who puts the question, give an answer if you dare. And if you have no answer, fall silenced before Him who calls you. But break the silence of excuselessness by a prayer for mercy. Continue to cry, “Turn Thou me, and I shall be turned,” till answer comes from the mercy seat.

Free Will (2)¹

Rev I D MacDonald

2. Free will in the state of innocence. We turn now to consider the true Scriptural bounds to the freedom of man's will in the state of innocence. And here we are directed by Scripture to consider that "God [that] hath made man upright" (Ecc 7:29). These words, we think, apply most immediately to the faculty of the will, which was made upright with God's will, as Thomas Boston says in his *Fourfold State*, "His will lay straight with the will of God. . . . The will of man was directed and naturally inclined to God and goodness. . . . It was disposed by its original make,² to follow the Creator's will, as the shadow does the body; and was not left in an equal balance to good and evil." The underlying moral disposition of his soul was a principle of perfect holiness.

Freedom to Choose Spiritual Good. To begin with, this meant innocent man possessed perfect freedom to will spiritual good, as the *Confession* tells us: "Man, in his state of innocency, had freedom and power to will and to do that which was good, and well pleasing to God". Now, this is more than the psychological freedom of mere spontaneity, or natural liberty – as it is described in the *Confession*'s first paragraph. Rather this "freedom and power" to will that which was good is true theological or spiritual freedom, for as Anslem argues, only the ability to choose spiritual good is worthy of the name freedom, and all else is just miserable bondage. God Himself was well-pleased with the holy obedience of our first parents, proceeding as pure streams from a pure heart, without any mixture of sin.

Then, in addition to this freedom to spiritual good, innocent man also had, in a sense, the freedom of contrary choice, which is just what *The Shorter Catechism* describes as our first parents being "left to the freedom of their own will". The *Confession* states the same: "Man, in his estate of innocency, had freedom and power to will and to do that which was good . . . but yet mutably, so that he might fall from it". Therefore the will of man in innocence had the freedom of contrary choice since it was free to choose between the opposing alternatives of good and evil.

The mutability of innocent man supposes on the one hand a withholding of determining grace which would have rendered the bias of his will to holiness permanent. Had Adam stood for the time of probation under the covenant

¹Another section of a paper presented to the 2024 Theological Conference. The first article provided an introduction and the first main point: "The true limits of the freedom of man's will in every state".

²That is, by how it was originally made.

of works, his will would have been confirmed, and would have ceased to be mutable, and so he would have been determined in holiness and for ever placed beyond the possibility of a sinful choice. Some, Girardeau for instance, go further and allow that the will of man in innocence had the freedom of self-determining power, so that it was able to change its own propensity. But other theologians, such as Charles Hodge, anxious to conserve the relation of dependence between the understanding and the will, prefer to speak of the self-determining power of the man as a whole, rather than of the will itself.

Either way, the freedom granted to man in innocence by no way means that, as the Arminians claim, his will possessed the freedom of indifference, so that it was in a moral equilibrium between good and evil, without any fixed bias one way or the other. Quite the contrary, for its bias was entirely towards holiness.

Returning to our nautical analogy, it could be said that innocent man was like a ship sailing in the sea of time towards the fair haven of eternal life, with perfect harmony on board. Captain Holiness ruled over the whole vessel. First Mate Understanding had knowledge of, and assented to, the way of holiness, leading to eternal life, and Helmsman Free Will had perfect freedom to steer the ship in that blessed direction.

David Brainerd¹

12. “Nothing Less Than Divine Power”

On the first Sabbath of 1746, Brainerd baptized both an adult and a child at Crossweeksung. The adult was an 80-year-old woman who may have suffered from dementia, but had now obtained spiritual comfort. One morning she came to Brainerd and asked him if he had been sent “to preach to the Indians by some good people a great way off”. He replied, “Yes, by the good people in Scotland”. She told him that “her heart loved those good people so [much], the evening before, that she could scarce[ly] help praying for them all night; her heart would go to God for them”. Brainerd comments, “The blessing of those ‘ready to perish’ is like to come on those pious persons” who have given money to spread the gospel (pp 320-1).

On another Sabbath, Brainerd believed, “a weary, heavy-laden soul, was “brought to true rest and solid comfort in Christ. The missionary found his account of God’s dealings with this man’s soul to be “abundantly satisfying as well as refreshing”. This is Brainerd’s summary of what the man told him:

¹A further part of a longer version of a paper given at the 2024 Theological Conference. The previous article, in the January issue, was entitled, “Pressing on in Weakness”.

“He had often heard me say that persons must see and feel themselves utterly helpless and undone; that they must be emptied of a dependence upon themselves, and of all hope of saving themselves by their own doings, in order to their coming to Christ for salvation. And he had long been striving after this view of things; supposing this would be an excellent frame of mind”. He was seeking to be “emptied of a dependence upon his own goodness, [expecting] that God would have respect to this frame, [that He] would then be well pleased with him, and bestow eternal life upon him. But when he came to feel himself in this helpless, undone condition, he found it quite contrary to all his thoughts and expectations” (p 322).

Brainerd went on, He saw “nothing but badness in himself and saw it was for ever impossible for him to make himself any better. He wondered, he said, that he had ever hoped to mend his own heart. He was amazed he had never before seen that it was absolutely impossible for him, by all his contrivances and endeavours, to do anything that way, since the matter now appeared to him in so clear a light. Instead of imagining now that God would be pleased with him for the sake of this frame of mind, and this view of his undone estate, he saw clearly, and felt, it would be just with God to send him to eternal misery.”

He saw these things so clearly that the man thought “he could convince everybody of their utter inability ever to help themselves, and their unworthiness of any help from God”. With these thoughts in his mind he came to the evening service. There Brainerd was inviting sinners to come to Christ “without any goodness of their own to recommend them to His acceptance”. The man knew “that he had often tried to come and give up his heart to Christ, and he used to hope that sometime or other he should be able to do so. But now he was convinced he could not, and it seemed utterly vain for him ever to try any more. . . . He saw, and was fully convinced, his own strength would for ever fail” (p 323).

