

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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The Cities of Refuge

The Old Testament law contains many provisions which are typical of spiritual realities; they point forward to something on a higher level, and there is some similarity, or similarities, between the type and its fulfilment. One such provision is the city of refuge, given as a place of safety for the manslayer – corresponding to which is a spiritual reality.

But the city of refuge was not provided for someone who had committed deliberate murder, but for someone who had killed inadvertently. One of the examples given is a man wielding an axe and the blade comes away from the handle, flies through the air and hits another person with fatal results (see Deut 19:5). The city of refuge was a place where the manslayer could flee for protection from the “avenger of blood”, a close relation whose responsibility it was to kill the person who had killed his relative.

The law made clear that the murderer “shall surely be put to death” (Num 35:16). This requirement is not merely a provision in the civil law of Israel; it reflects the permanent command given immediately after the flood, for all mankind for all time: “Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made He man” (Gen 9:6). Thus capital punishment is still the proper penalty for deliberate murder. And countries that ignore God’s revealed mind on the matter should consider very seriously the further statement from a passage already quoted: “Blood . . . defileth the land: and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it” (Num 35:33).

In providing cities of refuge, God, in great kindness, was making a suitable provision for someone who killed accidentally. These cities point to a far more wonderful provision that God has made in His great mercy for sinners; they may not have killed, either deliberately or inadvertently, but they are condemned to eternal death, for the wages of every sin is death – *eternal* death is what every sin deserves; it is what every sinner deserves.

God has provided a place of refuge for sinners; a place where those condemned to eternal death can be safe. For “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” (1 Tim 1:15); He is the refuge to which sinners are to flee.

To flee to Christ is another way of saying *to betake ourselves to Him*, trusting in Him. To flee speaks of the urgency sinners should have in view of the dangerous position that they are in because of their sin and of the eternal death which their sins deserve – the eternal separation from God in the punishment of a lost eternity.

No doubt every manslayer would feel a tremendous urgency to get away to the nearest city of refuge. He would not delay; he would not go back home to say goodbye to his wife or to get some food to eat on the way. Nothing would have mattered but to get along the road as quickly as possible to the place of safety. So one would expect that the sinner, in face of the terrible prospect of a lost eternity, would flee with a tremendous sense of urgency to the divinely-appointed Saviour who is revealed to us in the Scriptures and freely offered in the preaching of the gospel.

Yet it is not so; sinners generally feel no urgency. Their spiritual blindness is such that they do not recognise their danger; nor do they take to heart the solemn fact that death can come suddenly and sweep them away to an eternity of woe. They may, like Felix, speak of a “convenient season”, but the danger is that they will never find any time they will regard as convenient to seek the Lord. Then, before they allow any serious thought to stir up their mind to a serious consideration of the reality of their situation, it is too late and they are passing into eternity, with all its solemnity for an unsaved sinner. But one cannot imagine the Israelite who had slain someone accidentally hesitating before setting out for the nearest city of refuge. His convenience would no longer be a consideration.

What is needed is a powerful work of the Holy Spirit to awaken sinners to a sense of their terrible danger as they teeter on the verge of a lost eternity, and to make them feel the evil of their sin, including their unbelief – especially their rejection of the good news concerning Jesus Christ – and their refusal to submit to the authority of God. It is the work of the Spirit to bring sinners to submit to God’s authority and come to Christ.

Yet, even when sinners are awakened in some measure to see their danger before the avenging wrath of God against them because of sin, they may refuse to believe that there is salvation for them. This refusal to flee for refuge to Christ is to continue in a state of unbelief; it flies in the face of His assurance, “Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out” (Jn 6:37). How appropriate for the sinner to cry to the One who thus welcomes sinners to Himself: “Draw me, we will run after Thee” (Song 1:4)! How wonderfully effective is Christ’s drawing power, through the Holy Spirit, in making sinners willing and able to flee from eternal danger to the place of refuge that God has appointed in the Saviour!

But how can God justly pardon sin? We get some light on this through the provision that allowed the manslayer to go free after the high priest's death. Until then he must remain in the city of refuge; his life was spared, but he was not really free; in particular, he could not go back home. Matthew Poole (commenting on Numbers 35:25) states that this provision was intended "principally to show that the death of Christ (the true High Priest, whom the other [high priest]s did evidently and eminently represent and typify) is the only mean[s] whereby sins are pardoned, and sinners are set at liberty".

