

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; Wellington; **Fourth:** Larne, Zenka.

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

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

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

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

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

August: First Sabbath: Dingwall; **Second:** New Canaan, Somakantana; **Third:** Laide; **Fourth:** Farr, Stornoway, Vancouver, Vatten, Zenka.

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

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

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

December: Third Sabbath: Bulawayo, Santa Fe, Tauranga.

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Sailing Towards the Final Haven

In graphic language, Psalm 107:23-31 describes the experience of those who go to sea. They are liable to experience storms – indeed, severe storms which may cause them severe “distresses”. One must remember that sea-going ships of biblical times were relatively small, and storms would have had a much greater effect on them than on large modern ocean-going ships (yet the ship in which the Apostle Paul was shipwrecked was carrying 276 people across the Mediterranean). But at sea, people “see the works of the Lord, and His wonders in the deep”. Matthew Henry comments on verses 23-24: “Let all that go to sea be led, by all the wonders they observe there, to consider and adore the infinite perfections of that God whose the sea is, for He made it and manages it”. Storms are dangerous but if, from a place of safety, one can stand and watch the waves breaking on a shore or on rocks, we have an opportunity to observe the magnificent beauty of the scene. We then have another opportunity “to consider and adore” the wonder and the beauty of God’s creation.

Verses 28-29 speak of the seamen crying “unto the Lord in their trouble, and He bringeth them out of their distresses. He maketh the storm a calm.” God has often heard the prayers of those experiencing severe storms and bringing about, in His kind providence, a calm on the sea – most obviously when the Son of God stilled the waves on the Sea of Galilee in answer to the pleas of the disciples, although they were so unbelieving. Henry comments here: “We have a saying, ‘Let those that would learn to pray go to sea’; I say, Let those that will go to sea learn to pray, and accustom themselves to pray, that they may come with the more boldness to the throne of grace when they are in trouble”.

But in these verses in Psalm 107 we may see a picture of believers sailing through the storms of life. David notes, “Many are the afflictions of the righteous” (Ps 34:19); they all experience trouble, but some of them experience more, and more serious, troubles than others. If anyone ever experienced particularly severe trouble, it was Job when he lost all his children, his animals, and then his health. But all this was followed by the tremendously-

discouraging attitude of his friends. They came to comfort him, but they were totally mistaken in their attempts to understand the source of all his troubles. We know what the source was, for God's revelation in Scripture shows not only the outcome but also the background – the devil was trying to prove the insincerity of Job's religion. The devil was, of course, unsuccessful: the reality of Job's religion was clearly demonstrated.

Yet the purpose of God lay behind it all; it was God who raised up the stormy wind, which lifted up the waves of the sea through which, so to speak, Job was sailing. We should note his faith, though there were many occasions when he could not see the Lord's hand in his difficult providence. But he had learned to pray, to "cry unto the Lord" in his trouble, and the Lord heard him. One evidence that the Lord was hearing him was that he was given faith to say, "He knoweth the way that I take: when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold" (Job 23:10). Job realised that the storm would subside – that although the Lord was trying him, he would be delivered and, as a result of the trial, he would be purified; he was being tried as gold is tried, to make it purer. Says W S Plumer, "Terrific as is the sea in a tempest, there is a God presiding over it. He can at will calm its agitations."¹

Although "many are the afflictions of the righteous", yet we are assured that "the Lord delivereth him out of them all" (Ps 34:19). That is according to the picture provided for us in Psalm 107: "He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still" (v 29). All the troubles of God's children will come to an end and they will be brought into the blessedness of heaven – just as the ship that has been thrown around on the waves of the ocean reaches at last the still waters within the harbour which it was aiming for.

Heaven is the final destination for God's children, and there is no trouble there, no "distresses", no stormy seas, no mounting "up to the heaven" and going "down again to the depths" as the waves rise and fall. They are brought to a place where "there shall be no more curse" (Rev 22:3), and there shall be no more curse because there shall be no more sin. All the troubles and storms were part of life in a sinful world. When they believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, they were delivered from the guilt of sin and the process of sanctification had begun, delivering them from the power of sin in their hearts and lives. And when they reach the haven of eternal glory, all the other consequences of sin – including the thorns and thistles that represent the curse imposed in the Garden of Eden on fallen mankind – are finally left behind. There can be no storms in the haven which is heaven.

Jonah had the very difficult experience of being at sea in a severe storm and of being thrown overboard, at his own request. It was the result of his

¹Plumer, *Psalms*, Banner of Truth reprint, 1975, on Ps 107:29.

disobedience, his refusal to go to Nineveh “to cry against it” and, instead, boarding a ship sailing, in the opposite direction, towards Tarshish. He acknowledged his wrongdoing to the crew members who challenged him, and they reluctantly cast him into the sea, where a great fish swallowed him up. We might say, on the basis of the prayer he sent up from inside the fish, that a storm raged within his soul also. In his cry to the Lord, he said, “I am cast out of Thy sight; yet I will look again toward Thy holy temple” (Jnh 2:4). In his trouble, he could only look by faith to the place where sacrifice was offered, where sinners could learn something about being reconciled to God, and where the special presence of God on earth was. Jonah was acknowledging that “salvation is of the Lord” (Jnh 2:9).

He too was one of those who “cry unto the Lord in their trouble” and, accordingly, he was brought out of his distresses. There was a strong element of chastisement in God’s dealings with Jonah, and who of us can say that we are without sin? Yet when God brings His children into storms of trouble, His purposes vary. In Job’s case, testing was the most prominent purpose; in Jonah’s case chastisement was most prominent. But both these men were brought at last into the haven of heaven. When he reached that haven, Job no doubt received further light on God’s purposes in bringing him into such a severe tempest. He would have seen how God used his experiences during that particularly stormy and difficult period of his life to purify him, making him more dependent on the Lord, and enabling him to learn also from the teaching he was given.

Jonah too learned obedience through his experiences in the storm. The next time he was called to go to Nineveh, he went. Yet he needed further spiritual training; no one learns perfect obedience through one experience. His disappointment when the gourd withered – and God’s response to his disappointment – was no doubt a further means of training. We can be sure that, by the time Jonah left this world, he had been made fit to enjoy the blessedness of the haven to which the Lord was bringing him. It corresponds to the perfect quiet of which the Psalmist speaks: “Then are they glad because they be quiet” (Ps 107:30). Plumer remarks, “If the desired haven is so pleasant to the tempest-tossed mariner, how sweet will heaven itself be to the poor soul over which all God’s waves and billows have passed!”²

We cannot avoid storms, whatever our spiritual state, but if we do not call on the Lord for His saving mercy before it is too late – before life here ebbs away – then we will never reach the haven God has prepared for those who love Him. The danger of perishing on the sea of life is real. How necessary then to heed the call, “Seek ye the Lord while He may be found” (Is 55:6).

²Plumer, *Psalms*, p 961.

God's Mercy Real and Infinite¹

A Sermon by C C Macintosh

Isaiah 55:8,9. *For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.*

These words refer to God's ways and thoughts in redemption. The statement is true indeed in the widest sense: all God's ways and thoughts are infinitely higher than ours, but it is here especially applied to the matter of pardon. The preceding verse contained that gracious command, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." But this assurance of mercy and pardon, as ready to greet the penitent, is in itself so wondrous and so contrary to all that the consciousness of guilt leads the awakened sinner to expect; so the Lord, to encourage him to receive the truth, follows up His invitation with the words, "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways".

Some people may think there is nothing in this that is very difficult to grasp, and that there is no truth easier of reception than that the Lord is gracious. They have always believed the mercy of God; they hope in it also, and they find it pleasant to do so. But what is the secret of the ease with which they believe this great truth? It is that they have never felt the wound or sting of sin; they have never been brought as justly-condemned criminals to God's bar. And what must be thought of their faith in God's forgiveness? That it is all a dream. They trust in a mercy which has no existence – a mercy which brings them no true sweetness now, and which will leave them in the end the helpless and naked victims of insulted justice.

If we would discover a true believer in God's mercy, we must go, not to the whole-hearted, who can speak of it unfeelingly, and therefore without knowing what it is, but to the poor publican, who cries out, "God be merciful to me a sinner". He who has felt the wound of sin hears the law declare, "The soul that sinneth it shall die", and conscience sets its seal to his condemnation. He hears his sins cry aloud for vengeance. He sees all the attributes of God – His holiness, justice and truth – demanding his punishment. Then mountains rise between him and the mercy he once found so easy to believe. He looks within and sees no cause why vengeance should be delayed; he

¹The first of three sermons on this text preached by Macintosh (1806-68) at the start of his ministry in Tain. He was then only partially recovered from a serious illness and from spiritual trouble. Taken, with editing, from *Memorials of Charles Calder Macintosh*. This volume is to be reprinted by Free Presbyterian Publications.

looks above him, and sees but one dark thunder cloud of wrath. What remains for him but to say, Righteous art Thou, O Lord, even shouldst Thou consume me.

While in this helpless and, to his own apprehension, all-but-hopeless condition, the still small voice from Mount Zion says, Return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon thee. No wonder though he should be unable to receive so blessed a truth. Mercy, mercy for *me!* he cries; No, that cannot be!

And it is a solemn and melancholy truth that it is very possible thus to converse with God's justice, and to tremble before it, without arriving at a soul-humbling and tranquillising view of His mercy. Indeed, without the Holy Spirit's agency in giving him the eyes of faith, he could never see it. No, even with this spiritual sight, the truth must be brought close to him by the Word, to enable poor, trembling faith to apprehend it. And this is why God says, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways". It is as if He had said, If my thoughts *were* as your thoughts, vain indeed would be all expectation of forgiveness; but My thoughts are infinitely higher than yours; therefore return unto Me, and I will have mercy.