While he was thinking in that way, Brainerd reports, “he saw with his heart (which is a common phrase among [the Indians]) something that was unspeakably good and lovely, and what he had never seen before; and ‘this stole away his heart whether he would or no’. He did not, he said, know what it was he saw. He did not say, ‘This is Jesus Christ’; but it was such glory and beauty as he never saw before. He did not now give away his heart so as he had formerly intended and attempted to do, but it went away of itself after that glory he then discovered. He used to try to make a bargain with Christ, to give up his heart to Him, that he might have eternal life for it. But now he thought nothing about himself, or what would become of him hereafter. . . . After some time he was wonderfully pleased with the way of

salvation by Christ, so that it seemed unspeakably better to be saved by the mere free grace of God in Christ than to have any hand in saving himself. He appears to retain a sense and relish of divine things, and to maintain a life of seriousness and true religion" (p 323-4).

At the beginning of February, Brainerd was addressing his people on an evening. He was almost finished when "a surprising power" seemed to accompany his words. Among those who were particularly affected was an old man who had been a great drunkard, a [sorcerer] and a murderer, who had been awakened some months previously. He trembled for several hours together, feeling that he was just dropping into hell and had no power to deliver himself from that fearful end.

The next day was a Sabbath, and Brainerd again held an evening meeting for catechising. He noticed that his people were "more ready in answering the questions proposed to them than ever before. It is apparent they advanced daily in doctrinal knowledge. But what is still more desirable, the Spirit of God is yet operating among them, whereby experimental, as well as [intellectual], knowledge is propagated in their minds" (p 325). Later that week he spent a considerable part of a day visiting his people from house to house. Several individuals "appeared concerned for nothing so much as for an interest in the great Redeemer" (pp 325-6).

The following Sabbath, Brainerd baptized two adults and a child. He believed that the adults were both truly godly. He also noted that God had been pleased to bless the sacrament of Baptism to some of those who were present, as well as other means of grace. In the evening, while he was catechising, many were affected. The missionary noted, "Former convictions appeared to be powerfully revived". He mentioned particularly a man "who had been long under spiritual distress: He appeared to be in great anguish of soul, wept and trembled, and continued to do so till near midnight.

"There was also a poor heavy-laden soul, who had been long under spiritual distress, as constant and pressing as ever I saw, but was now brought to a comfortable calm and seemed to be bowed and reconciled to divine sovereignty". She said "she now saw and felt it was right God should do with her as He pleased, and her heart felt pleased and satisfied it should be so". Although she had often recently "found her heart rise at and quarrel with God because He would, if He pleased, send her to hell after all she had done or could do to save herself" (p 326).

She "added that the heavy burden she had lain under was now removed; that she had tried to recover her concern and distress again (fearing that the Spirit of God was departing from her and would leave her wholly careless), but that she could not recover it; that she felt she never could do anything to

save herself, but must perish for ever if Christ did not do all for her; that she did not deserve He should help her; and that it would be right if He should leave her to perish. But Christ could save her, though she could do nothing to save herself. . . . And here she seemed to rest” (pp 326-7).

Mid-February saw Brainerd back at the Forks of Delaware. He had brought with him, from Crossweeksung, six of the most serious and best-instructed of the believing Indians. He felt it would be helpful for the people at the Forks of Delaware to speak with them. He hoped that “it might be a means to convince them of the truth and importance of Christianity, to see and hear some of their own nation discoursing of divine things and manifesting earnest desires that others might be brought out of heathenish darkness, as themselves were”. Brainerd was anxious that they would have an influence especially over the local people who had previously refused to attend his preaching. Some of these local people did come to the worship; a proportion of them “behaved soberly, and some others laughed and mocked. However, the Word of God fell with such weight and power that sundry seem to be stunned and expressed a willingness to hear me again of these matters.”

Afterwards Brainerd addressed the white people who were present, and his words made some impression. Later he tried to convince those who had been mocking “the truth and importance of what I had been insisting upon, and so have endeavoured to awaken their attention to divine truths” (p 327). From what he saw, then and afterwards, he believed that his attempts had a significant effect on one of the worst of these mockers.

The converts from Crossweeksung continued teaching the local Indians the truths that they had learned from Brainerd. The visitors also prayed with them and they sang psalms together. Particularly helpful was to tell the local people “the great things God has done for *them*” and for other Indians in Crossweeksung. Another day, Brainerd travelled 15 miles to preach to a gathering of Irish people. Two days later, he preached to some Dutch people who had seldom heard the gospel, some of them being “very ignorant”. Yet “some of them were much affected under the Word” and wanted Brainerd to stay with them, or come again to preach. He was “grieved” that he could not remain but he did preach to them again the next day.

Before he left for Crossweeksung, Brainerd invited some of the local people to come with him. He was afraid that they, as “sheep not having a shepherd”, would suffer spiritually without “the assistance of an experienced spiritual guide” (p 328). Some of them promised to pay a visit soon. Brainerd commented, “They seemed to be considerably enlightened and much freed from their prejudices against Christianity. But it is much to be feared their prejudices will revive again, unless they could enjoy the means of instruction here, or

be removed where they might be under such advantages and out of the way of their pagan acquaintance” (p 329). Then as now, such places desperately needed a messenger of their own “that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation” (Is 52:7).

Brainerd was back in Crossweeksung before the beginning of March. And two men from the Forks of Delaware fulfilled their promise by coming to Crossweeksung along with the returning converts. Having reached what was now his base, Brainerd commented that one could scarcely go into a house there without finding Christian conversation; he hoped that the visitors would be both instructed and awakened by it. He commented too on the degree of God’s presence among his people and the prevalence of brotherly love – “although, not more than nine months ago, they were worshipping devils and dumb idols under the power of pagan darkness and superstition”. He went on to exclaim, “Amazing change this, effected by nothing less than divine power and grace! This is the doing of the Lord, and it is justly marvellous in our eyes.” God was indeed doing wonderful things through David Brainerd, and all to His own glory.