When the high priest died, the manslayer was "free indeed" – an expression Christ used in reference to His own work: "If the Son . . . shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (Jn 8:36). People may have various kinds of religious experience, which do not involve saving faith in Christ through the regenerating work of the Spirit. Thus they are not free from the guilt and power of sin. They have not "fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us" (Heb 6:18); they have not begun to seek the city of refuge, where they will be safe from the just anger of God. On the other hand, if the Spirit brings about new life in the soul, there will be real faith and repentance, and the sinner will no longer have sin on the throne of his heart; instead, because the Holy Spirit has come to dwell in the soul, this person is truly free to serve God sincerely.

At one time, Saul of Tarsus seemed to be serving God with all his heart; he seemed to keep every detail of God's law. Yet the opposite was true; he was in bondage to sin and to Satan. Of course, there were many sins that Saul did not commit but, because his heart was in bondage, he could not love God sincerely; he was unwilling to submit to the Lord Jesus Christ. He was nowhere near the city of refuge; he did not even feel his need of a place of refuge. Then, when he met the Lord Jesus on the road to Damascus and the Spirit renewed his heart, Saul trusted in the Saviour. He fled to the city of refuge; he submitted to Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah whom God was to send; he looked to Jesus as the great High Priest who had offered a sacrifice which could really take away sin, and he was free indeed. He was free to serve the Lord as Paul the Apostle, which he did in a remarkable way for the rest of his life and is now – for the sake of the Saviour whom he so long rejected – experiencing the blessedness of heaven.

May we all feel the danger that continues to be ours if we remain outside the place of safety that God has appointed, and may we feel the urgency of fleeing there! The danger of remaining outside is tremendously serious. The urgency is real. Yet Christ, who is typified by the city of refuge, still calls to us: "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Mt 11:28). We have no right to delay.

Mercy Pardoning Abundantly¹

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.*

The mercy of God and the righteousness of Christ are two parallel truths; they run side by side along the whole gospel scheme. And this must ever be kept in view. Thus the mercy of God is infinite; it is a divine attribute and it is necessarily infinite. The righteousness of Christ is infinite, for it is the righteousness of God-man. The mercy of God would never have been manifested without the righteousness of Christ, and the righteousness of Christ would not have been wrought out but for the mercy of God. They can never be separated. Mercy originated the plan of redemption; righteousness opened up a channel through which mercy flowed to mankind; and thus “grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life”.

They must never be separated in our thinking. We must never think of the mercy of God apart from the righteousness of Christ; and we must never think of this righteousness without thinking of the guilt, the criminality and the sins which it covers. If we think we know the mercy of God without the righteousness of Christ, we deceive ourselves; and we must never think of the righteousness of Christ as if it made us independent of mercy: it only puts us into a situation in which we may receive mercy. Let us remember this, while we proceed to consider the nature and properties of God’s mercy and forgiveness.

1. God pardons *freely*. In our dealings with our fellow-creatures we do not expect to receive favours without giving something equivalent for them, least of all favours from those whom we have deeply injured. We should consider the prince as most merciful who issued a proclamation of pardon to the subjects who had conspired against his throne – who did so on condition of their proving their return to loyalty by some actions that implied a more than ordinary measure of courage and patient exertion. It is contrary to all our preconceived notions to expect anything from God *freely*.

This indeed implies a fearful ignorance of His character and of our own dependence upon Him. But the workings of our mind, when we come to deal with Him about pardon and reconciliation, prove that we are thus ignorant. Rebels and beggars though we are, we want to bring some price with us. We

¹The second of three sermons on this text. Taken, with editing, from *Memorials of Charles Calder Macintosh*, to be reprinted by Free Presbyterian Publications. The first of these sermons was entitled, “God’s Mercy Real and Infinite”.

come to Him with our prayers, our many duties, our fears and doubts, our tears and groans, and with this wretched and polluted compound we would barter with the Most High for the pardon purchased by the blood of His Son. O what a wonder that the impious and insulting offer, which is as a smoke in Jehovah's nostrils, does not bring down fire from heaven to consume the offerer with his offering! And if the vanity and guilt of such a proposal are revealed to us, how we blush before Him, and how naturally we feel as if we were for ever shut out from mercy!

