

The Free Presbyterian Magazine

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

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

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Communions

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

December: Third Sabbath: Bulawayo.

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The Prayer of the Destitute (2)

Last month we considered the promise that God “will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer” (Ps 102:17). As we noticed, this verse does not refer to absolute poverty in the things of this world but to spiritual destitution. In ourselves, there is nothing we can trust in for the salvation of our souls; we have absolutely no righteousness of our own; we must depend entirely on Christ and His finished work. And whatever our difficulties, we should depend entirely on what God is able to do for the destitute, who know they cannot deliver themselves from their difficulties.

We are called on to pray, and we should know that “prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God, for things agreeable to His will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgment of His mercies” (*Shorter Catechism*, Ans 98). Yet we dare not trust in our own prayers; we deserve nothing; we are destitute of every kind of merit. But we are to come before God “in the name of Christ” – in other words, “looking unto Jesus”. In Him there is merit. However destitute we are – and the more we realise that we are destitute, the better – God assures all His children that He “shall supply all [their] need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Phil 4:19).

God’s glorious riches provide an inexhaustible supply for destitute sinners; no matter how great the difficulties they experience, their needs *will* be supplied. But God’s children may be discouraged through the poverty of their prayers, which is one aspect of their destitution. The answer is to recognise the fact that they are to come to God through Christ, the Mediator, and the Bible teaches that Christ “is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Heb 7:25). Christ’s work of intercession goes on continually; He is permanently on the throne of grace receiving the petitions of His children, which He presents to the Father with the assurance He expressed at the grave of Lazarus: “I knew that Thou hearest Me always” (Jn 11:42). His children, poor and needy though they are, are heard for the sake of Christ and of His merits. A sense of their poverty and need are not to keep them back from the

throne of grace; rather, that sense should encourage them to come through Christ to the unfailing source of supply that has been provided for those who have begun to follow the Saviour.

We should notice too that there is no limit to the extent to which Christ saves; He does so “to the uttermost”. He will supply all the need of the most destitute of His people. All their sins will be forgiven. They will be made perfectly holy – not at once, for the work of sanctification is ongoing, while they are still in the body. But when life in this world will come to an end for them, all their troubles and difficulties, and their sins, will be left behind, and their souls will be brought into heaven, “not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but . . . [they will be] holy and without blemish” (Eph 5:27). What is more, when this world will be brought to an end, their bodies will be reunited with their souls and they, as complete individuals once more, will serve God perfectly for ever and ever in glory.

Let us now notice some particular examples of those who were spiritually destitute and came before God in their need – and were heard; God did not despise them or their prayers. Let us first notice how Jehoshaphat, King of Judah, reacted when he was attacked by “a great multitude” from various tribes around his kingdom. He “set himself to seek the Lord”; so he stood in the house of the Lord and prayed. He spoke of God ruling over the heathen, and of His irresistible power; he referred to how God had driven out the original tribes in Canaan and had given the land to Israel. He went on: “O our God, wilt Thou not judge them? For we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon Thee.”

Jehoshaphat knew he was destitute. By his own resources and by the resources of those who were with him, he knew he did not have sufficient power to overcome the attackers; his situation was hopeless – apart from God. And it was to God he looked; he had no might, but God had; he did not know what to do, but God did. So, by faith, he looked to God to deliver him and his people from their enemies. God regarded Jehoshaphat’s prayer; He did not despise it. The Lord sent a prophet to assure the King and his people: “Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God’s”. They were given instructions as to how they should go against the enemy the next day. They were assured that the Lord would be with them; He would deliver them; the people of Judah would not even need to fight. And so it turned out: Judah’s enemies destroyed each other, and Jehoshaphat and his people were delivered from danger.

Apart from the supernatural elements in this account: such as the prophecy and the direct instructions from God, everything else remains the same today.

God's providence remains unchanged; He rules over everything. He still has, and always will have, infinite power. Likewise, He knows perfectly what it is best to do in every possible set of circumstances. He regards the prayer of His destitute people today, and He always will. He does not despise it. Let His people then seek to come before Him in all their difficulties, conscious that they are destitute and, like Jehoshaphat, confessing, "We have no might . . . neither know we what to do". But let them seek grace to say also: "Our eyes are upon Thee" – in other words, By faith we are looking to the Lord to deliver us.¹

God's people should also feel destitute when they think about the enemies of the Church, with Satan at their head. They have no power to defeat Satan, and often they do not know what to do – except to pray. They may have other duties; for example, ministers should preach appropriately to refute the false ideas that are being promoted in our time. But the main matter is to go to God through Christ to plead that He would revive His Church.

Let us also think briefly of Hezekiah when the Assyrian King, Sennacherib, attempted to invade Jerusalem. Again it was beyond Hezekiah's power to resist him successfully, but he prayed, "O Lord God of Israel, which dwellest between the cherubims, Thou art the God, even Thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; Thou hast made heaven and earth. I beseech Thee, save Thou us out of his hand" (2 Ki 19:15-19). God, who has all power everywhere, did not despise faithful Hezekiah, but delivered Judah miraculously from the Assyrian armies.

And earlier there was David, when he was being pursued by Saul. He foolishly fled to the Philistine city of Gath, he discovered that he had good reason to be afraid of Achish, the King of the city. But he recorded what followed: "I sought the Lord, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears" (Psalm 34:4). Even although it was unbelief that sent David to Gath, God did not despise his prayer; nor does He reject a destitute believer's prayer today, even if sin has brought him into his present difficulty.

As recorded in Psalm 31, David came before God trustingly, asking to be delivered from his difficult situation and because of his iniquity. But before long he exclaims, "O how great is Thy goodness, which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee; which Thou hast wrought for them that trust in Thee before the sons of men!" (v 19). The truly destitute fear God; they have a holy regard for Him and for His commands and they also trust in Him. David's rejoicing in God's goodness should be an example for God's people when they are delivered from trouble, and when the Church is delivered from trouble and experiences a degree of spiritual prosperity.

¹Scripture quotations in the last three paragraphs are from 2 Chronicles 20:1-29.

A Greater than Jonah (1)¹

A Sermon by *Rev James S Sinclair*

Matthew 12:41. *Behold, a greater than Jonas is here.*

These words were spoken by the Lord Jesus Christ in response to a request made by some scribes and Pharisees for a sign. They came to Him and said, “Master, we would see a sign from Thee”. The Lord Jesus, in His reply, told them their true character as a people and a generation. He said, “An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas.” The scribes and Pharisees were seeking some display of His wonder-working power that would produce a strong impression on their natural senses and imaginations.

They were not satisfied with the many signs He had already given in those gracious miracles that He wrought on behalf of the poor children of men. He healed the sick, cleansed the lepers, opened the eyes of the blind, and raised the dead. These were signs sufficient to convince any truly sincere and honest seeker that Jesus of Nazareth spoke the truth when He claimed to be the Messiah. The unbelieving scribes and Pharisees, however, were not satisfied and so they sought some new sign from Him, and He clearly told them He would not give one. They would receive a sign, but not such a sign as they desired, namely, “the sign of the prophet Jonas”. Jonah was sent into the fish’s belly, in a mysterious manner, for three days and three nights; the Son of Man was to be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. He was to give the sign of His death and resurrection – a sign that few would understand. It would prove a stumbling-block to the unbelieving Jews and foolishness to the worldly-wise Greeks.

Only to those who were called by the power of the Spirit of God would the sign be the wisdom and power of God unto salvation. When He mentioned the experience of Jonah, He brought forward the men of Nineveh, to whom Jonah was sent to preach, as witnesses who would rise in the judgement with Christ’s generation and condemn it. These Ninevites were heathen Gentiles; they were a wicked and idolatrous people; they knew little or nothing about the one living and true God. But no sooner did Jonah appear among them with a solemn message of warning about the destruction of Nineveh than they repented. “They repented at the preaching of Jonas” – the prophet who was sent from the land of Israel.

But Christ went on to tell them that a much greater prophet than Jonas had

¹Reprinted with editing from *The Free Presbyterian Magazine* for May 1917. The sermon was preached in Oban and appears in the newly-published *No Ordinary Minister: Sermons of James S Sinclair*.

appeared in the land, and that the present generation had refused to repent at His preaching. “Behold,” He says, “A greater than Jonas is here.” Although a greater than Jonah had appeared among them, and had already given such remarkable proofs of being the Messiah, they had obstinately despised His message. These words were spoken to the scribes and Pharisees and to the people of that generation, with a view to bringing home to them their solemn responsibilities and the ill use they were making of the remarkable privileges they enjoyed. They enjoyed the greatest possible privilege in having the Son of God, the true Messiah, in their midst, speaking to them about the things of God and eternity; yet they repented not.