Why Pray?¹

John Flavel

Consider, all you that go out without prayer, how soon you may no longer be able to pray. Now you will not pray, and soon you may never again have one more opportunity to pray. Unbelief now shuts your mouths, and shortly death may do it. How soon may you be past prayers, both your own and others, and be fixed by death in your unalterable condition! Seek the Lord therefore while He may be found; call upon Him while He is yet near. Now is your praying time; hereafter there will be no use for prayer. “For this (says the Psalmist) shall every one that is godly pray unto Thee, in a time when Thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters, they shall not come nigh unto him” (Ps 32:6); that is, says Diodati² on this verse, in the time of the general destruction of sinners, as it was in the deluge; then there is no coming nigh to God by prayer, nor can you come nigh Him in the day of your particular destruction, by the flood of great waters. Therefore do not live a day longer in the profane, sinful neglect of this great duty of prayer!

Objection. But I observe that those generally, who do not pray, escape as well as they that do.

¹An edited extract from “The Seaman’s Companion”, in Flavel’s *Works*, vol 5.

²Giovanni Diodati: born in Geneva, he translated the Bible into Italian.

Answer. This objection was once made by a soldier during a battle, when he was pressed by his companion to pray; and God quickly stopped his blasphemous mouth with a mortal bullet. Beware of such bold, atheistical pleas; they greatly provoke the Lord against you. I had rather die praying than live prayerless.

Objection. But to what purpose is it for me to pray, if I am unregenerate? God does not hear such prayers if I make them; and besides, the prayers of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord.

Answer. Labour therefore to get into a regenerate state, and do not be persuaded to rest a day longer in so sad a condition. However, in the meantime you must know that prayer, being a part of natural worship, all men, even the unregenerate, are obliged to pray by the light and law of nature; otherwise the neglect of it could not be their sin.

Objection. But many pray and receive not; I myself have often done so.

Answer. “Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss” (Jas 4:3). If we were as disposed to receive as God is to give, we should not be long without the answer of our prayers.

(1.) If your persons were accepted through Christ, your prayers would be accepted too (Gen 4:4). But you are in a state of nature, destitute of the Spirit. And so your voice is, to God, not the voice of a child, but of a stranger.

(2.) If your prayers were regulated by the will of God, they must have the desired success. “If we ask any thing according to His will, He heareth us” (1 Jn 5:14).

(3.) If your prayers had more faith and fervency, they would not return empty (see Jas 1:6; 5:16). Well then, object no more against your duty but, in the fear of God, apply yourselves to it, and do not dare go out for any purpose, until you have by prayer recommended yourself and your affairs to God. Go alone, my friends; retire from the world. And do not say you cannot spare time for prayer; better any thing else were neglected than this. Tell the Lord you are now launching forth into the ocean and you do not know what this voyage may bring about. Possibly you may never return to the land of your birth anymore; but however it shall please Him to dispose the event, beseech Him with all earnestness that you may have the pardon of sin sealed to you before you go. Beg Him to separate guilt from your person before you are separated from your habitation and relations, lest the stroke that shall separate your soul from your body should eternally separate both soul and body from God.

Ask the Lord that His presence may go with you wherever you go. Tell Him it is the source of both your safety and comfort. Ask Him not to carry you hence if His presence may not go with you. All the relief you have

against trouble is wrapped up in that promise of His, “I will be with him in trouble”. Tell Him that those will be tasteless comforts, and troubles without support, in which He is not present.

Entreat the Lord with all earnestness, to keep you by His fear from the sins and temptations that are in the world. Tell Him that you are consciously affected with the danger which your own corrupt heart will everywhere expose you to: sins in buying and selling, into which you may easily be drawn by an earthly, covetous heart; sins in drinking, wherein you may be entangled, unless He will keep you; by evil company and sinful desires; sins of uncleanness, by which you may be overcome in the absence of lawful remedies and the presence of alluring objects, unless His fear will quench the temptation and break the snare.

Be earnest also with the Lord to protect you graciously in all dangers. Tell Him that thou cannot be in safety anywhere, but under the shadow of His wings. Tell Him, whenever you are afraid, that you will trust in Him. Beseech Him, when your heart is overwhelmed with fears and troubles, that He will lead you to the Rock that is higher than you are. Beseech Him also to give you counsel in all your difficulties, that you may not lean to your own understanding, but that He will make your way plain before you.

And if it is His good pleasure to bless your honest enterprises with success, tell Him it is your desire that all your mercies may result in you praising Him, and beg the assistance of His grace in it. If you thus set out in the fear of God, you may expect good success and a happy outcome.

A Zimbabwe Clinic

While visiting Zimbabwe in November 2025, I had the opportunity to attend a mobile clinic at Sagonda, 33 km from Mbumba, along with four nursing staff, several auxiliary staff, and the two catechists, Messrs Nkiwane and Khumalo. Two old huts were used and had to be cleaned and swept before use.

Once the initial preparations were made, I was invited to join the staff for a light lunch. Lunch allowed about 20 mothers with their infants to gather. Those present met in one of the huts for an address by the catechists. A short service was held, Psalm 25 was sung, and James 4 was read. Mr Khumalo then addressed the mothers. The mothers who attended were free to ask any relevant questions, and in turn, they were also asked a few simple ones. No one was under any pressure to contribute unless they felt able to. The whole exercise lasted about 45 minutes.

The location was different, and hens and dogs mingled among the people, but there was something encouraging about the gathering. The young mothers all turned up the references in their own Bibles as the Catechist referred to specific texts, and they seemed to remain attentive to the end. We do hope and pray that this seed sown, on this and similar occasions, would bring forth much fruit. “Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days” (Ecc 11:1).