Abundant mercy. The words seem intended not only to help the convinced and consciously self-destroyed sinner to see that there is mercy in God, but that there is mercy enough and pardon enough even for him. There are two obstacles that hinder his resting in God's mercy, even when he may have begun to discern dimly this shining star in the constellation of God's perfections. The first is the view which he entertains of the magnitude of his sins, and the second the unworthy views which he entertains of God. He thinks of his sins as being too great even for mercy to pardon, and he thinks of God's mercy as not being great enough to cover his sins. He can never indeed see his sins in all their magnitude; so it is evident that the true root of his fears lies in his inadequate views of God's mercy. His eyes have been opened to see in some measure the magnitude of the one, but he does not see the magnitude of the other.

The Lord condescends here to give the poor trembling sinner a telescope through which the real character of His mercy can be discovered, and to bring him to the proper point of view from which to contemplate it. It is as if He had said, What wonder if your sense of sin and your fear of wrath overpower you, when you think of My mercy as something you can measure, when you think you see its length and breadth, and that you have sounded and reached its bottom? You think of Me as of yourself, and is this to honour Me? But drop your measuring line and think of Me as God. Hear this, O sinner: "As the heavens are higher than the earth", so is My mercy above all your thoughts of it.

Then the sinner sees mercy beaming through the cloud, even for him. When he has once discovered that God's mercy has no bottom, that it is an ocean without a shore, a depth not to be fathomed, he enjoys a rest and a delight that pass expression. He brings his own boundless and fathomless sins side by side with God's infinite and fathomless mercy, turning his gaze from the one to the other. And while sweetly reposing on the bosom of mercy, he yields to the God of grace the glory of this attribute in the deep humiliation, the heart-contrition, the sincere repentance, the holy hatred of sin, and the ardent breathings after conformity to God's image that necessarily accompany this blessed posture of soul. But this is an eminence which many seem to view only at a distance; they are still a "little flock" who, with David, truly "hope in God's mercy."

Such is the general meaning of the text. To illustrate it further, we will now consider *what the mercy of God has done for sinners in overcoming the obstacles that stood in its way, and in securing the granting of pardon.*

If we have been taught in any measure to regard sin as God regards it, let us endeavour to fix our minds upon it in connection with His character as a holy Sovereign and righteous moral Governor. He regards sin with hatred. It is a denunciation of His excellence, a contempt of His authority, a direct insult to His majesty, a conspiracy against His being. Let us remember also that, as the Sovereign of the universe, He is clothed with power, not only to take vengeance on His enemies, but to reflect new lustre on His throne and government, by their destruction. When we bear this in mind, and then consider that, notwithstanding all this, mercy towards sinners of Adam's race found a place in the heart of God, we may see how truly infinite that mercy is; that His ways are not as our ways, nor His thoughts as our thoughts.

But all this is as nothing when compared with the cost (if we may so speak) of forgiveness, God overleaping His view of the humiliation and death of His Son! "He spared not His own Son." The full meaning of these words the redeemed through eternity will be ever pressing forward to know. So high were the claims of justice, so extensive the demands of the law, that no other than God's own Son could satisfy them so as to make way for the exercise of mercy – and in no other manner than by submitting to humiliation and sufferings. The very imagination of them could never have been entertained by any of His creatures, unless God Himself had revealed them.

Before a door of mercy could be opened, it behoved God the Father to give up His only-begotten Son – who dwelt in His bosom from eternity – to appear in our rebellious world in the form of a servant; it behoved the Son to make Himself of no reputation, to tabernacle in a world that lay under the curse, to submit to the contradiction of sinners whom He came to save, and of devils

whom He held in subjection, to be reviled, persecuted, buffeted, crucified by those whom in a moment the fires of His wrath could have consumed.

Beyond this it behoved the Father Himself to stretch out His hand against Him. He put *Him* to grief in whom His soul delighted. He spared Him not; and though in agony and desertion His cries pierced the Father's ear, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" yet the sword continued to smite until the Sufferer said, "It is finished!" O who can tell the yearnings of the Father's heart over His beloved Son? His overleaping the vileness of the sinner was nothing compared with His overleaping His view of the humiliation of His divine Son. And this obstacle stood right across the only way of mercy. But the mercy of God, like an impetuous, resistless stream, broke through every obstacle, that it might overflow our world.

The reality of God's mercy. Let us, with all these things before our minds, say whether we have not here shown to us the reality of God's mercy. If after all this we question it or fail to fall prostrate before its exhibition, we slander and malign God in what He is most jealous of; we rob Him of His choicest jewel – His grace. And nothing remains but that insulted mercy should give a keener edge and a swifter descent to the stroke of justice. But were we blessed with but a faint perception of our own inexpressible vileness – for a full view of it we never can obtain – and with a faint perception of the immeasurable preciousness of "Him who is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His person," the thought that Christ should have died for us would so humble, so dissolve and so astonish us that we could find no vent or refuge for our feelings but in God's own words, Thy thoughts are not our thoughts, nor Thy ways our ways.

Here further we may learn to see that the mercy of God is such that no sinner can perish for want of a sufficiency of mercy. Unless we can say that we have looked into the heart of God and seen the yearnings of the Father's heart over His Son, and unless we can measure Christ's worth and the worth of His sufferings, we cannot limit God's mercy. It is infinite. And if it is infinite, is it not enough for you, however great your sins? It is infinite, and what more can you want? None ever perished for lack of mercy. Many have perished for despising mercy, many for rejecting mercy; many have perished for sinning because mercy abounds; but none ever perished because there was not enough of mercy. If there is anyone whose mouth is shut before a holy God, to him we bring the good news that there is mercy for him in the outstretched hand of God Himself, who delights to have it received, and who is glorified in bestowing it.

The preacher's duty. The great duty and business then of the minister of the gospel is to proclaim the mercy of God, the wondrous truth that "God

so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life". He is to proclaim it so that sinners may believe and be saved, may repent and bring forth fruits meet for repentance, may believe and be moved by their belief to glorify God in their body and in their spirit which are God's. O how joyfully would we proclaim this gospel, if we were only enabled to apprehend the love and the grace wrapped up in it; if we apprehended our own personal interest in it, and the secure basis provided by it for the hopes of the chief of sinners! How admirably would we proclaim it, if we but perceived the infinitude of the mercy displayed in it, and of the love which passeth knowledge!

And how earnestly and tenderly and faithfully would we press you to receive it if we realised the preciousness of your souls, and the fearfulness of the wrath that abides upon the sinner; if we but travailed in birth for you till Christ be formed in you; if we were but constrained and pressed by the love of Christ and by a sense of the inevitable and inconceivable anguish that is before those who neglect so great salvation! And how would your hearts leap to receive it, if you but knew and felt your own condition as sinners, and if you but apprehended this gospel as coming not from a poor brother worm, but from the great Majesty of heaven, whose avenging law has been hot in pursuit of you!

But alas how possible it is for us to preach this gospel coldly. And what a miserable welcome it often receives from the perishing, forlorn souls to whom it is proclaimed!

If that which gave comfort to one of the holiest saints on earth in the near approach of death – "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief" – touches no sympathetic chord in your breast, if these blessed words are words of indifference to you, if you feel no personal interest in them, we know why it is so, and we are called to declare it to you. It is because you are still dead in trespasses and sins, so that the very sense of your condition has yet to be shown to you. We know too what is the necessary tendency of such security and its fearful result. It is death eternal.

O then awake to a sense of your condition! "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." Awake, you that live without God and Christ in the world. Awake, you that live as if this world was your home. Awake, you that go about to establish your own righteousness. God's avenging law is in pursuit of you, and if it finds you without the protection of the Redeemer's blood, your future misery is sure. Let the world say what it will, unless this blessed book is a fiction, the world "lieth in the wicked one" and is devoted to destruction. Let the world say what it will of the mercy of God and of the uselessness of fear and anxiety about an

eternal state, sooner or later the pride of our hearts must be subdued and we become prostrated at God's feet. Better surely to be so when He is on the throne of grace, and the royal hand of mercy will raise us up, than to be shivered by the rod of iron.

The song of the redeemed in heaven is: "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood". And if you would ever join that blessed throng, you must learn something of the wonders of redemption now.

The Glorified Understanding¹

Thomas Case

The saints shall know God to perfection, though not to infinity; they shall see Him so as to repose themselves in Him with full complacency and delight, so that they shall say they have enough. In this life, some of the saints have had such manifestations of God as have made them weep as bitterly as ever anyone under desertion did, crying out, Lord, withdraw Thy glory, else the vessel will split and I shall dishonour God.

It may justly be a wonder to the saints in the other world how it should be otherwise – a wonder that a created, finite mind should be able to bear the weight of glory which fills the infinite Object of their worship and not be destroyed by its immensity. This is especially so since we read of the very angels themselves, who in a vision of a somewhat inferior nature to the exceeding brightness of that face-to-face vision in glory, are said to veil their faces and their feet: their faces, as having their eyes dazzled with the exceeding brightness of His glorious appearance; and their feet, as abashed in the apprehension of their own meanness and imperfection in comparison with God's incomparable and incomprehensible perfections.

In order to a full reception of these manifestations of God, which shall be granted in heaven, we learn from the Scriptures that the glorified understanding shall be adorned with a six-fold perfection: 1. Spirituality. 2. Clarity. 3. Capacity. 4. Sanctity. 5. Strength. 6. Fixedness.

1. *Spirituality*. The understanding shall be made spiritual. Spiritual it is now – as spiritual is the opposite of *bodily*, though not as spiritual is opposed to *natural*. The soul is now forced to cater for a body of flesh, to provide things that are necessary for the sustenance of the animal life; it busies itself to satisfy the appetites of hunger and thirst etc. If it can redeem a few hours for actions more appropriate to it, it is so clogged, so pressed down, with the

¹An edited extract from *A Prospect of Heaven*, one of the works included in *The Select Works of Thomas Case*. Case (1598-1682) was a noted Puritan.

body's infirmities that it soon drops down to the earth and is drawn aside to attend to the "irrelevancies" of this present life. But when it shall be joined to a spiritual body, itself having been glorified, then it shall be wholly taken up with objects spiritual and heavenly; it will be made, as it were, to have the same nature – elevated by the light of glory, to the vision of God.