In dependence on the Spirit of truth, let us observe: (1.) The superiority of the Lord Jesus Christ to Jonah. (2.) The abiding significance of the assertion that “a greater than Jonas is here”. (3.) The call to “behold”, or to consider, the truth declared about the Lord Jesus.

1. The superiority of the Lord Jesus Christ to Jonah. *First*, the Lord Jesus was greater than Jonah as to *His person*. He was *perfect man*. He assumed into union with Himself a real humanity, yet that humanity was without sin. He was holy, harmless and undefiled from the womb. In Him was no sin. In Him, as man, there appeared all the graces of the Spirit in perfect degree and perfect proportion. He came up to the perfect standard of God’s law. He never came short in the least degree of that standard in His thoughts, affections, words and actions. He left a perfect pattern to His people to follow.

But Jonah was an *imperfect man*. Although a servant of God – highly honoured to be a prophet – he was manifestly imperfect and showed this in the actions of his life. When the Lord called upon him to go to Nineveh and to deliver His message, he disobeyed the call of the Most High. He fled from the presence of the Lord and took ship at Joppa, with a view to go to Tarshish. After this, and notwithstanding the discipline he passed through, Jonah showed himself to be imperfect. The Lord Jesus Christ then was greater than Jonas in His manhood.

Further, the Lord Jesus was incomparably greater than Jonah in *His Godhead*. He was the Son of man, but He was also the Son of God. He was the Second Person in the glorious Trinity, co-equal with the Father and the Holy Ghost in the undivided Godhead. He possessed in Himself all the immeasurable perfections of Deity – “the brightness of [the Father’s] glory, and the express image of His Person, and upholding all things by the word of His power”. He was the personal Word who was with God and was God from all eternity, and by Him, as the personal Word, all things were made that were made. He continued also to uphold all things that He had made. He upheld the universe at the very moment He appeared as an infant of days in

Bethlehem's manger. The Lord Jesus then was greater, incomparably greater, than Jonah in His person. He was a marvellous combination of the infinite perfections of the Godhead joined to all the finite perfections of humanity. "Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."

Second. The Lord Jesus was greater than Jonah in *His office*. Jonah was one of the prophets whom the Lord called, under the old dispensation, to make known His mind and message unto men, but His prophetic office was discharged on a lower platform, so to speak, than that on which Christ discharged His. He was the personal Word who was with the Father from everlasting, and He was sent forth from the immediate presence of the Father to make known the will of God for salvation. He was the Divine Prophet of whom Moses spoke to the children of Israel: "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in His mouth; and He shall speak unto them all that I shall command Him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto My words which He shall speak in My name, I will require it of him."

He came from the presence of the Father in heaven to make known the mind of God concerning salvation. We find Him saying, "I have given unto them the words which thou gavest Me". He received those words immediately from the Father, and He gave those words unto poor sinners on earth with all the authority that the Divine Prophet possessed. He was therefore greater as a prophet than it was possible for Jonah or any of the ancient prophets to be. And the Lord Jesus, as the Divine Prophet of the Church, had power to open the understandings of men to receive the truth that He proclaimed. The ancient prophets could only deliver their message; they had no power to give capacity to the hearers to receive the message that was entrusted to them. But the Lord Jesus opened the understandings of His disciples that they might understand the Scriptures. He was "the light of the world"; He was able to impart divine light – saving light – to the souls of men. Jonah could not do this.

Further, Jonah and the ancient prophets only held the office for a time. When they died, their work as prophets came to an end. They passed into eternity; they entered heaven; and death ended the period when they prophesied. But this is not so with Christ. He still exercises His prophetic office at the right hand of the Majesty on high, and you, as a poor sinner, can go to Him at the throne of grace with your darkness, difficulties and perplexities. He is able, in His omniscience, to understand your case and, by the power of the Almighty Spirit of God, to take away your darkness, difficulties and perplex-

ities. “The fathers, where are they? And the prophets, do they live for ever?” The merely human prophets had their day, and you cannot now go to Isaiah or Ezekiel or Jonah personally to be instructed in the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. But you may go now, on earth, and pour out your case before this Divine Prophet; He is able to help you to the uttermost. He can guide your footsteps into the ways of truth and peace, and cause you to go on your way rejoicing. The Lord Jesus then is greater as a prophet than Jonah.

Third, the Lord Jesus is greater than Jonas *in His outstanding experiences* designed for usefulness. Jonah went through remarkable experiences. He was disobedient to the Most High. He refused at first to go to Nineveh and took ship to Tarshish, but the Lord followed him. He sent a storm, and the ship in which Jonah was sailing was like to be overwhelmed in the raging waters. The mariners at last cast lots in order to see who was the cause of this great storm, and the lot fell upon Jonah, and Jonah himself suggested – indeed he declared his willingness – to be thrown into the raging billows, in order to have calm restored. This was done. But the Lord prepared a great fish, and this fish opened its mouth and swallowed him.

Jonah was three days and three nights there. He passed through great sufferings of mind and body, owing to his sin of disobedience. He tells us in his book that he cried out of the belly of hell, and the Lord heard his voice. He was in the belly of hell in his conscience, aware that he was under God’s displeasure because of his disobedience. He looked towards God’s holy temple when he felt cast out of God’s sight. The Lord heard him, and at the end of the appointed period, caused the fish to vomit out Jonah on the dry land. Now these were very remarkable experiences through which Jonah passed, and the actual truth of them is here confirmed by the Son of God, against all the objections of “the higher critics”.

These experiences of the prophet, as recorded in the Scriptures, have been useful to the sons of men – to the people of God – in subsequent generations. Others pass through these experiences, in a certain sense – even those who are brought under a deep sense of their sinfulness and guilt. Such people are brought down into the depths of soul distress under a sense of their sins against the Most High, but the Lord hears their cries in the depths, and He raises them up again. He causes them, like Jonah, to sing of deliverance: “Salvation is of the Lord”.

We find further that the Lord Jesus Himself here compares His own sufferings, death and resurrection to the experience through which Jonah passed in the fish’s belly. This experience was made useful as a sign to the Ninevites, as a sign to the people of Israel, and has certainly been beneficial to exercised souls – to the people of God – in subsequent ages, as a source

of direction and encouragement, yet we are not saved by Jonah's sufferings. We are saved exclusively by the sufferings, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Father laid on Him the iniquity of others, the iniquity of a company of our race which no man can number. He was made sin in stead of them. He was made to experience in His holy soul the just wrath of an offended God against guilty sinners, and the waves of God's displeasure passed over Him. He went down into the uttermost depths of God's holy displeasure, but He was not left there. He went down also into the grave – His body was laid in Joseph's tomb – but the Lord did not leave Him there. He raised Him from the dead on the third day; and the death and resurrection of Christ are the sources of peace and life unto the children of men.

The apostles preached Jesus Christ and Him crucified – Jesus Christ, as a suffering Redeemer, enduring God's wrath instead of the guilty. They preached also Jesus Christ as risen again from the dead on the third day by the power of God. His resurrection from the dead is the pledge of the resurrection of all His people from the grave of spiritual death. The Lord Jesus is greater than Jonah in those outstanding experiences through which He passed for the benefit of poor sinners on earth. It is of the very greatest importance that we should know this for ourselves. It is of the greatest importance that we should know Christ as the wisdom and the power of God unto salvation. This is what He is to everyone that believes.

Fourth, He is greater than Jonah in the message He came to proclaim. Jonah was sent with a very solemn and weighty message to the Ninevites. He was told by the Most High to say that in 40 days Nineveh would be overthrown. It was a message of solemn warning about impending judgement on the people and the city of Nineveh, if they continued in their wickedness.

The Lord Jesus Christ, as the great Prophet of the Church, also proclaimed a message of solemn warning, but His message was greater. His message was more tremendous, more solemn and awful, than that which Jonah was commissioned to proclaim. Jonah's commission concerned principally a temporal judgement that would fall on the Ninevites because of their sins, but the Lord Jesus Christ was commissioned to speak about a judgement that is eternal. What does He say? "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, but he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him". He declared to the people of that generation, particularly to certain cities, that the woes of the Most High were upon them. He said to Capernaum, which had been so highly exalted with privileges, that it would be cast down to hell. He told the people of His generation that, if they continued in their sins – if they continued to despise the message of the gospel

– they would fall into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.