(Rev) J B Jardine

Necessity of a Great Spiritual Change¹

1. The Greatness of the Change

James Buchanan

We have a very solemn statement on this subject from the lips of One whose personal character, as well as His official authority, may well impress our minds with a conviction of its infallible truth. It comes to us from the lips of Jesus – that same Jesus who is the Saviour, the only Saviour of sinners; who pitied them in their lost estate, entered into a covenant with God on their behalf, and engaged in His own Person to pay the price of their redemption. He appeared as a man on earth, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. He is that same Jesus who afterwards ascended into heaven and sat down with His Father in His throne – to whom all power is given in heaven and on earth. As mediatorial King, He is now carrying on the administration of the scheme of grace and will come in the clouds of heaven to judge the quick and the dead. That same Jesus declares, with the solemnity of a most emphatic assertion, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God”.

And can we contemplate the character of Him who speaks, and His official authority, whether as the Saviour or as the Judge of men; can we consider His love for souls and His earnest desire for their salvation – His perfect knowledge of the plan of grace and of every provision which it contains, and His divine commission to declare the will of God and to decide the case of every soul at the last day – without feeling that the very benevolence of His character, and His almighty power as a Saviour, impart a tremendous force to His words? This is so when “He that is true, He that hath the key of David,

¹The first section of the first chapter of Buchanan’s book, *The Office and Work of the Holy Spirit*. Buchanan (1804-70) was latterly Professor of Systematic Theology in the the Free Church’s New College in Edinburgh. He also wrote *Comfort in Affliction*, which is available from Free Presbyterian Publications.

He that openeth and no man shutteth; and shutteth and no man openeth", declares that the door of heaven is barred against every unregenerate man. And, notwithstanding all that He suffered on the cross, He will Himself decide, when He takes His seat on the throne, that "except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God".

In regard to the nature of that change which must be wrought on a sinner before he can see the kingdom of God, I shall only observe at present that it is spiritual – spiritual in respect alike to its subject, its Author, and the means by which it is accomplished. It is wrought on the soul of man by the Word and Spirit of God. The soul is the subject of this change; it is not an external reform merely, but an internal and spiritual renovation, a change of mind and heart, taking effect on the understanding when it is enlightened, on the conscience when it is convinced, on the will when it is subdued, on the affections when they are refined and purified, on the whole man when he is "transformed by the renewing of [his] mind", and "created in Christ Jesus unto good works"; so that he is said to be "a new creature" in whom "old things are passed away . . . all things are become new".

The Spirit of God is the Author of this change; the soul is born again only when it is "born *of the Spirit*", for "that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit". It belongs to Him to enlighten the darkened understanding, by shining into it and giving to it the light of the knowledge of the glory of God; He awakens the slumbering conscience by convincing sinners of sin; He subdues their rebellious will by making them a willing people in the day of His power; He takes away the hard and stony hearts out of their flesh and gives them hearts of flesh; He refines and sanctifies their affections; and He works in them all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power. And this spiritual change is wrought by spiritual means, for the Word of God – or the truth contained in the Word – is the instrument by which the Spirit acts. Sinners are "born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever"; and they are saved "through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth."

This change is often preceded by a process of instruction and conviction, and is always followed by a progressive course of sanctification; but it properly consists in sinners being made willing to comply with the gospel call, by embracing Christ for salvation, and surrendering themselves to Him to be taught, pardoned and governed, according to His revealed will. As soon as it is accomplished in the experience of any sinner, his whole relation to God, his prospects for eternity, his views and feelings, his prevailing dispositions and habits are totally changed. Thus he who formerly sat in darkness is intro-

duced into marvellous light; he who was at a distance from God is brought nigh; he who was in a state of enmity with God is translated into a state of peace; he who was exposed to a sentence of condemnation is forgiven and accepted; he who was lost is saved.

I need scarcely add that a great change is spoken of here. It is a very great change when an infant is born into the world, when it is introduced into a new scene, begins to have a consciousness of its individual existence, receives a thousand new sensations and enters on a life of which it had no experience before. So it is with the soul when a new spiritual life is imparted to it; for when the Lord speaks of its conversion under the figure of being “born again”, He evidently represents it as a very great change – so great as to bear some resemblance to the commencement of conscious existence.

Many other figures are employed which describe one or other of the features of the new birth, but all speak of its greatness. It is called a renovation of the soul, or its being made new; a transformation of the soul, or its being changed into another likeness; a translating of the soul, or its being brought from one position and placed in a very different one; a quickening of the soul, or its receiving a new life; a resurrection of the soul, or its being raised from the dead; a new creation of the soul, or its being created anew by Him who made it; the washing of the soul, or its purification from defilement; the healing of the soul, or its being delivered from disease; the liberation of the soul, or its being set free from bondage; the awakening of the soul, or its being aroused out of sleep.

And it is compared to the change which is wrought on the blind when they receive their sight, on the deaf when their hearing is restored, on the lepers when they are cleansed, on the dead when they are raised to life. Now, of this change – so great, so spiritual, so comprehensive – the Saviour Himself, who alone can save, declares, “Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

By *the kingdom of God* in this place, we are to understand, not the external dispensation of the gospel, or the visible Church of Christ in this world, although the expression is sometimes used in that sense, but *the spiritual and invisible kingdom of God*; and the statement here made is designed to warn us that no unconverted man is a member of Christ’s spiritual Church on earth, or can by any possibility be admitted to the Church triumphant in heaven. There is special emphasis in the words; it is not said that he *may* not, or that he *shall* not, but that he *cannot*; the impossibility of any unregenerate man being admitted to heaven is declared – by Him who came to throw the door of heaven open to receive sinners, and who holds in His own hands the keys of the kingdom!

That we may arrive at a right conclusion on any subject, two things are necessary – a sound principle and a certain fact. In the case before us, the principle which our Lord assumes is that a man must be spiritual if he would enter into the kingdom of God; and the fact is that, by nature, men are not spiritual, but carnal, corrupted and depraved. If these two things are certain, the conclusion is inevitable: that a great change is indispensably necessary, or, in other words, that “except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God”.

The Glory of Man¹

W K Tweedie

Isaiah 60:19. *The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory.*

The aching void which sin has left within the soul of man is to be filled up by the friendship of God; it could be filled up by nothing less. The prophet saw what was needed, both by the Church and the individual believer; and in his own glowing strains, announces what it is that constitutes our glory: namely, our God.