But God's ways are not our ways. Having cast up the royal road of mercy in the bruising and death of His Son, He has enthroned Himself as the God of grace, taken into His hands the golden sceptre, thrown wide open His palace gates, and sent forth His heralds to proclaim that He, on His throne, bestows pardon freely on all who will receive it from Him. He pardons "for His own name's sake". This special honour He has secured for Himself by delivering up His own Son freely, whose obedience and death have so firmly established and so deeply fixed the foundations of the Father's throne in justice and righteousness. Thus His law is honoured when the sinner is pardoned.

It is God's glory, as the Sovereign of the universe, that He gives forth pardon freely and liberally, irrespective of the character of its objects; yet His holiness and majesty and rectitude are glorified in bestowing it. Thus He has secured a sure basis for the hopes of self-condemned rebels. When the soul rests on this basis, he feels he is perfectly sure. It is not for our sakes, for the sake of anything we do, that He pardons us. It is not for the sake of anything wrought in us by His Spirit, but it is for His own name's sake.

Are you poor? Are you naked? Are you self-condemned before Him? Are your sins as scarlet and as crimson? Are you the very chiefest of sinners? Still the only question is, Will you have pardon from God's royal hand as His free gift? He gives it for His own name's sake; He gives it freely. O then seek to get your soul within the compass of this blessed truth, and you will see yourself in the fortified city!

2. God pardons fully. When He pardons one sin, He pardons every sin. We are ready to suppose, in approaching Him, that if this or that number of sins was taken from the black catalogue, or if this or that particular horrid sin did not stand in the way, mercy might possibly reach us. But here we see such heinousness, there such abominations and evil, that we dare not entertain the hope. It is necessary to be thus burdened on account of our sins, to feel their gall and wormwood; it is essential that the remembrance of our evil ways, and of our doings that were not good, should be as a sting in the conscience and as a fire in the soul, consuming self-righteousness. And it is natural that some sins, distinguished by specially aggravated circumstances of enormity,

should stand out vividly before us, interposing their huge heads between us and forgiveness.

But though this perception and feeling are essential to us welcoming pardon, and though the Holy Spirit subjects the soul to this awful discipline in its attempted approach to God, still neither the greatness of any one sin, nor the blackness of the catalogue of sins of any one sinner, interposes a barrier to the overflowings of mercy. The question on which our eternity rests is not, Is there a sufficiency of mercy? but, Are we willing to be debtors to infinite mercy?

The least of all our sins comparatively (though no sin is in itself little or trivial) would for ever shut us out from God's presence if His ways were our ways, or His thoughts our thoughts. But as His ways and thoughts are infinitely higher than our ways and thoughts, the most heinous sin melts like snow before the sun at the touch of mercy. There is no sin too great for God's mercy to pardon and Christ's righteousness to cover. Were it otherwise, the basis of our hopes would be a quicksand and not a rock. But it is not thus that God has prepared peace for sinners. The basis on which we are to trust for the forgiveness alike of our wandering thoughts in prayer, and of the blackest sin that condemns us before God, is one and the same: it is the infinite mercy of God resting for its exercise in the infinite worth of His dear Son's atonement.

And in pardoning one sin, God pardons all. He does not say, This sin I forgive you, but that other I cannot blot out but must leave it recorded against you. As He dispenses pardon, so He dispenses it in a manner worthy of the gift and of the Giver; giving pardon freely, He gives it also fully. Whether they are the sins of 10 or 20 or 50 or 70 years, He takes the heap of the believer's sins and casts it all into the depths of the sea, not leaving one behind.

3. God pardons heartily. O how false and unworthy are our natural views of God! We regard Him as a jealous and cruel tyrant – yet He follows us day after day with His forbearance, unwilling that we should perish. If our consciences are awakened from their stupor and our sins are placed in our view, His wrath drinks up our spirits – and it cannot fail to do so when we realise that it *abides* on us. But if we were to be left in this situation, our desperately wicked hearts would never own His glory and His excellence in punishing sin. And even if, through the omnipotent and all-overcoming influence of the Holy Spirit, the soul is prostrated before Him, dumb and self-destroyed in its own experience; still, if it was left in this posture, how utterly would it fail to attain a knowledge of God's graciousness!