2. *Clarity.* By virtue of this supernatural illumination by God, the understanding shall be brightened and cleared. There are now many spots and stains on the mirror of the understanding, by which the soul is defiled. The breath of the world, and the steam of corruptions from within, do so sully this crystal glass that it cannot receive into it the beams of light which shine on it. The more impurity the dimmer the vision: "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God" (Mt 5:8). Now in glory all these stains and spots shall be perfectly wiped off, and the vessel shall be made a clear glass, to receive and contain the glorious rays of divine excellence, which shine into it. Hence divines call this vision of God a clear, distinct and perfect sight of God; it is not as if the blessed ones did see all that is in the essence of God, but as opposed to our present dim, obstructed vision (1 Cor 13:12), so that it perfectly takes in, without the least obstruction or diminution, what God's will is pleased to reveal.

3. *Capacity.* In glory, the understanding shall be extended to have a vast capacity. Now the understanding is large; there is no bounding or limiting of it; it is higher than the heavens, deeper than the sea, and wider than the world. But in glory, the understanding shall be widened, to a much greater capacity, to take in, not the little things of the creature only, but the infinite God – I do not say infinitely. It is worth comparing those two expressions of the beatific vision: the one, where it is said that the "angels do always behold the face" of God (Mt 18:10); the other, where the angels and saints – the number of whom is said to be ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands – are described as surrounding God's throne (Rev 5:11). Compare them together; they always behold the face of God, and yet are round about; and it hints to us this blessed notion: God has no back parts in heaven. To the blessed inhabitants there, God is all face, and they are always beholding it. How should not so resplendent an Object confound the understanding with its immense splendour and glory, unless the Object itself sustains and nourishes the understanding!

4. *Sanctity.* The understanding shall be made perfect in holiness. In the state of separation, the spirits of just men are perfect (Heb 12:23), and surely the soul loses nothing of its sanctity by being united to the body in glory. Now of all God's qualities, none more capacitates the soul for the vision of Him than holiness. Note that holiness is called "the divine nature" (2 Pet

1:4). Holiness assimilates unto God; and the perfection and the delight of sight are founded in conformity to Him; “blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God”. According to the purity of the heart is the vision of God. What a glorious sight of God will that be which the perfection of holiness shall advance the soul unto, when the glorious object shall both enlarge and purify the understanding.

5. *Strength*. The vision of God fortifies the understanding. In nature, the more vehement and intense the object, the more it hurts and crushes the sense. The vision of God, though under a veil, did undo the prophet Isaiah. Holy Daniel’s vision, though but a vision, left him without strength (Dan 10:7,8). John’s vision, though but the darker side of the beatific sight of God, almost slew him outright for a time: “I fell at His feet as dead” (Rev 1:17). The souls of the blessed in heaven are set beyond all fear of such a surprise of glory; while God fills their understanding, He also sustains and perfects it, by means whereof the understanding shall never be weary of its object, but shall behold it with fresh vigour and delight.

6. *Fixedness*. In the state of grace, the mind is exceedingly slippery, like that of little children, whose minds cannot settle. We lie on spiritual objects, as upon a bank of ice, where we slide and slide and never stop sliding till we are in the dirt. This happens because of those mixtures of impurity which are in these natural minds of ours; the objects are pure and simple, but the understanding is woefully clogged with “superfluity of naughtiness” (Jas 1:21); hence the instability that is in the understanding; it is like the sea itself. But now in glory all that mixture is abolished, so that there is nothing remaining to divert or distract the understanding. The Object shall unite the faculty to itself. O blessed and blessed-making vision! Glorious things are spoken of thee, O vision of God! Truly beatific for ever! Truly “eye hath not seen . . . the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him”.

Luther and the Reformation¹

14. Nothing but the Word of God

J H Merle d’Aubigné

More formidable resistance than Tetzel’s came against Luther. Rome answered. It was not Leo X who condescended to speak of theology. “It is a mere monkish squabble,” he said one day; “the best way is not to

¹This is a further abridged extract from d’Aubigné’s *The History of the Reformation in the Sixteenth Century*, vol 1. Last month’s article described some of the reaction to Luther’s 95 Theses, written in response to the sale of indulgences by Tetzel near Wittenberg.

meddle with it.” At another time he observed, “It is a drunken German that has written these theses; when the fumes have passed off, he will talk very differently”. A Roman Dominican, Sylvester Mazzolini of Prierio, master of the sacred palace, was the censor; in this capacity he first became acquainted with Luther’s theses.

Luther’s theses came into collision with the power in Rome which claimed to open and shut at pleasure the mouth of Christendom. The Roman censor, prior-general of the Dominicans – empowered to decide what Christendom should profess or conceal, and on what it ought to know or be ignorant of – hastened to reply. He published a work which he dedicated to Leo X, in which he spoke contemptuously of Luther. Then, under the form of a dialogue, he attacked Luther’s theses, employing by turns ridicule, insult and menaces. This combat between the Augustine of Wittenberg and the Dominican of Rome was waged on the very question that is the principle of the Reformation: “What is the sole infallible authority for Christians?”

Here is the system of the Roman Church: the letter of the written Word is dead without the spirit of interpretation, which alone reveals its hidden meaning. Now this spirit is not given to every Christian, but to the Church – that is, to the priests. It is great presumption, she claims, to say that He who promised the Church to be with her always, even to the end of the world, could have abandoned her to the power of error. It will be said perhaps that the doctrine and constitution of the Church are no longer such as we find them in Scripture. Undoubtedly, the Church replies, but this change is only in appearance; it extends only to the form and not to the substance.

The Church goes further: this change is progressive. The vivifying power of God’s Spirit has given a reality to what in Scripture was merely an idea; it has completed the work of which the Bible only gave the first rough draft. We must therefore understand the sense of the Holy Scriptures as settled by the Church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. From this point there is a divergence. General councils, said some, are the representatives of the Church. The pope, said others, is the depository of the spirit of interpretation, and no one has a right to understand the Scriptures except as decreed by him.

This was Prierio’s opinion. He put forward propositions on the power of the Church and of the pope, at which the most shameless flatterers of the Church of Rome would have blushed. Here is one of his principles: “Whoever does not rely on the teaching of the Roman Church and of the Roman pontiff, as the infallible rule of faith, from which the Holy Scriptures themselves derive their strength and their authority, is a heretic.”

Then, in a dialogue in which Luther and Prierio are the speakers, the latter seeks to refute Luther’s propositions. The opinions of the Saxon monk were

altogether strange to a Roman censor; accordingly Prierio shows that he understood neither the emotions of his heart nor the springs of his conduct. "My dear Luther," said he, "if you were to receive from our lord the Pope a good bishopric and a plenary indulgence for repairing your Church, you would sing in a softer strain, and you would extol the indulgences you are now disparaging!" The Italian, so proud of his elegant manners, occasionally assumes the most scurrilous tone: "If it is the nature of dogs to bite, I fear you had a dog for your father". He ends by showing his adversary the cruel teeth of an inquisitor: "The Roman Church, the apex of whose spiritual and temporal power is in the pope, may constrain by the secular arm those who, having once received the faith, afterwards go astray. It is not bound to employ reason to combat and vanquish rebels."

These words were very significant. Still, they did not frighten Luther. He believed, or feigned to believe, that this dialogue was not written by Prierio. He had no desire to behold the see of Rome excited against him. However, after having kept silence for some time, his doubts (if he had any) were dispelled; he set to work, and his answer was ready in two days.

The Bible had moulded the Reformer and begun the Reformation. He did not need the testimony of the Church in order to believe; his faith had come from the Bible itself. He was so intimately convinced that evangelical doctrine was immovably founded on the Word of God that in his eyes all external authority was useless. The living source that had welled forth for Luther was to become a river to slake the thirst of nations.

In order to comprehend the Word, the Spirit of God must give us understanding, said the Church; and it was right thus far. But its error lay in considering the Holy Spirit as a monopoly accorded to a certain class, and supposing that it could be confined exclusively within assemblies or colleges. "The wind bloweth where it listeth", the Son of God had said, speaking of God's Spirit; in another place, "They shall be *all* taught of God". The corruption of the Church, the ambition of the pontiffs, the passions of the councils, the quarrels of the clergy, the pomp of the prelates, had banished far from them the Holy Spirit and the spirit of humility and peace. The Spirit had taken up His dwelling with simple Christians and humble priests. The Church – degraded by its love of power and riches, dishonoured in the eyes of the people by selling salvation to replenish the treasuries drained by its haughtiness and debauchery – had forfeited all respect, and sensible men no longer attached any value to her testimony. They turned joyfully towards God's Word and its infallible authority, as the only refuge remaining to them in the general disorder.

In his reply, Luther passes over the principles which Prierio had set forth

in the beginning of his work: "Following your example, I will also lay down certain fundamental principles. The first is this expression of Paul: 'Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed'.

"The second is this passage from Augustine to Jerome: 'I have learned to render to the canonical books alone the honour of believing most firmly that none of them has erred; as for the others, I do not believe in what they teach simply because it is they who teach them'."

Here we see Luther laying down with a firm hand the essential principles of the Reformation: the Word of God, the whole Word of God, nothing but the Word of God. "If you clearly understand these points," he continues, "you will also understand that your Dialogue is wholly overturned by them; for you have only brought forward the expressions and the opinions of Thomas."² Then, attacking his adversary's axioms, he frankly declares that he believes popes and councils can err. He complains of the flatteries of the Roman courtiers, who ascribe both temporal and spiritual power to the pope. He declares that the Church exists virtually in Christ alone, and representatively in the councils.