Our God – not the idols on which we are prone to rest, as if they could meet the demands of a being like man’s soul, created for eternal duration, and for boundless blessedness. Our God – and not our own handiwork, proud as we are of such transient or polluted things.

Our God Himself – and not the works even of His hands, glorious though they are, and reflective of His wisdom, His goodness and His power. Not the sea, that type of His immensity; not the sky, the most dazzling of His works; not the earth, stored as it is with His bounty; but Himself, in all His perfections: His love, His compassion, and His mercy to man. Now, the thought could be entertained of an angel flitting from star to star, and trying to find in each of them some new form of glory. Is it likely that he would ever discover anything to eclipse the appointed glory of the believer: His God? There then let the soul rest – there let it be at peace, at perfect peace; it is still a blind, degraded thing, if its God do not yield it joy.

But how is all this verified? In a way which is at once exquisitely simple and unspeakably gladdening. Everything that the believer has (except indwelling sin) is God’s. Has he righteousness? It is the righteousness of God. Has he hope? It is hope in God. Has he peace? It is the peace of God. Has

¹Taken, with editing, from Tweedie’s volume, *Glad Tidings of the Gospel of Peace*.

he joy? It is joy in God. And has he glory? “Thy God thy glory,” is God’s reply. Such is the provision made to satisfy the believer’s soul; and surely he may repose on that and enjoy the peace, while he delights in the smile of his God. And now, my soul, how is it with you? Have you learned to soar, or are you still grovelling in the dust?

Is God your glory and your joy, or is some perishing thing all that you have to satisfy the vast desires of your heart?

“No Other Gods Before Me”¹

Mr D P Rowland

The Larger Catechism states that the duty required of man in the First Commandment is (in part): “the knowing and acknowledging of God to be the only true God, and our God”. The answer to the next question about what sins are forbidden in the First Commandment is (in part): “The sins forbidden in the First Commandment, are, Atheism, in denying or not having a God; Idolatry, in having or worshipping more gods than one, or any with or instead of the true God”.

In answer to the next question, “What are we specially taught by these words [before Me] in the First Commandment?” the answer given (in part) is, “These words [before Me] or before my face, in the First Commandment, teach us that God, who seeth all things, taketh special notice of, and is much displeased with, the sin of having any other God: that so it may be an argument to dissuade from it, and to aggravate it as a most impudent provocation”.

Therefore the clear testimony of the Holy Scriptures, the supreme and divine standard of all truth, together with the united testimony of our godly forefathers, declare that the evil menace of Islam is “idolatry” and an “impudent provocation” of Almighty God. Therefore it should not be tolerated in any form in any land, let alone in a still-professedly Christian nation such as the United Kingdom, where the relationship between the Monarch and its government and institutions has been, by statute, intimately intertwined with the Church for many centuries.

Islam’s subtle yet pervasive presence, increasing influence, and proposed dominance have led to its evil being either grossly underestimated or foolishly ignored across many areas of society. Especially is this true of the actions of the weak, diffident and unprincipled governments we have had in recent years, which have arrogantly attempted to rewrite so much of our history and to

¹Exodus 20:3. This article could be subtitled: “The Holy Scriptures, the Westminster Governments, and the Rise of Islam in the United Kingdom”.

shift constitutional emphasis to conform it to their latest humanistic and anti-Christian agendas.

As always, prayer is our greatest weapon against all the powers of darkness and the forces of evil. Our God is in heaven: He is the Almighty; He has all power and authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore we are to cast ourselves wholly upon His mercy and grace in Christ, wrestling with Him in prayer for the prosperity of His work in our land and throughout the earth, beseeching Him to overthrow all the forces of evil and darkness, however powerful and evil they may be.

As individuals, families, congregations, and as a Church, we do not only need to be aware of these matters but also be resolved to take the necessary action the Holy Scriptures require of us at such a time as this. In the fear of God, we need to protest valiantly against all the unscriptural activities of our day, including the Muslim’s proposed Islamic takeover of our land, which is steadily making headway, especially in our towns and cities. In the same manner that our forefathers fought in their day against the ways of sin and evil, we need, in our day, in the name of our God, to be resolute and earnest, beseeching Him that, for His glory and for the welfare and protection of our Church and other Churches, He would be pleased to overthrow Islam and each of the other heathen religions, and advance the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ in our land and overseas.

We believe, with the Reformers, that the Papacy is the Antichrist. Whilst Islam may not warrant that title, it is nevertheless a foul, devilish, and anti-Christian religion. Like Rome, it will be destroyed by God in His time. As Rome has been a great enemy of both God and His Church, so Islam is causing much harm wherever its followers and influence are found.

It is estimated that over 2 billion people are Muslim, representing just over one quarter of the world’s population. Of the approximately 195 countries in the world, 53 have a Muslim majority. Of these, 23 have Islam explicitly declared to be the state religion in their constitutions. Demographers expect Muslims to continue growing faster than the world average, so their share of the global population is projected to rise further over the coming decades.

This population increase is evident not only overseas but also in our own country. The proportion of our national population identifying as Muslim is on a consistently upward trajectory. From 2001 to 2021, England’s Muslim population rose by nearly 150%. In many parts of the country, Muslims make up a significant proportion of the population of towns and cities.

In the East London borough of Tower Hamlets (where our London congregation meets), Muslims now represent the largest religious grouping,

outnumbering both Christians and those of no religion. A member of Parliament recently wrote of the UK: “Mass migration and the abject failure of integration that has flowed with it has meant that in some places Islamists – unrespecting of British institutions of law and order, violent or openly threatening violence – now have such a foothold that the police do not know how to assert control and maintain order”. He further stated that unless the rise of Islamist extremism was addressed, there would be “Sharia courts, [first] cousin marriage, hate preachers in mosques (enjoying charitable status), rampant anti-Semitism,” and, “Our foreign policy will be increasingly dictated by Islamism rather than by any traditional understanding of British interests. Women’s rights will be further undermined. Our country will be a more threatening and violent place”.