Further, Christ's message presents a greater exhibition of the wondrous mercy and love of God than the message of Jonas, or any of the ancient prophets. "The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." The Father sent Him forth to proclaim more fully than had hitherto been done, by any of the ancient prophets, the love which He cherished from all eternity towards poor, perishing sinners of Adam's race. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son", and the Apostle John further expresses it in these words, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins". The Lord Jesus Christ spoke much concerning the matchless, sovereign love of God towards perishing sinners. He spoke much concerning the ransom which He Himself was to give on behalf of many.

Do not think for a moment that Jonah and the ancient prophets knew nothing about the mercy or the love of God in connection with the Messiah, the Redeemer of Israel. If you study the Old Testament carefully, you will see that they often thought about His loving-kindness in His temple (Ps 48:9). The Scriptures of the Old Testament contain a distinct revelation of the mercy and love of God to sinners of the human race, and of the Messiah, or Christ, who was to come in the fullness of the times to accomplish the redemption of a countless multitude. At the same time, we must see most plainly that the Lord Jesus Christ did unfold more richly and fully in His public ministry the wondrous love of God unto perishing sinners, than Jonah or any of the ancient prophets had done. Was His message not much greater on that account, and does His message not imply far greater responsibility? We shall have to give all the greater account, all the more solemn account, of our responsibility in view of the fullness of the message of mercy as proclaimed by Christ, and as afterwards made known also by His apostles. The "greater than Jonas is here".

Fifth. The Lord Jesus was greater than Jonah in *the fruits of His ministry*. The preaching of Jonah certainly did produce a general or outward repentance among the Ninevites. We are not very clear as to whether any of those Ninevites were really saved with an everlasting salvation. But, although it is true that many listened to the voice of Christ when He was on earth and did not profit by His ministry, still some did in a saving measure. Such were the Apostles themselves, and they expressed their thoughts in such words as these: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." Zacchaeus the publican, and Matthew, Mary Magdalene, Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea and others were brought out of darkness into God's marvellous

light. A considerable number were plucked as brands from the fire through the preaching of the great Prophet of the Church, and if we consider the thousands who were afterwards gathered in by Him through the instrumentality of His Apostles and other servants, we must say that the fruits of His abiding ministry are immeasurably greater than those of the ministry of Jonas. "A greater than Jonas is here."

David Brainerd¹

13. A Remarkable Communion Season

On a Sabbath in early March 1746, Brainerd believed that there was a powerful divine influence in the congregation: Several "that I have reason to think are truly pious were so deeply affected with a sense of their own barrenness and their unworthy treatment of the blessed Redeemer that they looked on Him as pierced by themselves and mourned; yea, some of them were in bitterness as for a firstborn. Some poor awakened sinners also appeared to be in anguish of soul to obtain an interest in Christ."

He went on to speak of a woman, to whom he had previously referred. He believed he had never seen anyone who was so "filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory". In Brainerd's house, she burst out, he says, "in prayer and praises to God before us all, with many tears" (p 331). She cried out, sometimes in English and sometimes in her own language: "O blessed Lord, do come, do come. Do take me away, do let me die and go to Jesus. I am afraid if I live, I shall sin again. . . . O how can I live in this world? Do take my soul away from this sinful place. O let me never sin any more" (pp 331-2).

Brainerd asked her if Christ was now sweet to her soul? She replied in a very humble way: "I have many times heard you speak of the goodness and the sweetness of Christ, that He was better than all the world. But I knew nothing what you meant. I never believed you. I never believed you. But now I know it is true." Brainerd now asked, "Do you see enough in Christ for the greatest of sinners?" Her reply was: "Enough, enough, for all the sinners in the world, if they would but come".

Brainerd further comments: "This sweet and surprising ecstasy appeared to spring from a true spiritual discovery of the glory, ravishing beauty and excellency of Christ; and not from any gross imaginary notions of His human nature, such as that of seeing Him in such a place or posture, as hanging on the cross, as bleeding, dying, as gently smiling, and the like; which delusions

¹A further part of a longer version of a paper given at the 2024 Theological Conference. The previous article, last month, was entitled, "Nothing Less Than Divine Power".

some have been carried away with". It was, Brainerd fully believed, "a view of [Christ's] personal excellency and transcendent loveliness which drew forth those vehement desires of enjoying Him she now manifested, and made her long to be absent from the body that she might be present with the Lord" (p 333). The following Sabbath, Brainerd baptized her. He commented in his *Journal* that, on this day, she still "appeared to be in a devout, humble and excellent frame of mind".

Several of those who had gone with Brainerd to the Forks of Delaware the previous month returned a few days later. The missionary was away at that point, but the people decided to gather to give thanks to God for bringing their friends back safely and for His mercy to one of them who had been dangerously ill and had now recovered.

Brainerd was not carried away with every indication that the Word might be coming with saving power to those who listened to him. Not at all! After an evening of catechising, he noted that there had been "strict attention" to what was said and "many tears and heart-affecting sobs". These would have been considered "very remarkable, he went on, were it not that God has made these things common with us, and even with strangers, soon after their coming among us". But he stated: "I am far from thinking that every appearance, and particular instance of [emotion], that has been among us has been truly genuine and purely from a divine influence". He was conscious "of the contrary, and [I] doubt not but that there has been some corrupt mixture, some chaff as well as wheat, especially since religious concern became so common and prevalent here".

The following Sabbath, about 15 strangers were in the congregation, some of whom had never before attended a religious service. Brainerd thought it right to speak in a way that suited the circumstances and capacities of the visitors. So he took God's words in Hosea 13:9 as his text: "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in Me is thine help". At the first service, Brainerd spoke "in the plainest manner I could" on "man's apostasy and ruined state, after having spoken some things respecting the being and perfections of God, and His creation of man in a state of uprightness and happiness". In the afternoon, he tried to explain "the glorious provision God has made for the redemption of apostate creatures, by giving His own dear Son to suffer for them and satisfy divine justice on their behalf". There was no particular evidence of concern during the service, but most of the strangers paid a reasonable degree of attention.

Near sunset, Brainerd felt an unusual degree of concern, especially for the strangers, because "God had much withheld His presence and the powerful influence of His Spirit from the assembly" that day. God, he feared, had

“denied them that matter of conviction which I hoped they might have had” (p 336). Brainerd went out to visit some homes and spoke to various people individually, but what he said did not seem to have much effect. This went on till he came to a house where there were several strangers, “and the solemn truths I discoursed of appeared to take effect, first upon some children,” then on some adults “who had been somewhat awakened previously” and finally on several of the heathen strangers (p 336-7). He continued to speak with some earnestness till almost everyone in the house was in tears.

Then more people “gathered from all the houses round about and so thronged the place that we were obliged to remove to the house where we usually meet for public worship”. Brainerd spoke for some time from Luke 19:10: “For the Son of man is come to seek . . .”. He tried to explain the mercy, compassion and concern of Christ for lost, hopeless sinners. His conclusion then was: “I doubt not but that a divine influence accompanied what was spoken to the hearts of many”. Five or six of the strangers, both men and women, appeared to have been awakened. He noted further that “one very rugged young man, who seemed as if nothing would move him, was now brought to tremble like the jailer [in Philippi] and weep for a long time”. He commented, “The pagans that were awakened seemed at once to put off their savage roughness and pagan manners and became sociable, orderly and humane” in their behaviour.

When these strangers first came to Crossweeksung, Brainerd asked those who understood the truth to “take pains” to instruct them in Christianity. When some of the local people attempted to do so, the strangers would leave the house they were in and go elsewhere. Then Brainerd’s people agreed to spread themselves throughout the settlement, so that it would be more difficult for the visitors to escape hearing what might be profitable for them. Brainerd describes the situation afterwards: “They were so far touched with a sense of their perishing state as made them tamely yield to the closest addresses that were made [to] them, respecting their sin and misery, their need of an acquaintance with, and interest in, the great Redeemer” (p 337).

About this time Brainerd reckoned that there were now around 130 people in the settlement. A group of them walked more than 15 miles to clear an area of land so that they could plant crops there. The land at the existing settlement was not fit for agriculture, and they wished to live close together where it would be possible for them to attend public worship easily and for their children to attend school. Before they left, Brainerd called them together to set before them the duty of working diligently. Then he prayed with them, commending them and their work to the Lord.