Then coming to Prierio's insinuation: "No doubt you judge of me after yourself," he said, "but if I aspired to an episcopal station, of a surety I should not use the language that is so grating to your ears. Do you imagine I am ignorant how bishoprics and the priesthood are obtained at Rome? . . . I protest that you will not frighten me . . . by the threatening noise of your words. If I am put to death, Christ lives, Christ my Lord and the Lord of all, blessed for evermore. Amen." Thus, with a firm hand, Luther sets against the papacy the infallible, holy Word of God, before which he would have every knee to bow, and on which he declares himself ready to offer up his life.

Prierio published an answer, and then a third book, *On the Irrefragable Truth of the Church and of the Roman Pontiff*, in which, relying on church law, he asserted that, although the pope should make the whole world go with him to hell, he could neither be condemned or deposed. The Pope was at last obliged to impose silence on Prierio.

A new adversary soon entered the lists; he also was a Dominican. James Hochstraten, inquisitor at Cologne, whom we have already seen opposing Reuchlin and the friends of letters, shuddered at Luther's boldness. It was necessary for monkish darkness and fanaticism to come in contact with him who was destined to give them a mortal blow. Monasticism had sprung up as the primitive truth began to disappear. Since then, monks and errors had grown up side by side.

²Presumably Thomas Aquinas, the mediaeval theologian.

A man had now appeared who was to accelerate their ruin; but these robust champions could not abandon the field of battle without a struggle. It lasted all the Reformer's life. Hochstraten lost his temper and called loudly for the heretic's death. It was by the stake he wished to secure the triumph of Rome. "It is high treason against the Church", he exclaimed, "to allow so horrible a heretic to live one hour longer. Let the scaffold be instantly erected for him!" This murderous advice was but too effectually carried out in many countries; the voices of numerous martyrs, as in the early Church, gave testimony to the truth in the midst of flames. But in vain were the sword and the stake invoked against Luther. The Angel of the Lord kept watch around him and preserved him continually.

Luther answered Hochstraten in few words, but with great energy. He said in conclusion, "Go, you raving murderer, who cries for the blood of your brethren; it is my earnest desire that you forbear to call me Christian and faithful, and that you continue, on the contrary, to decry me as a heretic. Do you understand these things, blood-thirsty man, enemy of the truth, and if your mad rage should hurry you to undertake anything against me, take care to act with circumspection and to choose your time well. God knows what is my purpose, if he grant me life." Hochstraten was silent.

A more painful attack awaited the reformer. Doctor Eck, the celebrated professor of Ingolstadt and Luther's friend, had received the famous theses. Eck was not a man to defend the abuse of indulgences; he was well versed in the scholastic writings, but not in the Word of God. If Prierio represented Rome, if Hochstraten represented the monks, Eck represented the schoolmen.³ The schools, which for five centuries past had domineered over Christendom, rose up haughtily to crush the man who dared pour out upon them the floods of his contempt. Eck and Luther, the school and the Word, had more than one struggle, but it was now that the combat began.

Eck found errors in many of Luther's positions. Nothing leads us to doubt the sincerity of his convictions. He as enthusiastically maintained the scholastic opinions as Luther did the declarations of the Word of God. We may even suppose that he felt no little pain when he found himself obliged to oppose his old friend; it would seem, however, from the manner of his attack, that passion and jealousy had some share in his motives.

He gave the name of *Obelisks* to his remarks against Luther's theses. Desiring at first to save appearances, he did not publish his work, but was satisfied with communicating it confidentially to his superior, the Bishop of Eichstadt. But the *Obelisks* were soon extensively circulated, either through the indiscretion of the bishop or by Eck himself. A copy fell into the hands

³The main theologians of the Middle Ages.

of Link, a friend of Luther and preacher at Nuremberg. He quickly sent it to the Reformer. Eck was a far more formidable adversary than Tetzl, Prierio, or Hochstraten; the more his work surpassed theirs in learning and in subtlety, the more dangerous it was. He assumed a tone of compassion towards his "feeble adversary", being well aware that pity inflicts more harm than anger. He insinuated that Luther's propositions circulated the Bohemian poison, and by such malicious allusions, he drew upon Luther the unpopularity and hatred attached in Germany to the name of John Hus and his followers.

The malice that pervaded this treatise exasperated Luther; but the thought that this blow came from an old friend grieved him still more. Must he uphold the truth at the cost of his friend's affections? Luther poured out his deep sorrow in a letter to Egranus, pastor at Zwickau: "In the *Obelisks* I am styled a venomous man, a Bohemian, a heretic, a seditious, insolent, rash person. . . . I pass by the milder insults, such as drowsy-headed, stupid, ignorant, contemner of the sovereign pontiff etc. This book is brimful of the blackest outrages. Yet he who penned them is a distinguished man, with a spirit full of learning, and a learning full of spirit; and, what causes me the deepest vexation, he is a man who was united to me by a great and recently-contracted friendship. . . . If I did not know Satan's thoughts, I should be astonished at the fury which has led this man to break off so sweet and so new a friendship, and that too without warning me."

But if Luther's heart was wounded, he rose up invigorated for the contest. Eck realised how disgraceful his conduct had been and endeavoured to vindicate himself in a letter to Carlstadt. In it he styled Luther "their common friend", and cast all the blame on the Bishop of Eichstadt, at whose solicitation he pretended to have written his work. He said that it had not been his intention to publish the *Obelisks*, and demanded in conclusion that Luther, instead of disputing publicly with him, should turn his weapons against the Frankfort divines. These fine phrases did not persuade Luther, who was yet inclined to remain silent. But his friends disagreed; they constrained him to answer.

He therefore replied to the *Obelisks* with his *Asterisks*, in which he treated his adversary with less severity than he had shown his previous antagonists, but his indignation pierced through his words. Luther showed that in the *Obelisks* there was nothing from the Holy Scriptures, nothing from the Fathers of the Church; they were filled with mere opinions and empty dreams. The *Asterisks* are full of life and animation. The author is indignant at the errors of his friend's book, but he pities the man. He professes anew the fundamental principle which he laid down in his answer to Prierio: "The supreme pontiff is a man and may be led into error, but God is truth and cannot err". Further

on, he says, "It is the most impudent of all impudence to affirm in the Church and among Christians what Christ Himself has not taught. Now where is it found in the Bible that the treasure of Christ's merits is in the hands of the pope?" Luther did not publish the *Asterisks*; he communicated them solely to his friends. They were not given to the public till long afterwards.

This rupture between the doctors of Ingoldstadt and Wittenberg was a great sensation in Germany. They had many friends in common. Scheurl especially, who appears to have been the man who brought the two doctors together, was alarmed. He was one of those who desired to see a thorough reform in the German Church by means of its most distinguished men. But if, at the outset, the most eminent theologians of the day should come to blows, then what disruption might not be feared? Would two hostile camps not be formed in the bosom of the Empire?

Scheurl endeavoured therefore to reconcile Eck and Luther. The latter declared his willingness to forget everything, that he loved the genius, that he admired the learning of Doctor Eck, and that what his old friend had done had caused him more pain than anger. "I am ready," he told Scheurl, "for peace and for war, but I prefer peace. Apply yourself to the task; grieve with us that the devil has thrown among us this beginning of discord, and afterwards rejoice that Christ in his mercy has crushed it." About the same time he wrote Eck a letter full of affection, but Eck made no reply. It was no longer a season for reconciliation. The contest daily grew warmer. Eck's pride and implacable spirit soon broke entirely the last ties of that friendship.

The Holy Spirit and Prayer¹

Thomas Boston

By whose assistance is acceptable prayer performed? By the help of the Holy Spirit (Gal 4:6, Rom 8:26). There are two sorts of prayers:

(1.) A prayer made by virtue of a gift of knowledge and utterance. This is bestowed on many reprobates, and that gift may be useful to others and to the Church. But as it is merely of that sort, it is not accepted, nor does Christ put it in before the Father for acceptance.

(2.) There is a prayer wrought in men by virtue of the Holy Spirit. "I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplications" (Zec 12:10); and that is the only prayer acceptable to God (Jas 5:16). Right praying is praying in the Spirit. The

¹An edited extract from Boston's *Works*, vol 2, giving lessons from what he has said on the Shorter Catechism answer to the Question: How is the word made effectual to salvation?

breathing of the Spirit in the saints is a gale blowing from heaven that carries them out in the prayer, and it comes as far as the throne.

(1.) The Spirit helps to pray as a teaching and instructing Spirit, granting proper matter of prayer, causing us to know what we pray for (Rom 8:26); enlightening the mind in the knowledge of our needs and those of others; bringing to our remembrance these things, suggesting them to us according to the Word, together with the promises of God, on which prayer is grounded. “The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost . . . shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you” (Jn 14:26). Hence the saints are sometimes carried out in prayer for things which they had no view of before, and carried past some things they had.

(2.) The Spirit helps to pray as an enlivening Spirit (Rom 8:26), the Spirit qualifying the soul with praying graces and affections, working in the praying person a sense of need – of faith, fervency, humility etc. “Thou wilt prepare their heart” (Ps 10:17). The man may go to his knees in a very unprepared frame for prayer, yet the Spirit blows, and he is helped. It is for this reason the Spirit is said to make intercession for us – insofar as He teaches and enlivens, puts us in a praying frame and, as it were, draws our petitions, which the Mediator presents.

This praying with the help of the Spirit is confined to the saints (Jas 5:16); yet they do not have that help at all times, nor always in the same measure; for sometimes the Spirit, being provoked, departs, and they are left in a withered condition. So there is great need to look for a breathing, and to pant for it, when we are to go to duty; for if there is no gale, we will only tug heartlessly at the oars.