It is widely reported in certain parts of the press that unless our police and government challenge the authority of Islam, they risk ceding control of the country and its streets to Islamic powers. It is said that the fight against Islamism is the fight of our generation, yet in some areas of the country the police have already handed over their authority to powerful local Islamic rulers, clearly indicating a two-tier policing policy. British politicians have themselves acknowledged that they are frightened of the Islamic forces that are so prevalent in many parts of the country, and thus they refuse to ban Islamic bodies that are using our land to engage in militant activity here and overseas.

Our nation once had blasphemy laws. They were not often used but were a deterrent. In England and Wales, the common law offences of blasphemy and blasphemous libel were abolished in 2008. However, it was not until 2021 that these provisions came into force in Scotland, when the Hate Crimes and Public Order (Scotland) Act took effect. Notably, Northern Ireland is currently the only part of the UK where blasphemy and blasphemous libel remain criminal offences, despite the National Secular Society’s active campaigning to change this. In England, it is believed that these laws were originally enacted in a better and more spiritual age to address the possibility of the ungodly vilifying or ridiculing Christianity, scoffing at the Holy Scriptures, denying God’s existence or providence, and generally exposing Christian doctrine to contempt.

There is now a serious risk that the UK government will soon introduce something akin to a new blasphemy law, though not by that name. Most shamefully, this will not be to protect the Christian faith and Christians, as our government is mandated to do by Holy Scripture, but to protect Islam and Muslims! How much more wicked and anti-Christian can our government and land become? May the Lord have mercy upon us!

Early last year, the UK government established a working group, the

“Islamophobia Council”, to tackle anti-Muslim hatred and craft an official government definition of Islamophobia. This step was taken to ease mounting pressure on parliamentarians to accommodate the growing demands of Islam in our land, as witnessed in recent years by many in London and in the northern cities of England. Following early complaints, the body was later expanded to include members of other religions, including Christian representatives. The government wants to move away from the term Islamophobia and instead adopt the phrase “anti-Muslim hostility” as a working, non-statutory definition.

The Government’s proposed working definition described Islamophobia as “a type of racism targeting expressions of Muslimness”. This “Anti-Muslim hostility is engaging in or encouraging criminal acts . . . and harassment and intimidation, whether physical, verbal, written or electronically communicated, which is directed at Muslims or those perceived to be Muslims. . . . It is also the prejudicial stereotyping and racialisation of Muslims as part of a collective group with set characteristics, to stir up hatred against them, irrespective of their actual opinions It is engaging in prohibited discrimination.”

It is to be feared that if any definition was to be agreed upon by our Government that would give Islam and Muslims special protection, it would, sooner or later, be used by them to discriminate unlawfully against Christians and Christianity, as is evident in so many lands where the evil of Islam has become dominant.

May the Lord be pleased to give us all a burden for urgent, wrestling prayer that He would graciously overthrow all the many endeavours being promoted by Satan to destroy what little remains in our land of the truth of God. And may He be pleased, by the wonder-working power of the Holy Spirit, to enlighten the minds and open the hearts of many Muslims in our land and overseas, to see their true spiritual need, the blasphemous evil of Islam, and to come to appreciate the rich, full, and wholly free salvation provided for sinners through the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ, so wondrously set forth in the glorious gospel of the blessed God (see 1 Tim 1:11).

The immediate cause of man’s condemnation is not this sin or that sin, but their refusing Christ by unbelief.

[Christ] has wrath in Him as well as love. Wrath for enemies as well as love for His spouses; and His wrath is as hot and terrible as His love is sweet and comfortable. Yea, His love will, if rejected by you, turn into wrath, and no wrath like that which is the result of abused love. O, therefore, close with Christ this day. *Edward Pearce*

FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SCOTLAND - CONGREGATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS - 2025

CONGREGATION	MINISTER (Interim Moderator)*	SUSTENTATION FUND	HOME MISSION FUND	COLLEGE & LIBRARY FUND	BOOKROOM FUND	GENERAL BUILDING FUND	OUTREACH FUND	JEWISH & FOREIGN MISSION FUND	OVERSEAS FUND	TOTAL
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£

NORTHERN PRESBYTERY

Aberdeen	Rev D W B Somerset	14,472.11	47.50	762.50	47.50	47.50	47.50	1,875.00	47.50	17,347.11
Greich, Dornoch, etc	Rev J A Morrison	16,040.00	507.50	397.50	312.50	135.00	335.00	767.50	417.50	18,912.50
Daviot, Tomatin & Stratherrick	Rev K D MacLeod*	2,800.00	90.00	90.00	75.00	15.00	75.00	250.00	75.00	3,470.00
Dingwall & Beaully	Rev A W MacColl	24,792.50	681.25	1,046.50	342.50	162.50	400.00	1,233.75	90.00	28,749.00
Halkirk, Strathly, Thurso & Wick	Rev W A Weale	23,960.00	820.00	1,272.50	532.50	475.00	462.50	3,530.00	740.00	31,792.50
Inverness	Rev K D MacLeod	40,962.00	5,976.75	6,508.75	1,193.75	1,042.00	651.25	6,427.00	790.00	63,551.50
Kinlochbervie & Scourie	Rev J A Morrison*	2,190.00	20.00	230.00	50.00	30.00	-	460.00	45.00	3,025.00
		125,216.61	8,143.00	10,307.75	2,553.75	1,907.00	1,971.25	14,543.25	2,205.00	166,847.61