We are ready to suppose that God is much more ready to punish than to pardon; we think, if we shall ever obtain pardon, that it must be extorted

from Him; that He gives it grudgingly, preferring rather to use the sword of vengeance than to stretch forth the sceptre of mercy. Do we not often come before Him as if we were to steal forgiveness from Him, instead of honouring Him by accepting it? How many there are who view Him as made placable and merciful by the sacrifice and atonement of His Son!

Yet we know nothing of His true character till we see the spring of mercy in His heart gushing forth in the gift of His Son, and now ready to satisfy us with its living waters. The Lord Himself tells us that judgement is His strange work, and that He delights in mercy. It is for the display of mercy that He has erected the throne around which the brightest manifestation of His glory is now made. He has revealed Himself as the God of grace, and He wishes us to know Him; it is for mercy that He desires us to plead with Him; it is in dispensing mercy that He desires to be glorified. And it is only on those who refuse and despise His mercy that His rod of vengeance falls.

The Lord is slow to anger, unwilling to punish, till His glory requires it; but He is swift to show mercy, opening His arms wide to the soul who is afar off, to encourage it to come to His embrace. There is nothing in which God's heart goes forth more fully than in showing mercy to the soul for whom His dear Son died, and whom the Eternal Spirit has brought nigh. Though he may have lain among the pots and been cast out in the open field to the loathing of his person – a polluted, vile object for infinite purity to rest upon; yet when he comes seeking for mercy, all vile and loathsome though he is, God's very heart goes forth to meet him; He receives him with a welcome, not with upbraiding; He stretches over him the sheltering wings of His mercy and rejoices in his security. He takes off his vile garments and, with His own hand, puts on him a change of raiment; He puts a ring on his hand. Rejoicing over him to do him good, He calls on all heaven to unite in songs of praise, for His mercy has secured another of its wished-for trophies.

Do we then address any who feel their need of mercy? We would bid them look up and see God enthroned on the seat of mercy, bearing the sceptre of mercy, with His Son seated at His right hand, and all to exalt mercy. Is it mercy you seek? Would you value, more than the world and life, the least crumb of mercy that the Lord might cast to you? Then approach the throne of grace in the name of Him who is seated on its right hand and, as surely as that throne has been erected, so surely will you be satisfied with mercy.

4. God pardons *unalterably*. He does not suspend forgiveness on condition of future loyalty and obedience, but He teaches the pardoned rebel to love and obey because he is forgiven. Nor does He, in announcing pardon for the past, insert a clause in the deed of indemnity, by which He may again revoke the sentence. His gifts and calling are without repentance. His people often

provoke Him grievously; yet He never does speak of them like He said of the old world, It repenteth Me that I have forgiven them; nor do their bitterest provocations move Him to give them over to the law for punishment. He is God, and not man, and therefore they are not consumed.

If indeed they forsake His law and do not walk in His commandments, He visits their iniquities with stripes and brings their sins to their remembrance. Indeed He plunges them in deep waters and, hiding His face from them, leaves their consciences to be the abode of guilt and fear, and a highway for Satan and his agents to drive through at their pleasure. But though sin thus brings returning torment to them, and He takes vengeance on their inventions, yet at the time when they are sinking deepest in the mire, when His waves and billows pass over them, and the prospect in the distance is that of apostasy and everlasting separation from God – at this very time, not one sin that had been forgiven appears again in His book to condemn them; not one drop of the wrath of the Judge is poured into their cup of bitterness.

Let no one here mistake us. Far be it from us blasphemously to assert that God can ever view sin, even in His people, without loathing and abhorrence, or to assert that they, as others, do not deserve His wrath. Far be it from us to assert that the believer's future as well as past sins are pardoned when he is pronounced a justified person. Such an unworthy and dangerous notion is no part of the truth of God. Equally removed from truth is every statement that would lead to the conclusion that the believer may or does commit sin with less scruple because His forgiveness is sure – a notion abhorrent to the character of God and to the workings of His grace, and contradicted by the experience of every child of God.

But while we thus warn those who have hitherto neither part nor lot in forgiveness against perverting any part of the truth regarding it, we must not and dare not shrink from stating that truth, to the glory of God's grace and the consolation of His people. If the believer falls into sin, the peace and the comforts of God forsake his soul, and he may become, in his own experience, a very brand of hell; the Lord may at times bring old sins to his remembrance, so as to fix guilt afresh in the conscience; He may make him possess the sins of his youth and visit him on account of them.