Let no one think that a readiness and volubility of expression in prayer is always the effect of the Spirit’s assistance. For that may be the product of a natural gift, and of the common operations of the Spirit, removing hindrances to the exercise of prayer. And it is evident that one may lack words, and have groans instead of them, while the Spirit helps him to pray (Rom 8:26). Neither is every flood of affections in prayer the effect of the Spirit of prayer. Some of them puff up a man, but make him no more holy or tender in his walk. But the influences of the Spirit will always be humbling and sanctifying. Hence David says, “Who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? For all things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee” (1 Chr 29:14). And the Apostle says, “We . . . have no confidence in the flesh” (Phil 3:3).

Man’s light may make us more learned, but God’s light more holy.
It is a degree of spiritual knowledge to know that we know nothing.
God’s laws are ways that lead us to God.

Thomas Manton

That Greatest of All Questions

A Review Article by *Rev David Campbell*

The Doctrine of Justification, by James Buchanan, published by the Banner of Truth Trust, hardback, 520 pages, £17.00, obtainable from the Free Presbyterian Bookroom.

The doctrine of justification is undoubtedly among the most important and most disputed doctrines in the history of the Christian Church. Central to the recovery of the faith once delivered to the saints at the time of the Reformation, it has been at the centre of assaults on that faith ever since. These assaults continue in the present day, not only in the widespread Arminianism within Protestant churches, but also in the New Perspective on Paul and the widespread universalism in pulpits where once the Calvinism of the Reformed creeds was the only standard of orthodoxy.

Martin Luther asserted that “if this article [of justification] stands, the church stands; if this article collapses, the church collapses”.¹ The volume under review confirms this assertion to be true and should be an essential starting place for any preacher desiring to understand the history of the doctrine or seeking a fresh and biblical exposition of it. It will also prove to be a most profitable study in the doctrine of the gospel for any reader seeking an answer to that greatest of all questions, How shall a man be just with God?

Dr James Buchanan (1804-1870) was a leading Disruption divine and Professor of Systematic Theology at the New College in Edinburgh after the death of Dr Chalmers in 1847. A brief biographical sketch gives the main events in his life. It also highlights the change that had come over the late-nineteenth-century Free Church, relating how William Robertson Smith and Marcus Dods – two infamous heretics of the period – found his lectures tedious and “painfully prolix”. The sketch by Charles Walker and the useful introduction by Dr James Packer (prepared for the 1961 edition) correctly identify Buchanan’s peerless contribution to the defence of the Westminster doctrine, most notably in the face of false teachers arising within the Church itself. The history of the Free Church, and of the Protestant Church in general, since the emergence of the German Higher Criticism, has fully justified Luther’s identification of this doctrine as the test of a standing or collapsing church.

The volume is divided into two main parts – the first dealing with the history of the doctrine and the second with its exposition. The first part is a

¹<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/justin-taylor/luthers-saying>.

series of seven lectures covering, in fairly rapid survey, the doctrine in the Old Testament and Apostolic periods, through the Scholastic and Reformation times, before dealing with its history “in the Romish Church after the Reformation”, considering it as a “Subject of Controversy in Protestant Churches”, and giving a “History of the Doctrine in the Church of England”. In this survey, the main attacks made on the doctrine and the defences raised to counter these, are thoroughly handled. While some readers may prefer to go directly to the second part of the treatise, this first part of the volume will repay careful reading. A few interesting observations in connection with the history of the doctrine may be worth mentioning.

Concerning the early Church Fathers, Buchanan argues that they found the doctrine of justification “an established and unquestioned article of the common faith, and they assumed and applied it in all their writings, without thinking it necessary to enter into any formal explanation or proof of it” (p 78). He brings out that the Reformers held in common “whatever is essential and fundamental in the question of justification”, particularly the four points: the nature, the ground, the means, and the effect of it (p 107f), noting that “few things in the history of the Church are more remarkable than the entire unanimity of the Reformers on the subject of a sinner’s justification before God” (p 141).

Buchanan concludes that their teaching of justification “imparted immediate relief and comfort to many anxious and distressed consciences . . . and proved at many a homely hearth and in many a monastic cell – in some, even of the palaces of princes – that it was still, as of old, ‘the power of God unto salvation’” (p 118). Identifying a “widespread and growing defection from the old theology of the Reformation” in the Church of England, Buchanan accurately diagnoses the disease. Among several causes mentioned is “the leaven of Arminian and Pelagian error . . . imbibed by many who continued to adhere to the Thirty-Nine Articles” (p 186). This familiar evil, and other external causes, together with the “natural Popery of the human heart” will ever be a source of danger to Reformed Churches.

The second, and arguably more readable part, consists of a further seven lectures divided into 33 propositions. It is no exaggeration to say that these propositions masterfully present the full-orbed gospel of the Christian Church, and act as a bulwark against every species of error and deceit arrayed against it. Introducing his subject, Buchanan makes the insightful remark: “The best preparation for the study of this doctrine is neither great intellectual ability, nor much scholastic learning – but . . . a conviction of the fact of sin, as an awful reality in our own personal experience; of the power of sin, as an inveterate evil cleaving to us continually, and having its roots in the innermost

recesses of our hearts; and of the guilt of sin, past as well as present, as an offence against God which, once committed, can never cease to be true of us individually, and which, however He may be pleased to deal with it, has deserved His wrath and righteous condemnation” (p 208).

Dealing with the meaning of the term, the nature of the blessing, and its relation to law and justice, he then considers justification in its “Relation to the Mediatorial Work of Christ”. He then deals with its “Immediate and Only Ground – the Imputed Righteousness of Christ”. The study then goes on to deal with the deeply practical subjects of its “Relation to Grace and Works and its Connection with Faith”. Perhaps readers will be encouraged to pursue these lectures fully if the terms of the propositions 25-29 concerning the nature and reason of the connection between justification and faith are given:

“We are justified by faith, and faith is counted or imputed to us for righteousness; but faith is not itself the righteousness on account of which we are justified.”

“The faith by which we are justified is a spiritual grace – as being the gift of God and one of the fruits of his Spirit – and, as such, is acceptable and well-pleasing to Him through Jesus Christ.”

“A real influence or efficacy is ascribed to faith in connection with our justification, but it is such only as belongs to a divinely appointed means of receiving and appropriating a free gift.”

“The only warrant of faith is the Word of God, and that Word is sufficient, not only to entitle every sinner to receive and rest upon Christ for his personal salvation, but to make it his duty to do so without delay.”

“We are justified by faith only, simply because it is by faith and by no other grace that we believe the truth concerning Christ and rely on Him alone for salvation as He is freely offered to us in the gospel” (pp 340-359).

Some of the 33 propositions are dealt with briefly, in no more than a page, others cover 10 or 12 pages. Many useful distinctions are made, including an eminently helpful discussion of the distinction between justification and adoption, in which he asserts, “Pardon, acceptance and adoption are distinct privileges, the one rising above the other in the order in which they have been stated” (p 244). The essential distinction between justification and sanctification is addressed fully in both parts of the work, but Buchanan makes clear that “regeneration and justification are simultaneous; and no man is justified who is not renewed, nor is any man renewed who is not also, and immediately, justified” (p 370). In the final lecture, on the “Relation [of Justification] to the Work of the Holy Spirit”, Buchanan explains that, “by the agency of the Holy Spirit, who works faith in us by enabling and persuad-

ing us to receive and rest upon Christ alone for salvation, we are united to Christ; and by our union with Him, we are made partakers of all the blessings which He died to purchase and is exalted to bestow” (p 371).

It would be eminently useful for present-day preachers to re-acquaint themselves with this classic work on the great Reformation doctrine of justification. It would doubtless affect their own study of the Word and their emphasis in preaching. It would also, with the blessing of God, strengthen the walls of Zion against the old Popish and Arminian heresies on the subject, in whatever guise they resurface. Other readers will glean valuable insights which will greatly aid their understanding of the doctrine. This reprint, which includes invaluable notes in appendices, benefits greatly from being entirely retypeset and has all the features of quality which we have come to expect from Banner of Truth publications.

Homosexuality (1)¹

Introduction. By any reckoning, homosexuality has become the defining and dividing issue of the current generation. It is widely taken for granted that any area of influence within society, such as politics, public sector bodies, the media and corporate business, should not only accept homosexuality, but actively promote and celebrate it.

This movement seems to be driven by a false zeal to appear “virtuous” according to the new values in which biblical morality is turned upside down. Indeed it seems that the only thing many might call “sin” today is the conviction that homosexuality is sinful. Such is the wholesale subversion of biblical morality in our culture.

This revolution has had a very destructive impact on society’s understanding of morality, love, liberty, marriage, the family and much more that is critical to God-honouring living. God has appointed the marriage union between one man and one woman and protected it with the Seventh Commandment. As *The Westminster Larger Catechism* makes clear, “Thou shalt not commit adultery” includes the prohibition of “sodomy and unnatural lusts” (Ans 139).

Cultural pressure is also being exerted on the professing Christian Church; thus a believing submission to, and willingness to comply with, the clear teaching of Scripture is often lacking. In doing so they manifest an enmity to God, truth, righteousness and the spiritual and eternal good of their fellow

¹This paper has been prepared by the Religion and Morals Committee of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

men. They may sincerely intend the love and compassion of which they speak, but they come under the judgement of those that “have pleasure in them that do” such things (Rom 1:32).

Faithfulness to God and His unchanging standards of righteousness, as well as love to souls, require us to give the clearest possible testimony in this matter. Silence in such a matter would be sinful both in relation to God and our fellow men. Those who defend homosexuality dismiss the moral principles maintained in this paper as hateful prejudice, or accuse us of having malicious motives in criticising their lifestyle. Our purpose, however, is solely to speak the truth in love.

Another emotive way to attack those who politely but firmly maintain that homosexuality is sinful is to accuse them of homophobic bullying and causing depression and low self-esteem. It goes without saying that harsh and rash bullying is condemned by the Ninth Commandment, “Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour”. Yet the same commandment also requires us to stand for the truth.