SOUTHERN PRESBYTERY

Barnoldswick	Rev D Campbell*	12,495.00	460.00	625.00	370.00	275.00	235.00	435.00	315.00	15,210.00
Chesley	Rev R MacLeod*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Perth	Rev D Campbell*	930.00	50.00	50.00	20.00	25.00	18.75	51.25	13.75	1,158.75
Edinburgh	Rev D Campbell	29,659.00	882.00	3,917.00	468.00	533.00	2,181.00	4,013.00	669.00	42,322.00
Fort William & Oban	Rev R MacLeod*	455.00	45.00	45.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	50.00	20.00	675.00
Glasgow	Rev R MacLeod	37,559.42	1,771.06	2,355.66	1,208.43	1,119.07	1,319.93	3,804.35	1,303.19	50,441.11
London & Broadstairs	Rev R MacLeod*	20,200.00	500.00	7,060.00	30.00	-	-	4,100.00	-	31,890.00
Sania Fe, Texas	Rev D Campbell*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		101,298.42	3,708.06	14,052.66	2,116.43	1,972.07	3,774.88	12,453.60	2,320.94	141,696.86

OUTER ISLES PRESBYTERY

Achnore	Rev J B Jardine*	1,635.00	147.25	146.75	217.25	117.25	102.25	430.00	117.25	2,913.00
Ness	Rev K M Watkins*	8,236.25	95.00	30.00	16.25	12.50	12.50	107.50	15.00	8,525.00
North Harris	Rev J B Jardine	10,643.75	376.25	228.75	88.75	101.25	98.75	223.75	105.00	11,866.25
North Tolsta	Rev J B Jardine*	11,848.00	1,039.50	1,005.00	380.50	478.00	387.00	943.00	464.50	16,525.50
North Uist	Rev J B Jardine*	5,010.00	320.00	310.00	165.00	165.00	155.00	320.00	155.00	6,600.00
South Harris	Rev K M Watkins	8,545.00	659.50	626.00	324.50	334.50	325.00	629.00	304.70	11,748.20
Stornoway	Rev J B Jardine*	13,495.00	1,580.00	2,139.00	544.00	420.00	612.00	1,432.00	514.00	20,736.00
Ulig	Rev K M Watkins*	2,655.00	165.00	85.00	35.00	55.00	30.00	100.00	55.00	3,180.00
		62,068.00	4,382.50	4,570.50	1,771.25	1,683.50	1,702.50	4,185.25	1,730.45	82,093.95

Applecross & Shieldaig	Rev I D MacDonald*	3,490.00	375.00	460.00	125.00	62.50	230.00	1,287.50	62.50	6,092.50
Bracadale, Strath & Duirnish	Rev I D MacDonald*	10,780.00	465.00	275.00	320.00	142.50	142.50	282.50	225.00	12,640.00
Garloch	Rev I D MacDonald*	9,308.93	233.00	190.00	122.00	149.75	210.50	290.00	119.25	10,615.93
Kyle, Plockton & Lochcarron	Rev I D MacDonald*	1,440.00	240.00	240.00	120.00	120.00	120.00	240.00	240.00	2,760.00
Laide	Rev A W MacColl*	10,475.00	290.00	185.00	120.00	125.00	230.00	360.00	150.00	11,935.00
Lochbroom & Assynt	Rev A W MacColl*	3,020.00	380.00	330.00	210.00	225.00	200.00	355.00	220.00	4,940.00
Odessa, Ukraine	Rev D Levytskyi	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Portree	Rev I D MacDonald	24,931.25	352.50	835.00	340.00	575.00	390.00	595.00	540.00	28,558.75
Staffin	Rev J B Jardine*	12,742.75	791.75	794.50	328.75	295.00	366.50	950.50	329.00	16,598.75
		76,187.93	3,127.25	3,309.50	1,685.75	1,694.75	1,889.50	4,360.50	1,885.75	94,140.93

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SUMMARY

Northern Presbytery	125,216.61	8,143.00	10,307.75	2,553.75	1,907.00	1,971.25	14,543.25	2,205.00	166,847.61
Southern Presbytery	101,298.42	3,308.06	14,052.66	2,116.43	1,972.07	3,774.68	12,453.60	2,320.94	141,696.86
Outer Isles Presbytery	62,068.00	4,382.50	4,570.50	1,771.25	1,683.50	1,702.50	4,185.25	1,730.45	82,093.95
Western Presbytery	76,187.93	3,127.25	3,309.50	1,685.75	1,694.75	1,889.50	4,360.50	1,885.75	94,140.93
Asia Pacific Presbytery	~(See note above)	17.14	100.05	45.84	45.84	45.84	217.79	518.35	990.85
TOTAL CONGREGATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS	364,770.96	19,377.99	32,340.46	8,173.02	7,303.16	9,383.77	35,760.39	8,660.49	485,770.20

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Book Review

Light From Calvary, The Seven Last Words of Jesus, by Robert H Ireland, published by the Banner of Truth Trust, paperback, 112 pages, £6.00, obtainable from the Free Presbyterian Bookroom.

This little book is on the seven sayings of the Saviour while on the cross, as the sub-title tells us. Ireland lived from 1827 to 1881 and was Free Church minister successively of Sene, in Aberdeenshire, and Portobello, in Edinburgh. It is said that he exercised “fruitful ministries” in these places.

He takes the sayings one by one and writes simply and profitably. For instance, he applies the words, “It is finished”, to the reader as follows: “If thou art to try and prepare a salvation for thy soul, or make thy soul worthy of the salvation of God, if thou art to work out a righteousness for thyself, it will take time, it will take eternity, and eternity will not do it! But if it is all secured, accomplished, finished, offered, pressed upon thee as God’s gift of love, what hinders? Only this, ‘Ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life’ (Jn 5:40).” Writing on the Father forsaking Christ, he says, “In the explanation of the mystery we have the gospel of the grace of God. In the suffering Jesus we see the sinner’s substitute and surety.” And he tells the believer, “When He was forsaken on the cross, this was part of His suffering for you”. A worthwhile read.

Notes and Comments

No Sunshine in Aberdeen

At the time of writing, Aberdeen has been 16 consecutive days without any sunshine – apparently a record for the area, if not the country. There has been much rain but no rainbows. Many things continue as usual, but the dampness and the lack of sunshine are not without effect. Seeds will not germinate; plants will not grow, or only weakly; and some people become despondent. Outdoor tasks get deferred until dry weather. Wood is becoming saturated, and roofs are starting to leak and doors to jam.