That evening, Brainerd expounded Acts 3 to those who were left behind.

Afterwards he asked the strangers if they felt that their hearts were awakened, as he had taught them. One of the women replied, "Yes, I feel it now" (p 338). Before coming to Crossweeksung, she had heard about Brainerd's teachings, but she had said, "My heart is not wicked, and I have never done anything that was bad in my life". Brainerd commented that, in their heathen state, none of them have any "consciousness of sin and guilt, unless they can charge themselves with some gross acts of sin contrary to the commands of the second table" of the law.

On a Saturday, Brainerd was catechising as usual. His subject was "the benefits which believers receive from Christ at death". He felt that those he believed were God's people showed "such eagerness to be made partakers of the benefits then mentioned, that they seem to be not only looking for, but hastening to, the coming of the day of God" (p 339). He felt too that most of the others were affected by what he said on the blessedness of the godly death, so that they were ready to cry, "Let me die the death of the righteous".

After a meeting for catechising on the next Saturday evening, some of those whom Brainerd believed to be genuine converts came to his house looking for more teaching. He told them that "God's work in the hearts of all His children was, for substance, the same" and he showed them their obligation to have a special love for one another. This seemed to awaken a tender affection toward each other." Brainerd calls this love to one another "that particular token of their being the disciples of Christ" (see Jn 13:35) and goes on to comment that it "had scarce ever appeared more evident than at this time" (p 340).

The next day, Brainerd preached on Matthew 7:21-23: "Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven . . .". Many of "the religious people" examined their spiritual state closely after hearing the sermon; some were afraid that they had deceived themselves because they felt that they had done so little of the will of God. One man, particularly after the service was over, came under great concern for his soul; what gave him the greatest concern "was not so much any particular sin, as that he had never done the will of God at all but had sinned continually, and so had no claim to the kingdom of heaven" (p 341).

In late April, Brainerd believed that some people in the congregation should be admitted to the Lord's Supper. He took advice from some ministers with whom he corresponded and appointed the next Sabbath for this sacrament to be observed, God willing. At a preparatory service, Brainerd prayed for God's blessing on their renewing their covenant, with Him and with one another, undertaking to live in His fear and in Christian fellowship. The missionary also pled that God's presence would be with them at the Lord's

table. He sought grace for them to humble themselves before God because the influence of the Holy Spirit on them seemed to be less than in the past. A further matter for prayer was opposition, presumably from white people, to the work of clearing land for growing crops and preparing for a new settlement where it would be easy for them all to gather for public worship. The land belonged to the Indians, although claims to the contrary were made. Brainerd prayed that God “would blast and defeat” all that opposition (p 342).

On the communion Sabbath, Brainerd preached from Titus 2:14: “Who gave Himself for us . . .”. The minister noted that “the Word of God at this time was attended with some appearance of divine power upon the assembly”. He administered the sacrament to 23 Indians, but there were five or six more who would have joined them if they had not been away, at the Forks of Delaware. The minister was conscious of great solemnity at that time. It seemed that the symbols of bread and wine were received “with the same full and firm belief and affectionate engagement of soul as if Christ had been really crucified before them. And the words of institution, when repeated and enlarged upon in the season of the administration, seemed to meet with the same reception, to be entertained with the same full and firm belief and affectionate engagement of soul as if the Lord Jesus Christ Himself had been present and had personally spoken to them” (p 345).

Later, Brainerd preached again on the same text, emphasising the words: “that He might redeem [His people] from all iniquity”. Brainerd believed that “in the preparatory services I found uncommon freedom in opening to their understandings and capacity the covenant of grace, and in showing them the nature of this ordinance as a seal of that covenant”– though they needed to have the idea of a *seal* explained to them (p 246). He exclaims, “What a sweet and blessed season was this! God Himself, I am persuaded, was in the midst of His people, attending His own ordinances.”

The next day, Brainerd concluded the communion season with a sermon on John 14:15: “If ye love me, keep my commandments”. Brainerd followed the sermon by following through with his proposal that his people renew their covenant before God. They were to undertake to “watch over themselves and one another, lest they should dishonour the name of Christ by falling into sinful and unbecoming practices. And especially that they would watch against the sin of drunkenness . . . and the temptations leading thereto . . . They cheerfully . . . and explicitly joined in that covenant”. Brainerd went on, “in the most solemn manner that I was capable of, to call God to witness their sacred engagement; and reminded them of the greatness of the guilt they would contract to themselves in the violation of it” (p 347).

This communion season must have been a great encouragement to the

missionary when he saw a remarkable series of answers to his earnest prayers. What was to be seen on these days was the fruit of diligent labours in the face of considerable weakness and illness – studying, preaching and visiting even when one might have expected him to be confined to bed.

Free Will (3)¹

Rev I D MacDonald

3. Free will in the state of nature. Here we are guided by those Scriptures which express the bondage of fallen man’s will. Man is described as being a servant of sin: “Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin” (Jn 8:34), and the bondage of his will in relation to spiritual good never appears to be so strong as when sinners under the gospel are told, “And ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life” (Jn 5:40).

How did this woeful change come about, so that the once-free will of man has become such a prisoner to sin and Satan? The answer is that the devil sailed into the Garden of Eden in the ship of temptation and launched a ferocious attack upon the ship of innocent man. In this conflict, Captain Holiness was slain outright and a new captain allied to the devil placed on board the ship, namely Captain Sin. First Mate Understanding had his eyes put out so that he became quite blind, and Helmsman Free Will became a prisoner bound with iron chains. He fell so sick that in his fevered state of mind he gave his full loyalty to the new Captain and was content to follow the directions given by the now-blinded First Mate Understanding.

The ship, now under the iron grip of Captain Sin, immediately altered its course to follow in the path of “the pleasures of sin for a season”, while all on board are ignorant of the fact that their true destination is the “lake which burneth with fire and brimstone”. It may be that the temptation of Satan to induce our first parents to sin against God, in eating the forbidden fruit, first took a grip upon their understandings, leading to their affections becoming enticed, and then the purpose to sin being conceived in the will, leading to the actual transgression in the eating of the forbidden fruit.

The *Confession* puts this in stark terms: “Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation: so as, a natural man, being altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin, is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare

¹Another section of a paper presented to the 2024 Theological Conference. Last month’s article provided dealt with the third main point: man’s “free will in the state of innocence”.

himself thereunto". As a result of man's fall into sin, the two aspects of freedom which characterised man in innocence – that is freedom to choose spiritual good, and freedom of contrary choice – are denied to fallen man's will.

Whatever was true of the role of the will in the committing of the first transgression, the effects of the Fall upon the will are all too clear from Scripture and human experience ever after. As mentioned before, there is no doubt that man's will retains its spontaneity or natural liberty. Men are still free to choose and do what is in accordance with the underlying moral disposition of their souls, so, as noted before, they are free to do whatever pleases them. But the underlying moral disposition now being a principle of sin, all that the fallen will is free to choose is sin. Sin is what pleases him and so he chooses to sin freely without any external compulsion from without, or any inner necessity from his faculties as such. This means that, theologically considered, compared to the freedom he knew in an estate of innocence to choose spiritual good, his will is in utter bondage. Such is this bondage that the will of man is inclined only to evil, continually, and is utterly indisposed and disabled to all spiritual good. Now under the power of Captain Sin, Helmsman Free Will can only choose to steer in the direction of sin.

It is also true that the will of fallen man no longer retains the power of contrary choice in relation to the opposites of sin and holiness. Although innocent man had freedom of contrary choice to choose evil, fallen man has no such power to choose good. Free will has no freedom to choose spiritual good. It cannot say, "The good that I would". Nor can fallen man by an act of his own free will change this sinful bias through the exercise of the freedom of self-determining power.

There are several grave consequences arising from this loss of spiritual freedom in man's will. One is that fallen man is now utterly incapable of producing anything good or pleasing to God, with regard to the moral law. He cannot produce good works that are in any sense pleasing to God, even if the works themselves are good. This is expressed elsewhere in the *Confession* when it states that works done by unregenerate men "are therefore sinful, and cannot please God, or make a man meet to receive grace from God".