In part, the problem is that those who make such claims do not have a true notion of sin and repentance. They equate guilt with shame. Scripture shows that it is essential that sinners feel their sin and are burdened by it in order to seek the only remedy of forgiveness in Christ.

This paper does not present personal opinion, nor does it deal with changeable scientific and social analysis. What the individual believes is of no ultimate consequence, unless he rests in the unchanging Word of God alone. The Church’s role is to be the pillar and ground of truth by declaring only what God has made known in the Scriptures, not with an uncertain sound and not yielding one hairsbreadth of God’s truth, for it does not belong to us but to God.

Section 1: Direct Scripture Testimony Against the Sin of Homosexuality.

A. Old Testament References.

1. *Sodom and Gomorrah* – Genesis 13:13; 18:20; 19:1-11. It is remarkable how early on in the Scriptures we find the sin of Sodom mentioned. First we read that Sodom was ripe for judgement because of this sin. “But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly” (Gen 13:13). “And the Lord said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto Me; and if not, I will know” (Gen 18:19,20). Other nations had these sins too, but the men of Sodom also “committed abomination before” God as described in Ezekiel 16:50.

Comparing scripture with scripture we discover that the particular sin which

singled Sodom out from other wicked cities or nations was homosexuality. In Genesis 19:5-8 we read of their homosexual tendencies when the “men of Sodom, old and young, all the people from every quarter” came to Lot’s house seeking “to know” two men who had come to stay in Lot’s house. They said, “Where are the men which came in to thee this night? Bring them out unto us, that we may know them”. Lot well knew what they meant by “know them” when he replied, “I pray you, brethren do not so wickedly. Behold now I have two daughters which have not known man; let me, I pray you bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as is good in your eyes: only unto these men do nothing; for therefore came they under the shadow of my roof.” The heinousness of the sin of homosexuality is brought out by the contrast made with uncleanness with Lot’s daughters which, though great sin in itself, was not so aggravated as that of uncleanness between men.

The awful judgement which subsequently came to Sodom further shows the heinousness of the sin. The angels said to Lot, “For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the Lord; and the Lord hath sent us to destroy it” (Gen 19:13). We read, “Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven; and He overthrew these cities, and that which grew upon the ground” (Gen 19:24,25). Their punishment became proverbial for awful judgement upon a people as we see, for example, from Deuteronomy 29:22,23, where it is said of the curse that would come on Israel for their sins “that the whole land thereof is brimstone, and salt, and burning, that it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein, like the overthrow of Sodom, and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim, which the Lord overthrew in His anger, and in His wrath”.

Their sin became proverbial for great sin. In Ezekiel 16:49,50, Israel’s departure from the Lord is compared to the sin of Sodom, which is described in the following way: “Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. And they were haughty, and committed abomination before Me; therefore I took them away as I saw good.” Here the abomination before the Lord, their crowning sin, was homosexuality. This particular sin has often been called after their city. In the list of sins which Judah committed above all that their fathers had done in the sight of the Lord, we read, “And there were also sodomites in the land: and they did according to all the abominations of the nations which the Lord cast out before the children of Israel” (1 Ki 14:24). Then in 1 Kings 15, where we read of King Asa doing that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, it is added, “And he took away the sodomites out of

the land, and removed all the idols that his father had made” (1 Ki 15:12). This shows, incidentally, that the civil magistrate has a duty to forbid and prevent this sin.

2. *Homosexuality forbidden by the law of God:* Leviticus 18:22. Leviticus 18 forbids numerous sins of uncleanness such as incest and bestiality, and also the practice of slaying children by causing them to pass through the fire. In this context we read at verse 22, “Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination”. Here is an express command forbidding homosexuality, and again the aggravated nature of this sin, even compared to other sins of uncleanness, is brought out in the statement, “It is abomination”.

3. *Homosexuality was a punishable offence in the Old Testament:* Leviticus 20:13. The punishment under the law for those guilty of various forms of uncleanness is dealt with in this chapter. We read at verse 13, “If a man lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them”. In common with sins such as adultery and bestiality, Sodomites were counted worthy of the death penalty under the Mosaic law. Once again the description of sodomy as abomination is given. Under the New Testament dispensation, of course, the death penalty no longer applies to sins such as homosexuality.

4. *The incident at Gibeah:* Judges 19:22-24. As an example of how degenerate the Israelites had become after inheriting the land of Canaan, we read of another attempt at forced homosexuality. A man and his concubine were given hospitality in the house of a man of Gibeah and we read that the men of the city “beset the house round about, and beat at the door, and spake to the master of the house, the old man, saying, Bring forth the man that came into thine house, that we may know him. And the man, the master of the house, went out unto them, and said unto them, Nay, my brethren, nay, I pray you, do not so wickedly; seeing that this man is come into mine house, do not this folly. Behold, here is my daughter a maiden, and his concubine; them I will bring out now and humble ye them, and do with them what seemeth good unto you: but unto this man do not so vile a thing.” Here the sin of homosexuality is described as “doing wickedly”, “folly” and “so vile a thing”.

Summary: The Old Testament shows that homosexuality is a sin and a particularly aggravated sin. It is classified alongside adultery, incest and bestiality.

B. New Testament References to the Sin of Homosexuality.

1. *Romans 1:20-32.* In describing the sins of the heathen world in Romans 1, the Apostle Paul describes the sin of homosexuality as a “vile affection”. “For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: and likewise also

the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient” (Rom 1:26-28). Here the sin of homosexuality is also described as being “against nature”, a “burning in lust”, “unseemly”, “error” and “things which are not convenient” – that is, things which are improper. It is also seen that this sin, as was the case in Sodom, is itself a judgement which results from an accumulation of prior sins and rejection of God. It is also clear that the orientation towards this sin as well as the behaviour itself is sin, because the root of this sin is said to be a reprobate mind.

2. *1 Corinthians 6:9-11*. In 1 Corinthians 6:9 we read of those who “shall not inherit the kingdom of God” and in this verse we find the terms, “effeminate” and “abusers of themselves with mankind”. These two terms in the original Greek language describe those who participate in acts of homosexuality, and they are listed alongside other sins such as fornication and drunkenness. All such people are described as being among the “unrighteous” who “shall not inherit the kingdom of God”.

3. *1 Timothy 1:10*. In this chapter we have a list of those who are lawless, disobedient, ungodly, sinners, unholy and profane. The law is made for such transgressors as “murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons”. The term “them that defile themselves with mankind” is a translation of the same Greek word translated “abusers of themselves with mankind” in 1 Corinthians 6:9. So here is another reference to the sin of homosexuality and it is found alongside the sins of murder and stealing.

4. *2 Peter 2:6*. In 2 Peter 2:6 we read that, along with old world which was destroyed by the flood, God also destroyed Sodom. The sin of the Sodomites is here described as the “filthy conversation [that is, way of life] of the wicked” and “unlawful deeds”. “And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; and delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: for that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds” (2 Pet 2:6-8).

Summary. Thus the New Testament witness is that the sin of homosexuality is among the most heinous sins which men and woman are capable of. It is evident that it is a sin which is forbidden by the Seventh Commandment and

it is made clear that those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven and they are worthy of God's wrath.

Abundance of Peace¹

W K Tweedie

Psalm 68:18. *Thou hast ascended on high, Thou hast led captivity captive: Thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them.*

No one can be truly happy but the believer in Jesus, for surely no one can be happy while he lies under the load of unpardoned sin, and therefore under the wrath of the Holy One. But when sin is pardoned, and God is our friend, how jubilant may the soul become! How full, how perfect is its peace; how rich its portion, how exhaustless its joy! Light is now sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.

The Prince of Peace is at once that soul's Saviour and its portion. It may walk with "the very God of peace". It may enjoy "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding"; or to say all in one, "the kingdom of God is within you"; and that is "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost". He who led captivity captive and received gifts for men, even for the rebellious, has taught them to walk with God again. The Lord God is to dwell in them, and walk in them. He is to be their God, and they are to be His sons and daughters.

But the *gifts* which the Prince of Peace thus received for men are countless. Does the believer veer and change? The unchanging One is now his portion. Does he sin? The God of pardons blots out iniquity. Does the believer pray? God hears and answers. Is the believer afraid? His God defends. Is he bereaved and sad? His God comforts. Is the believer poor? He who led captivity captive imparts unsearchable riches.

In short, his God is a little sanctuary to him. He hides the believer in the hollow of His hand, and even his dying chamber may be turned into the ante-room of glory. Why then should the believer in Jesus be downcast and gloomy? Why should he hang down his head like a bulrush? Why act as if his God were not the Prince of Peace? Away, my soul, with that evil report against the truth. The Lord will no more forget His people than a mother will forget the infant of her love. Arise then from the dust. Look up to the Sun of Righteousness. Reflect some rays of His brightness; walk like a child of the light, and so win others to walk with thee.

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

Profiting from the Word of God¹

Thomas Boston

1. *Prize your Bibles* and read them diligently in your families and by yourselves. And look on that exercise as a means appointed by God for your souls' good. "Search the scriptures" (Jn 5:39). Alas, the dust on many people's Bibles will be a heavy witness against them at the great day, which should stimulate us all to peruse them carefully.

2. *Prize the preaching of the Word*, and attend on it conscientiously and remember that neglecting it and deserting it is not such a light thing as many think it is; it is the spiritual means which the Lord uses in converting sinners and edifying saints. And it is necessarily productive of the most terrible consequences to those who despise it.

3. *Let not the one jostle out the other*. God has joined them; do not then put them asunder. Do not think that, because you hear the preaching, you may neglect reading the Bible; nor sit at home unnecessarily on the Lord's Day, thinking you do as well with your Bibles as attending the preaching of the Word. For as the preaching sends you to your Bible, your Bible should send you to the preaching, if you would listen to it (see 1 Cor 1:21). And the Bible is read in vain if it does not inspire you with a sincere love to the preaching of the Word.