So it is with the soul in the absence of Christ. The sunshine of the soul is the spiritual joy that Christ gives to His people, and in the absence of this, the believer soon struggles. “The joy of the Lord is your strength” (Neh 8:10). Take this away, and the chariot wheels of the soul drive heavily, or not at all.

So it is with society. The sunshine of the nation is Christ blessing the gospel: “God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause His face to shine

upon us; Selah. That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations” (Ps 67:1-2). In the absence of this, everything in the nation starts to decline and rot. It is not just 16 days but 16 decades since Britain had a major gospel blessing and our need has become very great.

It is easy to be confident that the sun will return to Aberdeen – although ultimately this certainty goes back to the Divine promise to Noah after the Flood (Gen 8:21). We should be equally confident that the gospel will return to Britain on account of the worldwide promise to Christ: “It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give Thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be My salvation unto the end of the earth” (Is 49:6). *DWBS*

The Harm of Gambling

Gambling in the United Kingdom and elsewhere represents not only a social and economic problem but also a moral and spiritual one. While gambling is represented as harmless entertainment or a matter of personal freedom, its widespread harm contradicts core Christian teachings about stewardship, love for one’s neighbour, justice, and care for the vulnerable. As gambling has become increasingly normalised in British society, particularly through the National Lottery, online platforms and the sports culture, its damaging effects on individuals, families, and communities have become more visible and concerning. To understand the extent of the problem, we may note statistics produced by the Gambling Commission: in 2024 the value of the gambling market in Great Britain was £16.8 billion, with 48% of the adult population and 30% of children and young people gambling. In 2024 the Exchequer accrued the huge amount of £3.4 billion in taxes from gambling companies.

Central to a Christian view of ethics is the concept of stewardship. All resources – time, money and abilities – are gifts from God to be used wisely and responsibly. Gambling encourages the opposite mindset: the pursuit of quick gain without productive labour. It promotes false hope, encouraging people to trust chance rather than use diligence, patience and honest work. Scripture repeatedly warns against the love of money and the desire for wealth gained without effort. “They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition” (1 Tim 6:9-10).

Gambling disproportionately affects vulnerable people experiencing financial hardship, loneliness, or mental-health struggles. For many, it becomes an escape from anxiety or despair rather than a “leisure activity”. From a Christian viewpoint, an industry that profits from human vulnerability

raises serious moral concerns, especially when those most harmed are least able to absorb the losses. The Saviour consistently showed compassion to those in need and in difficulty, and it is a Christian duty to protect the poor and marginalised.

Addiction of any sort, including gambling, causes significant harm to families due to the secrecy and the resulting broken trust, and financial instability. Spouses and children may suffer emotional distress, insecurity and long-term trauma because of a loved one's gambling behaviour. The Bible stresses the importance of caring for one's household: "If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith" (1 Tim 5:8). Gambling addiction undermines this duty by prioritising personal desire over familial wellbeing.

The close relationship between gambling companies and professional sport, particularly football, has normalised betting among young people. Encouraging gambling through constant advertising and "free bet" promotions risks leading others into harm and is contrary to the Eighth Commandment which "forbiddeth whatsoever doth or may unjustly hinder our own or our neighbour's wealth or outward estate" (*Shorter Catechism* Ans 75).

Spiritually, gambling places the love of money before the love of God, and reliance on "chance" before Him who has said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Mt 6:33). Given the financial and mental harm done to individuals, to families and to society through gambling, one would think that governments would take a deeper interest in regulating the industry, but no doubt the gain from taxes is a factor in their apathy. Of course, if rulers had any conception of the spiritual harm caused by gambling, they would outlaw it altogether, but sadly "the prince that wanteth understanding is also a great oppressor: but he that hateth covetousness shall prolong his days" (Prov 28:16). *FRD*

Church Information

Meetings of Presbytery (DV)

Outer Isles: At Stornoway, on Tuesday, March 3, at 11 am.

Asia Pacific: At Gisborne, on Monday, April 6, at 11:30 am.

Jewish & Foreign Missions Fund

By appointment of Synod, the first of the year's two collections for the Jewish & Foreign Missions Fund, is due to be taken in congregations during March.

W Campbell, General Treasurer

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. (Each as intimated). **Stratherrick:** no services at present. Contact: Mr M A J Schouten; tel: 01463 221776.

Fort William: Monzie Square, Sabbath 11 am, 5 pm, as intimated. Manse: 15 Perth Place, PH33 6UL; tel: 01397 708553. Contact: Mr D A McKinnon. Tel: 01397 702597.

Gairloch (Ross-shire): Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm. Prayer meeting in **Strath**, Thurs 7.30 pm. Manse tel: 01445 712118. Contact: Rev I D MacDonald; tel: 01478 612110.

Glasgow: St Jude's Church, 137 Woodlands Road, G3 6LE; Sabbath 11 am, 6.30 pm; Wed 7.30 pm. Rev R Macleod BA, 4 Laurel Park Close, Glasgow, G13 1RD; tel: 0141 954 3759.

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

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

Harris (North): **Tarbert:** Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm. **Tarbert** and **Stockinish:** Wed 7 pm, alternately. Rev J B Jardine BD, F P Manse, Tarbert, Isle of Harris, HS3 3DF; tel: 01859 502253, e-mail: northharris.fpc@btopenworld.com.

Harris (South): **Leverburgh:** Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm; Wed 7 pm. **Sheilebost:** as intimated. Rev K M Watkins BA, F P Manse, Ferry Road, Leverburgh, Isle of Harris, HS5 3UA; tel: 01859 520271.

Inverness: Chapel Street, IV1 1NA; Sabbath 11 am, 6.30 pm; Wed 7.30 pm. Rev K D Macleod BSc, 11 Auldcastle Road, Inverness, IV2 3PZ; tel: 01463 712872.

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: grifton@internode.on.net.

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

New Zealand

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

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

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

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

Singapore

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

Ukraine

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

Zimbabwe

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

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

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

New Canaan: Church. Rev T Mwedzi.

Zenka: Church.

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