Another consequence is that he is unable to convert himself. That is to say he cannot turn to God by faith and repentance, by the power of his own will. He has no power of will to believe, and he has no power of will to repent in turning from his sin to God. The awful bondage of the will never appears so great as in the sinner under legal convictions and gospel light. Though conscience would cry out of present guilt and hell fire to come, the will still chooses sin and refuses to come to Christ on His terms. Even if the sinner

were placed in hell and given another offer of Christ, his will would refuse it and cleave to sin. Let flashes of law-wrath dart from Mount Sinai into the conscience, let gospel light from Mount Zion come into the understanding by way of head knowledge, and let there be all the advantages of Christian education, the will remains in bondage and will never relent and choose spiritual good. Indeed, were it possible (of course, it is not) for there to be regeneration in the understanding so that its blindness was healed, the will would resist that light if it was not itself renewed.

Therefore there is total depravity and total inability directly in the will, not merely indirectly through the blindness of the understanding. Heaven-taught souls come to learn this truth experimentally. Though they would come to see their need of Christ and of saving faith in Him, to give them an interest in His salvation, they could – as the godly in the past expressed it – no sooner believe on Him by their own power than they could put their hand into the sky and bring down the sun.

Not only can man not convert himself by faith and repentance, he cannot even prepare himself thereunto. It would be as possible for a dead body to prepare itself for its own resurrection, or for an infant to produce its own conception and birth, as for the unregenerate man to prepare himself for conversion. The will of man is in such complete bondage that by his own power he will never think one good thought, he will never as much as desire to be saved on Christ's terms; so he can never begin the good work himself. Scripture makes this abundantly clear when it teaches that no man can come to Christ other than through the free grace of God operating with irresistible power: "No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day" (Jn 6:44). This does not mean that the Holy Spirit has no preparatory work to do in His ordinary method of bringing a sinner to believe and repent, but it does mean that the sinner has neither strength nor merit to prepare the way of his own salvation. This shows the pressing need the sinner has of the renewal of his will as well as the enlightening of his understanding.

It is in this sphere that the errors of Arminianism² set themselves against the truth of man's total depravity and total inability. To the Arminian, the natural man is not completely averse to spiritual good, nor utterly dead, but

²This section, largely derived from Owen's *Display of Arminianism*, highlights the foundational and original errors of Arminianism in relation to the doctrine of free will. There has been a range of Arminian teaching over the years, with some allowing more, some less, of divine grace in the conversion of a sinner, but all agreeing that in the final assessment it is man's own free will that accounts for his salvation rather than the free grace of God.

is able to convert himself through the power of his own will. Erasmus went before them with his claims that man is able, even without grace, to apply himself to those things that lead to eternal salvation. Indeed, the Arminian accepts that the will has all the power it had before the fall, including the unscriptural freedoms of indifference and contingency. As a result, the natural man, according to them, is able to believe on Christ to the saving of his soul without the Holy Spirit. Not only so, but he has power to resist the work of the Holy Spirit so as to frustrate it altogether. It seems, after all, that the Ethiopian can change his skin and the leopard his spots. Therefore, if a sinner is regenerated, it is not God but man's own free-will that has made him to differ, contrary to that Scripture: "For who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" (1 Cor 4:7).

According to them, free will in fallen man retains the freedom of contrary choice to choose between the two opposing alternatives of good and evil. In effect this gives the fallen will a self-determining power, whereby the will is free to alter its own inclination and bias, irrespective of the existing moral disposition of his soul. This belief lies behind the evangelistic methods of Arminian preachers such as Charles Finney, D L Moody and Billy Graham, in the past, and many in the present day who press men to "decide" for Christ. The obvious danger is that this method produces man-made converts who possess no more than the historical faith of intellectual assent, thus filling the communion rolls of the churches with multitudes of self-deceived hypocrites.

In the discussion of what the fallen will cannot do, it is important to remember what it can do. Girardeau expands on this side of the question. The will of man may choose between one sin and another, it retains a freedom in civil, natural and political matters, and it has power in the realm of morality, so that a natural man may refrain from some outward sins (though all these powers suppose common, or restraining, grace). Going further still, in relation to the gospel, the will of the natural man has power to direct his mind to consider the evidences of the truth of Scripture, to read the Bible just as he can any other book, to attend the public means of grace just as he can choose to go to any other place, and he can pray to God for salvation. Owen adds to such outward attendance on the means of grace "a diligent intention of mind" in attending upon them. That the will of fallen man has power to do these things is apparent from the reality of what many unconverted sinners do, and especially those who are under the strivings of the Spirit, prior to regeneration.

Owen goes on to show that omission of those things which the natural man can do without saving grace are the principal occasion and cause of the

eternal ruin of the souls of the generality of men under the gospel. All pleas of inability in these things have no weight with God, he says, for it is merely cursed sloth, with love of the world and sin, which divert men from these duties. He notes that complaints of their neglect, in these things, will make up a great part of the last dreadful cry of the lost.

It does not follow that man's inability of will to spiritual good is a measure of his responsibility, nor vice versa. William Cunningham shows that God has sufficient reasons for addressing commands to men who are unable to comply with them. On the one hand, His commands reveal God's holiness, man's duty to obey His Creator, and hence his guilt for his transgression of the law. On the other hand, gospel commands to believe and repent reveal, to the soul who attempts to perform them, his utter inability and unwillingness to come to Christ and to leave his sin, thus emptying the sinner of all his own righteousness. Cunningham is in agreement with Luther, who says that God's commands to those who have no ability to perform them are useful, so that their impotence may be made known to them, and the knowledge of sin given to them.

Sin, Righteousness and Judgement¹

David Brown

John 16:8-11. *And when [the Holy Spirit] is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgement: of sin, because they believe not on Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father, and ye see Me no more; of judgement, because the prince of this world is judged.*

The word rendered "reprove" means more than that. Reproof is indeed implied, and doubtless the work begins with it. But "convict", or, as in the margin, "convince", is the word intended. And as the one word expresses the work of the Spirit on the unbelieving portion of mankind, and the other on the believing, it is better not to restrict the term to either.

First, of sin, because they believe not on Me. By this is not meant that He shall deal with men about the sin of unbelief only; nor yet about that sin as, in comparison with all other sins, the greatest. There is no comparison here between the sin of unbelief and other breaches of the moral law, in point of criminality. The key to this important statement will be found in such sayings of the Lord Himself as the following: "He that believeth on Him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the Only begotten Son of God. . . . He that believeth

¹An edited extract from the *Jamieson, Fausset and Brown Commentary*.

on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him. . . . He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life” (Jn 3:18,36; 5:24).

What the Spirit then does, in the discharge of this first part of His work, is to bear in upon men’s consciences the conviction that the one divinely provided way of deliverance from the guilt of all sin is believing on the Son of God; that as soon as they thus believe, there is no condemnation to them; but that unless and until they do so, the guilt of all their sins lies upon them, with the guilt of this crowning and all-condemning sin superadded. Thus does the Spirit, in fastening this truth upon the conscience – instead of extinguishing it – only consummates and intensifies the sense of all other sins; causing the convicted sinner to perceive that his complete absolution from guilt or his remediless condemnation under the weight of all his sins, hangs upon his believing on the Son of God or his deliberate rejection of Him.

But what, it may be asked, is the sinner to believe regarding Christ, in order to so vast a deliverance? The next part of the Spirit’s work will answer that question.

Second, of righteousness, because I go to My Father, and ye see [or behold] Me no more. Beyond doubt, it is Christ’s personal righteousness which the Spirit was to bring home to the sinner’s heart. The evidence of this was to lie in the great historical fact that He had gone to His Father and was no more visible to men: for if His claim to be the Son of God, the Saviour of the world, had been a lie, how should the Father, who is “a jealous God”, have raised such a blasphemer from the dead, and exalted him to His right hand? But if He was the “faithful and true Witness”, the Father’s “righteous Servant”, whom the Father called, “Mine Elect, in whom My soul delighteth,” then His departure to the Father and consequent disappearance from the view of men, was but the fitting consummation, the august reward, of all that He did here below, the seal of His mission, the glorification of the testimony which He bore on earth, by the translation of its Bearer to the Father’s bosom.

This triumphant vindication of Christ’s rectitude is to us divine evidence, bright as heaven, that He is indeed the Saviour of the world, God’s righteous Servant, who came to justify many, because He bore their iniquities (Is 53:11). Thus the Spirit, in this second sphere of His work, is seen convincing men that in Christ there is perfect relief under the sense of sin, of which He had before convinced them. So far from mourning over His absence from us, as an irreparable loss, we learn to glory in it, as the evidence of His perfect acceptance on behalf of the believer, exclaiming with one who understood this point, “Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God

that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us" (Rom 8:33,34).