4. *The Word is necessary for saints as well as sinners*. It is false growth by which people grow beyond it, either in preaching or reading, before they get to heaven. Indeed all such growth and progress is an absolute delusion.

5. *Look to the Lord Himself to make the Word effectual*. And labour to believe the Word so that it may profit your souls. For without faith, the Word will be unprofitable to you; and without the influence of the Spirit, you will reap no benefit by it.

Protestant View

The Pope and the Lord's Prayer

Recently, the Pope aroused widespread comment by his suggestion that the first clause of the sixth petition of the Lord's Prayer, "And lead us not into temptation" (Mt 6:13), should be altered in its English translation to something like, "Do not let us fall into temptation". We object to this view, however,

¹An edited extract from Boston's *Works*, vol 2, giving lessons from what he has said on the Shorter Catechism answer to the Question: How is the word made effectual to salvation?

for a number of reasons. Firstly, his suggested rendering is not as faithful to the words of Scripture as the rendering we have in the Authorised Version and is therefore to be rejected. The Greek verb *eisphero* literally means to be “carried into” or “brought into”. Christ is using this word in a figurative manner – not in a physical way – when He teaches us to pray, “Lead us not into temptation”. The rendering, “lead us not”, is therefore a good translation and reflects the Lord’s meaning more accurately than the alternative being proposed by the Man of Sin. It is highly dangerous to attempt to alter the translation of Scripture in an inaccurate direction.

Secondly, his comments suggest that our translation is misleading theologically and morally, liable to be construed as suggesting that God actively induces or brings men into sin. This is not what the Lord Jesus Christ taught, nor do we believe it is what our translators intended. Furthermore, the Pope’s objection tends to obscure the Bible’s teaching on the relationship between God’s providence and the existence of sin in His creatures. That Christ gave us the sixth petition reflects our proneness and willingness to fall into sin and our need of divine keeping to support and deliver us from all temptation and evil.

The Holy One is not and cannot be the author of sin, and this is very clearly set forth in James 1:13-15, which includes the words, “neither tempteth He any man”. This is the fundamental fact we must always bear in mind. Nevertheless, He does permit His creatures to fall into sin without being responsible for their sinning in the least degree. He does this for His own most holy and wise purposes and, as far as His people are concerned, even these mysterious and dreadfully-solemn dealings will yet work out for their good, as part of the “all things” He is working together for them (Rom 8:28). The sin is always entirely evil and completely our responsibility, but divine wisdom, power and mercy alone can make the forgiveness and deliverance *from* sin a wonderful blessing to God’s children. “This also cometh forth from the Lord of Hosts, which is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working” (Is 28:29).

Satan is the one who tempts to sin, but we are to pray to God the Father, for Christ’s sake, to deliver us from temptation. If we neglect this, God may justly leave us to discover more and more of the awful tendency to sin that is in our hearts. Those who have a true sense of their own sin will readily identify with the prayer of David in Psalm 17:5:

“Hold up my goings, Lord, me guide in those Thy paths divine;
So that my footsteps may not slide out of those ways of Thine”.

This subject is admittedly a very difficult area, and readers are especially referred to the chapters in the *Westminster Confession of Faith* on “God’s

Eternal Decree” and “Providence”, with the proof-texts, for the correct, biblical position. Clearly any translation or interpretation of Scripture which is based on a distorted view of the biblical facts must be strenuously opposed.

AWM

Notes and Comments

Persecution of Christians in Iraq

Horrifying reports of Christian persecution regularly come out of the Middle East. Iraq, for example – which is still experiencing great turmoil – had one of the oldest Christian communities in the world. There were over 1.5 million professed believers (in the widest sense) there some decades ago, but now, in the wake of persecution, over 75% of them have left the country.

Many examples could be given but perhaps an account of the treatment meted out to one 30-year-old Iraqi Christian woman reveals the extent of the persecution. Rita Habib Ayyoub was kidnapped, beaten, raped and held by her Jihadi captors for three years before being rescued last November by the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). Rita comes from the Nineveh plains of northern Iraq – where ISIS nearly wiped out the indigenous community.

In an interview she gave details of the horrors she endured from her kidnapers: “When ISIS invaded . . . my father and I were kidnapped by the terrorists. They took us to a hospital in the city of Mosul. They split up the women and the men. I haven’t heard anything about my father since.” Many did escape, but others disappeared. It was believed that most of those who disappeared were killed, but some have unexpectedly been rescued.

Rita continues, “The terrorists changed my name to Maria. . . . In the hospital in Mosul, we women were subjected to the most degrading abuse. Three children from my people were with me, and I witnessed them being sold to emirs (ISIS leaders) in Mosul. I was sold to Abu Mus’ab al-Iraqi. In his home, there was also a girl from Sinjar named Shata . . . she was only 14 years old.” Reta adds that the emir, Abu Mus’ab, enjoyed torturing them in other ways. She recalls, “He made us watch videos with terrorists slaughtering non-Muslims. In one of them, they were beheading Shata’s brother”.

After six months Reta found that Abu Mus’ab “got tired of her” and wanted to get money by “selling her off”. She says, “He sold me to another terrorist, and I was transported to Raqqa, Syria. But he did not keep me . . . he sold me to a third terrorist, a Saudi named Abu Khalid al-Saudi.” The cruelty continued in his household, where Reta was routinely beaten severely by the terrorist’s first wife, and the quest to forcefully convert her to Islam began.

She states, “Abu Khalid was married to a woman from Morocco. I was beaten and tortured by her every day. She would not give up until I was bleeding, from my head, for example. They made me read the Quran and threatened to kill me if I did not convert to Islam.” A few months later, she was sold again: “After four months in Raqqa, I was transported to Abu Kamal, on the border between Syria and Iraq. I was there for a year and four months, then I was moved once more, this time to the village outside of Deir ez-Zur.” Mercifully, in Syria, she was rescued by the SDF.

This tragic case reveals the sin and cruelty perpetrated by ISIS on one woman. Such cruelty is being replicated countless times across regions controlled by ISIS. It should cause us to pray earnestly for those who are persecuted and also pray that God would protect us, unworthy as we are as a nation, from the destructive activity of evil men. KHM

Use of “Thee” and “Thou” in Prayer

The earliest recorded Scottish prayers and addresses to God are probably those in works such as *Patrick’s Places* (written in 1527), Gau’s *Right Way into the Kingdom of Heaven* (1533), Archbishop Hamilton’s *Catechism* (1552), and Knox’s *History* (which he started writing in 1559). All the recorded prayers in these books use the singular form “thee” in addressing God, rather than the plural “you”. In this, they were following the practice of the Greek and Hebrew originals in the Bible, and also the Latin Vulgate, with which all these writers were familiar.

The same works show that, in daily speech, the “thou” form was occasionally used, especially in more religious contexts, but that the “you” form was normal. Knox invariably addresses his correspondents as “you” in his letters; and the assassins of Cardinal Beaton in 1546 address him as “you” when they are trying to force his door but as “thou” when they are warning him to prepare for death. Thus from the very beginning, when English (or Scots) displaced Latin as the language of religion, the people of Lowland Scotland were addressing the Most High as “thou”, but one another ordinarily as “you”.

This uniform practice continued until the twentieth century, when the modern-language versions of the Bible abandoned the “thou” form, and some people changed their prayers accordingly. This change has not brought any advantage to the Church. Instead, it has brought division, confusion, increasing conformity to the world, and loss of contact with the religious heritage of the past. As at the Tower of Babel, when the godly kept their language and their heritage, but the rest were deprived of their native tongue and lost their heritage with it, so it has been with the introduction of modern versions of the Bible.

Those that embraced them soon complained that they – or the mythical “man off the street” – could not understand the old language, and that they found the old Reformed and Puritan writers too difficult to read. Their religion, accordingly, had to be adjusted to the modern world. Those that retained the old practice thought that these complaints of incomprehension were imaginary, or vastly exaggerated; and they continue to think so now in 2018 when the “man off the street” is as likely to be African, Chinese, or South American as to be ethnic British, and yet seems to have no great difficulty with the old English language.

The Israelites kept their Hebrew Scriptures “unmodernised” for 800 years from Moses to Jeremiah, although doubtless their language changed in that time. With the rich heritage that God has given to British Christianity, we should not be ashamed to follow the same pattern. *DWBS*

Church Information

Mr Hugh Gunn

An elder of long standing in the Inverness Congregation, he passed to his eternal rest on 18 December 2017. May the Lord comfort the family and raise up others to take the place of those whom He is removing to a better world.

Committee Meetings

Synod committees will meet, DV, in Inverness Free Presbyterian Church on Tuesday, March 20, as follows:

- 10.00 - 10.30 Church Interests Committee
- 10.30 - 12.00 Training of the Ministry Committee
- 12.00 - 13.00 Sabbath Observance Committee
- 14.00 - 15.00 Outreach Committee
- 14.00 - 17.00 Finance Committee
- 15.00 - 17.00 Religion and Morals Committee
- 18.00 - 19.30 Publications and Bookroom Committee
- 19.30 - 20.30 Welfare of Youth Committee
- 19.30 - 20.30 Dominions and Overseas Committee

(Rev) K M Watkins, Clerk of Synod

Bookroom Fund

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

W Campbell, General Treasurer

FREE PRESBYTERIAN PLACES OF WORSHIP

Scotland

- Aberdeen:** 2 Alford Place, AB10 1YD, Sabbath 11 am, 6 pm; Tuesday, 7.15 pm. Rev D W B Somerset BSc DPhil, 18 Carlton Place, Aberdeen, AB15 4BQ; tel: 01224 645250.
- Bracadale Duirinish-Strath:** **Struan:** Sabbath 12 noon. **Glendale** and **Vatten:** Sabbath 6pm, alternately. Thursday 7 pm, rotating between Struan, Vatten and Glendale. Contact Rev I D MacDonald; tel: 01478 612110.
- Dingwall:** Church, Hill Street: Sabbath 11 am, 6.30 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. **Beauty** (Balblair): Sabbath 6.30 pm, Thursday 7.30 pm. Contact Mr A MacLean: 01349 862855.
- Dornoch:** Sabbath 11.30 am. Manse tel: 01862 810615. **Bonar:** Sabbath 6 pm. Wednesday 7.30 pm (alternately in Dornoch and Bonar). **Laig:** Church and Manse; **Rogart:** Church; no F P services. Contact Mr A Sutherland; tel: 015494 02115.
- Dundee:** Manse. No F P Church services.
- Edinburgh:** 63 Gilmore Place, EH3 9NU, Sabbath 11 am, 6 pm; Thursday 7.30 pm. Rev D Campbell, 35B Barnton Avenue West, Edinburgh EH4 6DF; tel: 0131 312 8227, e-mail: dcampbell1560@gmail.com.
- Farr** (by Daviot): Sabbath 12 noon. **Tomatin:** Sabbath 12 noon. **Stratherrick:** Sabbath 12 noon. (Each of these services is held once in three weeks as intimated). **Farr:** Thursday 7.30 pm (as intimated). Contact Mr M J Schouten; tel: 01463 221776.
- Fort William:** Monzie Square, Sabbath 11 am, 6.30 pm as intimated. Manse: 15 Perth Place, PH33 6UL; tel: 01397 708553. Contact Mr D A McKinnon. Tel: 01397 702597.
- Gairloch** (Ross-shire): Sabbath 11 am, 6.30 pm. Prayer meeting in **Strath**, Thursday 7.30 pm. Rev A E W MacDonald MA, F P Manse, Gairloch, Ross-shire, IV21 2BS; tel: 01445 712247.
- Glasgow:** St Jude's Church, 137 Woodlands Road, G3 6LE. Sabbath 11 am and 6.30 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. Rev Roderick 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. Sabbath 2.30 p.m.
- Halkirk:** Sabbath 11.30 am; Thursday 7.30 pm. Rev W A Weale, F P Manse, Bridge Street, KW12 6YG; tel: 01847 831758. **Thurso:** Sabbath 5 pm; **Strathy:** Sabbath: 6.30 pm (first and third Sabbaths of month).
- Harris (North):** **Tarbert:** Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm. **Tarbert** and **Stockinish:** Tuesday 7.30 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; Wednesday 7 pm. **Sheilebost:** as intimated. Manse tel: 01859 520271. Contact Rev J B Jardine; tel: 01859 502253.
- Inverness:** Chapel Street, IV1 1NA, Sabbath 11 am, 6.30 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. Rev K D Macleod BSc, 11 Auldcastle Road, Inverness, IV2 3PZ; tel: 01463 712872.
- Kinlochbervie:** Sabbath 6 pm; **Scourie:** Sabbath 11:30 am, Tuesday 7 pm (as intimated). Contact Mr A Ross; tel 01971 502099.
- Kyle of Lochalsh:** Sabbath 6 pm. Manse tel: 01599 534933. Contact Rev D A Ross; tel: 01445 731340.
- Laide** (Ross-shire): Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. Rev D A Ross. F P Manse, Laide, IV22 2NB; tel: 01445 731340.
- Lochcarron:** Sabbath 11 am, 6 pm; Wednesday 7 pm. Manse.
- Lochinver:** Church. No F P services at present. Manse tel: 01571 844484.
- Ness:** Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm; Wednesday 7 pm. Rev A W MacColl MA PhD, F P Manse, Swainbost, HS2 0TA; tel: 01851 810228.
- North Tolsta:** Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm; Thursday 7 pm; 1st Monday of month 7 pm. Manse tel: 01851 890325. Contact Rev J R Tallach; tel: 01851 702501.
- North Uist:** **Bayhead:** Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm; Thursday 7.30 pm (fortnightly). Manse tel: 01876 510233. Contact: Rev J B Jardine; tel: 01859 502253.
- Oban:** Church and Manse. No F P services at present.
- Perth:** Pomarium, off Leonard Street. Sabbath 11 am, 6 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. Contact Rev D Campbell; tel: 0131 312 8227.
- Portree:** Sabbath 12 noon, 6.30 pm; Wednesday 7 pm. Rev I D MacDonald, F P Manse, Achachork, Portree, IV51 9HT; tel: 01478 612110.
- Raasay:** Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm; Saturday 7 pm. Contact Rev I D MacDonald; tel: 01478 612110.
- Shieldaig:** Sabbath 11 am; **Applecross:** Sabbath 6pm. Tuesday 7 pm (alternately in Shieldaig and Applecross). Shieldaig manse tel: 01520 755259, Applecross manse tel: 01520 744411. Contact Rev D A Ross; tel: 01445 731340.
- Staffin:** Sabbath 12 noon, 5 pm; Wednesday 7 pm. Rev D Macdonald, F P Manse, Clachan, Staffin, IV51 9HY tel: 01470 562243.
- Stornoway:** Matheson Road, Sabbath 11 am, 6.30 pm; Thursday 7.30 pm. **Achmorr:** Sabbath 12 noon; Tuesday 7 pm. Rev J R Tallach MB ChB, 2 Fleming Place, Stornoway, HS1 2NH; tel: 01851 702501.
- Tain:** Church and Manse. **Fearn:** Church. No F P services. See Dornoch and Bonar.
- Uig (Lewis) Miavaig:** Sabbath 12 noon Gaelic, 6 pm English; Wednesday 12 noon. Manse tel: 01851 672251. Contact Rev A W MacColl; tel: 01851 810228.
- Ullapool:** Sabbath 11 am, 6 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. Manse: Quay Street, IV26 2UE; tel: 01854 612449.

England

- Barnoldswick:** Kelbrook Road, Sabbath 11 am, 6 pm; Friday 7.30 pm; Wednesday 8 pm, alternately in Sandbach and Gatley. **South Manchester:** Sabbath 6.00 pm, in Trinity Church, Massie Street, Cheadle (entry at rear of building). Rev K M Watkins BA, 252 Briercliffe Road, Burnley, BB10 2DQ; tel: 01282 835800.
- Broadstairs:** Sabbath 11 am, 5 pm at Portland Centre, Hopeville Ave, St Peter's; Tuesday 7 pm at Friends' Meeting House, St Peter's Park Rd. Contact Dr T Martin; tel: 01843 866369.
- London:** Zoar Chapel, Varden St, E1. Sabbath 11 am, 6.30 pm; Wednesday 7 pm. Rev J MacLeod MA, 6 Church Ave, Sidcup, Kent, DA14 6BU; tel: 0208 309 1623.

Northern Ireland

- Larne:** Station Road. Sabbath 11.30 am, 6.30 pm. Contact Rev K M Watkins; tel: 01282 835800.

Canada

Chesley, Ontario: Church and Manse, 40 Fourth Street SW. Sabbath 10.30 am, 7.30 pm; Tuesday 8 pm. Contact: Mr David Kuiper; tel: 519 363 0367; or Mr Gilbert Zekveld; tel: 519 363 5899. Manse tel: 519 363 2502.

Vancouver: Burnaby Community Room, 3605 Gilmore Way, Burnaby, BC, V5G 4X5. Sabbath 9.30 am, 6.30 pm. Contact: Mr Douglas Spratt, tel: 604 990 4051, or Mr David Kuiper; tel: 519 363 0367. E-mail: info@fpchurchvancouver.ca.

USA

Santa Fe, Texas: Church and Manse, 4031 Jackson St 77517. Sabbath 10.30 am, 6.30 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. Contact Mr Joseph Smith; tel: 409 927 1564.

Australia

Grafton, NSW: 172 Fitzroy Street. Sabbath 11 am, 6.30 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: sydneyfpchurch@aapt.net.au.

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: 09 282 4195.

Gisborne: 463a Childers Road. Sabbath 11 am, 6 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. Rev C Hembd, 14 Thomson St, Gisborne 4010; tel: 06 863 3140.

Tauranga: 45 Cliff Road, Sabbath 11 am, 7 pm; Wednesday 7 pm. Contact: Mr Dick Vermeulen; tel: 075443677.

Wellington (Carterton): 124 High Street North, Carterton. Sabbath 11 am, 4 pm; 3rd Wednesday of the month (not secondary school holidays) 7.30 pm. Contact: Mr Hank Optland, P O Box 150, Carterton, 5743; tel: 02 7432 5625.

Singapore

Singapore: Sabbath: 9.30am and 5.30 pm; Beacon International College, 70 Martaban Road, Singapore 328667 (entrance is opposite 37/39 Mandalay Road); Wednesday: 7.45 pm, Lion Building B, #02-11, 12 Arumugam Road, Singapore 409958. Contact: Mr Bernard Yong, 4 Chuan Place, Singapore 554822; tel: (65) 6383 4466, fax: 6383 4477, e-mail: byong1@singnet.com.sg.

Ukraine

Odessa: F P Mission Station, 3 Pestelya Street, 65031. Sabbath 12 noon, 6 pm; Wednesday 6 pm. Rev D Levvyskyi; tel: 00 38 048 785 19 24; e-mail: dlevvyskyi@gmail.com; or contact Mr I Zadorozhnyi, P O Box 100, Odessa-91, 65091; e-mail: antipa@eurocom.od.ua.

Zimbabwe

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

Ingwenya: Church and Secondary School. Rev A B MacLean. Postal Address: Ingwenya Mission, Private Bag T5445, Bulawayo.

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

New Canaan: Church.

Zenka: Church. Rev M Mloyi. Postal Address: Private Bag T5398, Bulawayo; cell phone: 0026311 765032.

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