But, alas, some may say who have been long "sold under sin", who have too long been willing captives of the prince of this world: Of what avail to me is deliverance from any amount of guilt, and investiture even in the righteousness which cannot be challenged, if I am to be left under the power of sin and Satan? For he that committeth sin is of the devil, and to be carnally minded is death. But you are not to be so left. For there remains one more part of the Spirit's work, which exactly meets, and was intended to meet, your case.

Third, of judgement, because the prince of this world is – or, has been – judged. By taking the word *judgement* to refer to the judgement of the great day – as is done even by good interpreters – the point of this glorious assurance is quite missed. Beyond all doubt, when it is said, "The prince of this world is *judged*" – or, in the Lord's usual sense of that term, *condemned* – the meaning is the same as in a former chapter, where, speaking of His death, He says, "Now shall the prince of this world be cast out". In both places the meaning clearly is that the prince of this world is, by the death of Christ, judicially overthrown, or condemned to lose his hold, and so "cast out" or *expelled*, from his usurped dominion over men who, believing in the Son of God, are made the righteousness of God in Him. Thus, looking to Him who spoiled principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in His cross, they need henceforth have no fear of His enslaving power. (See Col 2:15, Heb 2:14; 1 John 3:8.)

Thus this three-fold office of the Spirit is entirely of one character. It is in all its parts evangelical and saving: (1) bringing home to the conscience the sense of sin, as all consummated and fastened down upon the sinner who rejects the One that came to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself; (2) the sense of perfect relief in the righteousness of the Father's servant, now taken from the earth that spurned Him to that bosom where, from everlasting, He had dwelt; and (3) the sense of emancipation from the fetters of Satan, whose judgement brings to men liberty to be holy, and a transformation from being servants of the devil into sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty.

To one class of men, however, all this will only carry conviction; they "will not come to" Christ – though He is revealed to them as the life-giving One, that they may have life. Such men, abiding voluntarily under the dominion of the Prince of this world, are judged in His judgment, the visible consummation of which will be at the last great day. But to another class this blessed teaching will have a different issue – translating them out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son.

Necessity of a Great Spiritual Change¹

2. The Salvation of the Unregenerate Is Impossible

James Buchanan

Let us first of all consider the fact which is here assumed, and then, connecting it with the principle which is also assumed, show the necessity of a great spiritual change. (See footnote 1.)

1. In thus affirming the necessity of regeneration, and that salvation is impossible without it, the Lord proceeds on the assumption that, in our natural state, we are fallen and depraved. This is uniformly assumed in Scripture, and is abundantly verified by experience. The Lord says that unconverted people are outside the kingdom of God, and incapable of entering into it unless they are born again. It is clearly stated in John 3:6: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." In this comprehensive sentence, He places in vivid contrast the two great classes into which all men are divided in Scripture; I mean the regenerate and the unregenerate. But He does so in such a way as to state that, by nature, all men belong to the same class, and if any have been restored, it was by their being born again.

When He speaks of the flesh, he does not refer to the body, but to the *soul*. The term is sometimes used to denote our body, as when the Paul speaks of his living, or abiding, in the flesh. But it is more often, and always when distinguished as it is here from the Spirit, used to mean our whole nature, as fallen and as yet unrenewed; as when the apostle says, "So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God; but ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." In this sense it corresponds to "the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts", and to "the natural man, which receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God"; and is distinguished from the "new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness". Hence we read of "sinful flesh", and "the fleshly mind", of which it is said that the "carnal mind is enmity against God".

When Jesus says, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh", He states that every human being, as he is born of the flesh or of fallen parents, is himself flesh, fallen, corrupted and depraved; that is his natural state, his state as he

¹Another section of the first chapter of Buchanan's book, *The Office and Work of the Holy Spirit*. The first section was entitled, "The Greatness of the Change". It ended by stating that, if we are to reach a right conclusion on any subject, two things are necessary – a sound principle and a certain fact. Here the *principle* is: a man must be spiritual if he is to enter the kingdom of God; and the *fact* is: by nature, no one is spiritual, but corrupted. So the conclusion must be: "except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God".

is born, and in which he remains until he is born again. Thus every man, without any exception, may say with David, "Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me". And when Jesus adds, "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit", He intimates indeed that there are now two classes of men in the world, the one natural, the other spiritual; the one regenerate, the other unregenerate; but that this arises not from any original difference, still less from any spontaneous separation, but from a change which has been wrought on some, while the rest remain as they were.

This change is directly ascribed to the regenerating grace of the Spirit of God. But naturally all belong to the same class and partake of the same character. There may be, and doubtless there are, many diversities in disposition and innumerable degrees of guilt among the unconverted, yet in the only point of essential importance, "there is no difference, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God". Such is the supposition on which the Lord's statement rests, the universally fallen and corrupted state of human nature; and if we really believed this truth, if we received it in its full scriptural meaning and in its application to our own individual souls, we should have little difficulty in perceiving the necessity of a great spiritual change, and the impossibility of being saved without being born again.

But this doctrine of natural depravity, although uniformly assumed in the Bible, frequently asserted in express terms, and abundantly verified by the experience of our own hearts, as well as by the universal history of the world, is offensive and alarming to every unconverted man. So he is prone, if not to deny its general truth, at least to mitigate and soften its meaning, in so far as it applies to his own case. Hence many a one admits, in general terms, that he is a sinner, because he cannot decently deny it. Yet he shows by his whole spirit and conversation that he has no idea of what is implied in this confession, and no heartfelt conviction that he needs to be born again. He admits that he has some imperfections, some natural frailties, some human infirmities; he may even charge himself with a few occasional faults, with the omission or careless discharge of duty, and perhaps with certain acts of positive transgression.

But while he admits his imperfection to this extent, man is unwilling to believe that he is so utterly fallen as to be unable to restore himself, or to stand in need of so great a change as is implied in being "born again". Hence, when his conscience is at any time impressed, he thinks of nothing more than a mere outward reformation, a little more attention to duty, a little more care in his ordinary conduct; and thus cleansing "the outside of the cup and platter", he looks for acceptance with God, and admission into His kingdom. Yet no change has been wrought inwardly – none that can, even

in his own estimation, correspond with, or deserve to be called, a new spiritual birth. If any such people shall read these lines, it should be a very solemn reflection to them that the Lord Jesus, when he spoke to a self-righteous Pharisee, a master in Israel, made no account of his outward decency. Instead he insisted on the necessity of being born again, and did so in terms which declare that this necessity is both absolute and universal; all must be converted or condemned.

If then you imagine that you may enter into the kingdom in some other way, and that you have no need to undergo that great preparatory change, I beseech you to remember that the Lord Jesus is of a different mind, that He makes no exception for you, but affirms – without qualification or reserve – that “except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God”. This solemn statement rests on the fact of our universal depravity. Even if it was more difficult than it is to discover the reasons on which it is founded, such a declaration comes from Him who is at once the only Saviour and the unerring Judge. So it should impress our minds with the conviction that the matter is finally settled by an authority which no power in heaven or on earth can challenge or resist. His authority in this matter is supreme, and one distinct statement of His will should be received as a final and irreversible decision.

But the same testimony is often repeated, and in a great variety of language. At one time he tells you, “Except you repent, ye shall all likewise perish”; at another, “If ye believe not, ye shall die in your sins”; at a third, “Unless ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of God”. But in His words to Nicodemus there is a remarkable emphasis; He does not merely declare that no unregenerate man shall be admitted; He affirms that he *cannot* – that it is impossible for him; and I now proceed to speak to the grounds on which this impossibility is affirmed.

2. In the Scriptures, we read of some things that are impossible with men, but which are not impossible with God; and of other things that are impossible both with God and man. Some things that are impossible with men are possible with God, and the angel referred to them when he said to Mary, “With God nothing shall be impossible”; and the Lord Himself when He said to the disciples: “With God all things are possible”. But while God’s almighty power is more than sufficient to overcome any merely natural difficulty, certain things are said to be impossible with God Himself – not from any defect of power on His part, but they are incompatible with His essential attributes, and in opposition to His unchangeable will. Hence we read, “It is impossible for God to lie”, and, “He cannot deny himself”, and “Without faith it is impossible to please Him”. The things supposed are in their own

nature contrary to the essential character of God – He must cease to be God before these things could happen.

The salvation of an unregenerate man belongs to this class of moral impossibilities. There is a very remarkable difference between the statement of the Lord to Nicodemus and the deliverance which he pronounced on another case of great difficulty. It was when the young man mentioned in the Gospels “went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions”. Referring to the difficulty of rich men entering the kingdom, Jesus said, “I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven: and again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God”. But when the disciples said, “Who then can be saved?” Jesus answered, “With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible”. He was thereby intimating that, although naturally impossible because of the many obstructions with which a rich man has to contend, it was not impossible for Him to remove these obstructions, nor in any way inconsistent with His character to put forth His power for that end.

Accordingly, although “not many rich and not many noble are called”, some in every age have been converted and made remarkable instances of the effectiveness of God’s grace. But notice the difference when Christ speaks of an unregenerate man; He does not say that his entrance into the kingdom, although impossible with men, is possible with God; but He pronounces absolutely that remaining in that condition, he cannot see the kingdom of God. He thereby represents it as one of those things which are impossible with God Himself; it would be both inconsistent with His declared will and opposed to the essential perfections of his nature; it would be also subversive of the unchangeable principles of His government. It is possible, – it is very possible – that an unconverted man may be converted, that an unregenerate man may be renewed. So far from being opposed to God’s will or character or government, this is in unison with them all, and it is a fit object for the interposition of His grace and power. But that a sinner remaining unconverted should be saved, that a man “born of the flesh” should enter the kingdom without being “born again” by the Spirit – this is an impossibility, and must be so while God is God.

The older we grow in Christ, the less frequent, but the stronger, are the temptations that assail us, and the most dangerous temptation is to be seldom tempted. Then we are more likely to be off our guard, and if the devil surprises us with a temptation, we are betrayed into a compliance with it unawares. This plainly shows that a Christian should be always under arms, and never off his watch.

William Grimshaw

Means for Coming to Know God (1)¹

George Swinnock

The means which I shall offer as helpful for attaining the knowledge of God are these:

1. *Be aware of your ignorance of Him.* A conceited scholar is not a good learner. He that thinks he knows enough already will never wish to be indebted to a tutor to teach him more: “Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? There is more hope of a fool than of him” (Prov 26:12). This is what locked up the Pharisees in the dark dungeon of ignorance: they were blind; truth itself calls them blind (Mt 15:14). But they assumed their eyes were good and so neglected the means of curing them. Ye say ye see; I do not say ye see, but ye imagine so, “therefore your sin remaineth” (Jn 9:41); therefore your ignorance continueth. When ignorance and confidence, which are often twins, go together, the condition of a man is helpless; partly because such a person will not take the pains in reading and praying and conference and meditation, without which the knowledge of God cannot be had. “Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased” (Dan 12:4). It is an allusion to merchants, that run to this and that port, to sell and to take in commodities; or to a tradesman that runs to this and that market or place to buy and sell, whereby their stocks are increased.

But a conceited man will never labour thus for what he thinks he has already. “If thou seekest her [knowledge] as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God” (Prov 2:4,5). Men think digging hard work, and will sweat at it when they dig for silver; such diligence they must use who will get the knowledge of God. But poor men, who are aware of their lack of the knowledge of God and of their woeful condition as a result, will work to preserve themselves from perishing. Yet rich men who think they can do well enough without it will spare their pains, partly because all knowledge must be obtained from God by fervent prayer. And a conceited man will neither be earnest with God for it, nor will God give it to him. “The Lord is a God of knowledge” (1 Sam 2:3); and from Him all true saving knowledge comes: “The Lord giveth wisdom, out of His mouth cometh knowledge and understanding” (Prov 2:6).

As no one can see the sun by candlelight, but by its own light, so no one can know God savingly by the light of nature but by light derived from Him-

¹Taken with editing from *The Incomparableness of God* in Swinnock’s *Works*, vol 4. Both the *Works* and *The Incomparableness of God* alone in paperback are available from the Free Presbyterian Bookroom.

self. Now a conceited person will not go to God for knowledge. What do I need? he thinks; I have enough already. Poverty is a friend to prayer: "The poor useth entreaties" (Prov 18:23); but pride, or conceitedness, is an enemy to prayer: "The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God" (Ps 10:4). Who will beg something from his neighbour which he is confident he has at home? Neither will God undertake the instruction of proud scholars: "The meek will He guide in judgement: and the meek will He teach His way" (Ps 25:9). Such as are willing to be taught will be thankful for their learning and are fit to be directed, but conceited people are quite contrary.

Therefore beware of this mist in which many go wrong. "If any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know" (1 Cor 8:2). But labour to get your heart affected by your ignorance, and the woeful consequences of it (Ps 95:10,11). This will be a good step to knowledge. Paul gives the same direction: "If any man seemeth to be wise, let him become a fool, that he may be wise" (1 Cor 3:18). If you seem to know, be ignorant in your own feeling and apprehension, that you may know. Our Lord Jesus gives the same counsel to the sick and dying in Laodicea, and lets her know that her ignorance of her ignorance, and conceitedness of her knowledge, were the great hindrances of her recovery (Rev 3:17,18).

The Successful Seaman¹

John Flavel

I*nference 1.* If prosperity and success are not to be ascribed to our abilities but to the blessing of God on our lawful endeavours, how justly they are to be reprov'd that depend entirely on means but neglect providence; that never eye God or acknowledge Him in any of their ways! This is a very great evil and highly provoking to the Lord; it is the fruit and discovery of the natural atheism of the hearts of men. How confident men are of success and prosperity, when second causes smile on them! On the contrary, how dejected and heartless when second causes seem to lie contrary to their hopes! How few consider and believe that great truth. "The righteous, and the wise, and their works are in the hand of God" (Ecc 9:1)! To be in the hand of God denotes both their subjection to His power and to His directing providence. Whether your works be in your hand, or put out of your hand, they always are in God's hand to prosper or frustrate them at His pleasure.

¹Some points of application from a sermon entitled, "The Successful Seaman", on Deuteronomy 8:17,18.

Foolish man decrees events without the leave of providence, as if he was the absolute lord of his own actions and their success. Indeed, you may then speak of success, when you have asked God's leave. "Acquaint now thyself with [God] . . . Thou shalt also decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee" (Job 22:21,28). But your confidence in the means, while God is neglected, will surely be followed either with a disappointment or a curse. For what is this but to labour without God; yea, to labour against God? For so do all they that give the glory of God to what is created, that set the instrument and the subordinate in the place of the principal efficient cause. It is just with God to deny you your comfort in those things wherein you rob Him of His glory.

Inference 2. How vain and unreasonable are the proud boasts of men, in the midst of their successes and prosperity! If God is the sole author of it, and it is not in your power or in the might of your hand that has got you this wealth, why do you glory in it as if it was the effect of your own prudence and industry? How soon the spirits of men rise with their possessions! How haughtily they look! How proudly they speak! What an obvious change of temper this small change of condition brings about! It is an exceedingly hard thing to keep down the heart when providence exalts a man's state. Augustine says, "It is a great happiness not to be overcome by happiness". That man is surely rich in grace whose graces are not eclipsed by his riches. It is as hard to be prosperous and humble, as to be afflicted and cheerful.

But to keep down your heart in times of success and prosperity, I will offer you, reader, a few humbling considerations about this matter.

(1.) Though providence does prosper your earthly designs, yet this is no argument at all for the love of God to your soul. You may be the object of His hatred and wrath for all this. "No man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before him" (Ecc 9:1). How weak an evidence for heaven must that be which millions now in hell have had in a greater measure than you have! The least dram of grace is a better pledge of happiness than the greatest sum of gold and silver that ever lay in any man's treasury. Externals do not distinguish internals; you cannot so much as guess what a man's spiritual state is by a view of his temporal state. Ishmael was a very great man, the head of a princely family but, for all that, he was excluded from the covenant, and all its spiritual blessings (Gen 17:20,21). He that reads Psalm 72 and Job 21 will plainly see how wretched a case that man is in who has no better evidence for the love of God than this amounts to.

(2.) Do not be proud of outward prosperity and success; for providence is very changeable in these things; yes, it daily rings the changes all over the world. Many a greater estate than yours has He scattered in a moment – and

every way as well; yes, far better secured, to the eye of reason. It is the saying of a philosopher, speaking of the estates of merchants and seamen, "I like not that happiness that hangs upon ropes". I need not here cite histories, to confirm this truth; there is none of you but can abundantly confirm it to yourselves, if you will but recollect those instances which have happened within your time and your memory. It is a poor happiness that may leave a man more miserable tomorrow than he may be who has never had the degree of prosperity that you now have.

(3.) Do not pride yourselves in your success, for as providences are very changeable, so the change seems very near you when your heart is thus lifted up, especially if you are one to whose eternal happiness God has any special regard. To be sure, He will pull down that proud heart and quickly order humbling providences to that end: He will "behold every one that is proud, and abase him" (Job 40:11). The heart of good Hezekiah was tickled with vain glory, and he showed the King of Babylon's servants all his treasures and precious things. At that time the prophet Isaiah came to him with a sad message from the Lord, that all these treasures, in which he had gloried, must be carried to Babylon (Is 39). If you hope to enjoy the good things of providence comfortably, do not provoke God by such vain ostentation.

Exercise fear in prosperity, and think with thyself when your heart is most affected with it, that while the boast is in your lips, the scene may alter and your happiness be turned into sorrow. While that proud boast was in the mouth of Nebuchadnezzar, the voice from heaven told him, "The kingdom is departed from thee" (Dan 4:30,31). Pride shows that prosperity, which feeds pride, is at its highest point.

Inference 3. If success in business is from the Lord, then certainly the true way to prosperity is to commend our affairs to God by prayer. He takes the true way to thrive who secures God's blessing on his endeavours. "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass" (Ps 37:5). It is a vile thing for any man to grudge the time that is spent in prayer, as so much time lost to his business. But having pressed this point before, I shall add no more here.

Inference 4. Does all success and prosperity depend on God, and come from Him? Then let it be faithfully employed to His glory. If it is "of Him, and through Him," then there is all the reason in the world it should be "to Him" (Rom 11:36). You only give Him what is His own, as David speaks: "All this store . . . cometh of Thine hand, and is all Thine own" (1 Chr 29:16). He never intended your estates for gratifying your lusts, but to give you a larger capacity thereby of honouring Him in the use of them. Consider, when God has prospered you and you return successfully home, what an opportunity

you have of honouring God, and showing your sense of His goodness to you by relieving the poor with a liberal and cheerful charity; by encouraging the gospel, and making them partakers of your good things who labour for your souls and dispense better things to you than you can return to them.

I would not here be misinterpreted, as though I pleaded my own interest, under a pretence of pleading God's; no! God forbid; I am well satisfied with a capacity of doing any good, however little I receive; nor can many of you reap the fruit of my labours. But I would not leave you ignorant or regardless of so great and plain a duty as this is: you are bound to do this, by a plain and positive precept. "Let him that is taught in the Word, communicate to him that teacheth, in all good things" (Gal 6:6). You are obliged to do it, proportionately to the success God gives you in your trade (1 Cor 16:2). And when you have done so, do not think it any great matter, but the discharge of a plain and necessary duty (1 Cor 9:11).

Inference 5. Let not your hearts be satisfied with all the success and increase of the world, unless your souls thrive as well as your bodies, and your eternal concerns prosper as well as your temporal. It was a pious wish of John for Gaius his host: that he might "prosper, and be in health, even as" his soul prospered (3 John 2). But it were to be wished that your souls did but prosper as your bodies and estates do. It is a poor comfort to have an increasing estate, but a dead and declining soul. When a large present was sent to Luther, he earnestly protested, that God would not put him off with these things. Friends, I beseech you not to be taken up in these enjoyments!

Inference 6. If God is the author of all your success, how prodigious an evil is it to make your prosperity an instrument of dishonouring Him that gave it, to abuse the estates providence gives you, to rioting and drunkenness? Do you thus requite the Lord? Is this the thanks you give Him for all His care over you and kindness to you? You would never be able to bear that from another, which God bears from you. If God does you good, do not return Him evil for it.

Protestant View

The Church of Rome is not a True Church

The eminent Reformed theologian, Francis Turretin of Geneva (1623-87), wrote much in defence of the truth and in opposition to the Church of Rome and its pretensions. He held that the Roman Catholic Church is not to be regarded as a true Church and gave a number of reasons for this position. The first reason he gave was that the doctrines of Romanism impinge upon

the foundation of Christian truth so much that it cannot be regarded as built any longer upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Romanism strikes at the foundation of the faith by “addition and subtraction.” Firstly, it adds to the canonical Scriptures the unwritten traditions of men which were rejected by Christ Himself in Matthew 15:9. Secondly, it replaces foundational truths of the Christian faith with its own errors, such as another head of the Church than Christ, others’ merits besides Christ’s obedience alone, another propitiatory sacrifice in addition to His cross, other names besides the name of Jesus whereby we can be saved.

Turretin argues that to add to the foundation such things which are opposed to it – as the Romanist errors above – is not merely to build up a superstructure of errors but to undermine the very foundation of truth itself, for truth is incompatible with error. “Thus, he who adds unwritten traditions to be received with equal affection and reverence with the Scriptures, by this very thing denies that the Scripture is a rule to which nothing is to be added and from which nothing is to be taken. He who adds to the sacrifice of the cross another propitiatory sacrifice, by that very thing denies that unity and perfection of Christ’s sacrifice. He who sews on other merits to the righteousness of Christ denies that His righteousness is sufficient for us.”

Again, by subtracting from the perfection, integrity and authority of Scripture, the foundation of the Christian faith is also undermined. Thus, we see that the errors of Rome are so deep-rooted and far-reaching that we cannot allow the Papal Church to be regarded as a true Church of Christ. *AWM*

Notes and Comments

Elon Musk and Human Hands

Elon Musk, the American entrepreneur, has been emphasising the difficulty of making hands for robots: “Designing dexterous hands for robots is a very hard problem. Then figuring out how to manufacture them at scale is 100 times harder.” In the human hand, the wrist, the thumb and the four fingers can all move in several ways independently, giving the hand 27 degrees of freedom of movement. The hand can detect pressure, temperature, and texture (and a combination of these allows a certain detection of moisture). The hand can be used to apply delicate pressure or powerful force and can move rapidly. Then there are two hands which can coordinate with each other, performing tasks which neither hand can manage individually. Furthermore, hands have a considerable durability. One surprising point that emerges is the importance of the little finger for many hand functions.

The worshippers of “Chance”, the god of Evolution, claim that their god brought hands into existence, but Christians know that hands are one of the many wonders created by the God of Israel. The God of Israel speaks of His own “fingers” making the heavens (Ps 8:3), and of “His right hand and holy arm” getting him the victory (Ps 98:1). If simple human hands are so wonderful and can do so much, how high and glorious must “the hand of the Lord” be, and the work which that is able to accomplish! *DWBS*

Assisted Dying and Abortion

We have reason to be very thankful that the Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults (Scotland) Bill was defeated, by a significant majority, 69 to 57, on March 17. We must acknowledge that the Most High has answered prayer and has prevented Scottish legislators from making it legal for doctors to give a terminally ill patient a drug that would end their life.

It would be assumed, by someone helping to end a patient’s life, that this person would no longer suffer and would pass out of existence. There is no room for a lost eternity in the thinking of those who would promote such legislation. But hell, solemnly, is a reality for those who leave this world and do not believe in God, or His revelation in the Bible, and the way of salvation through Jesus Christ, the God-man Saviour.

Thankfully, the corresponding bill in England looks very likely to run out of time in the House of Lords. The danger is that the same or similar bills may be re-introduced in the future. We need to pray that the Lord will again restrain ungodly MSPs and MPs from increasing the guilt of our nation by passing such bills into law.

On March 18, the House of Lords accepted proposals, which had already been accepted by the House of Commons, to decriminalise abortion. No mother is to be prosecuted in England and Wales for killing a child, even at full term and without seeing a doctor. Yet a doctor may prescribe drugs for the mother to use to take away her child’s life. What is more, past convictions are to be expunged.

But *God* has said, “Thou shalt not kill” (Ex 20:13).

Church Information

General Building Fund

By appointment of Synod, this year’s special collection on behalf of the General Building Fund, is due to be taken in congregations during April.

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 DPhl, 18 Carlton Place, Aberdeen, AB15 4BQ; tel: 01224 645250.
- Duirinish and Bradacale:** **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 Achary 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. **Sheilobost:** 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

Santa 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: grafton@internode.on.net.

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

New Zealand

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

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

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

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: dlevytsky@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.by@gmail.com.

Ingwenya: Church and Secondary School. Postal Address: Ingwenya 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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