Still, the wondrous and blessed truth is that in this remembrance and this visitation there is no wrath; and despite all that person's self-accusations, not one of his countless sins appears at the bar of God to condemn him and demand that he be punished. These sins have ceased to exist, as to their power of condemnation. They have been buried and, as accusers, they shall never rise again either in this world or at the judgement seat. The memory of them is gone; their existence in that character has ceased to be a fact. The record

of their commission is erased. Open up and examine the book of God's remembrance, and you will find no trace of them. Once his sins lay over him like a heavy frowning dark cloud, charged with God's lightning and thunder; but now look up and nothing appears in the cloudless heavens but the Sun of Righteousness. "The iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found."

And as old sins are thus obliterated, so provision has been made for the continued forgiveness and blotting out of new sins. The believer's daily sins – for he ever comes short and often grievously offends – are not hung up against him to be yet reckoned for; but each new sin, as it appears, is borne away "to a land not inhabited". Let it be remembered, however, that the believer's sins do not cease to be sins; so his continued pardon is connected, not only with his continued possession of the garment of Christ's righteousness, but with a continued act of faith in Christ as the Lord his Righteousness.

The life of the justified and accepted saint is the life of the consciously unworthy and polluted sinner, who stands, in his own experience when nearest heaven, in as great need of the righteousness and blood of Christ as when it first covered his nakedness and cleansed his pollution. There is therefore no such thing as a state of continued pardon separated from a life of continued and deepening repentance, and from the continued exercise of faith in Christ's blood, righteousness, and intercession. Where this character and these actings of soul are lacking, a state of condemnation, not of justification, is the state of the sinner.

But remembering this, the believer never *can* come into condemnation. He may indeed often offend; fear of coming short, doubts of acceptance, and suspicions of rejection in the end, may assault him, and at times lodge in his breast; he may often be found prostrated before God, crying for mercy with greater importunity than when he first sought it. He will, without doubt, grow in daily acquaintance with the feelings and language of the publican as those which best befit him. And the more his experience of the riches of God's mercy in pardoning, the greater will be his wonder at mercy ever reaching him, the deeper will be his humiliation, and the more unfeigned and holy his sorrow and repentance for doing so little to testify his gratitude to God, and because that little is so defiled and imperfect. But his state is fixed and irrevocable; once pardoned and accepted, he is for ever pardoned and accepted; once arrayed in the garment of Christ's righteousness, it shall never be taken from him till he is presented faultless before God.

What a wonderful view this truth of the righteousness of Christ opens up to us! In consequence of the honour brought by His obedience and satisfaction to the justice and truth of God, He who is of purer eyes than to behold

iniquity is now glorified in taking into His favour and embrace His enemies and rebellious subjects, and in continuing them in this state fixedly and irrevocably. This is so notwithstanding the sin which remains in them, adheres to them, and defiles all they do. On what a basis must the throne of grace rest when the Holy God can thus manifest Himself! And what wonder if the redeemed should contemplate the work of the Redeemer throughout eternity!

In conclusion, let all beware of perverting this great truth. If any go about to establish their own righteousness, let them beware lest that fearful stone fall on them of which it is said, "On whomsoever it shall fall it will grind him to powder". They are fighting against God, and they shall not prevail. But especially they are fighting against that which is dearest to Him – the honour of His dear Son.

But there are those who sin because grace abounds. Grace does indeed abound – free, rich grace; but if any continue in sin, they put themselves outside the pale of mercy and lay themselves open to all the vials of God's wrath.

Let the people of God – those whose sins have been pardoned – see to it that, because much has been forgiven them, they love much. Let them be humbled that they love so little. And let them see to it especially that they walk circumspectly, and thus stop the mouth of the slanderous world and stop the slanderous mouth of Satan, which says that the grace of God leads to licentiousness.

But however it may be perverted, it is our duty as ambassadors of Christ to proclaim that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself", that there is a free pardon "without money and without price", and that "now is the accepted time". But it is also our solemn duty to declare that the time is coming when many shall knock at mercy's door, saying, "Lord, Lord, open to us," but it shall be shut against them. Beware lest you will be among that number, and lest God will say of you that you shall perish, because you would not honour His Son.

The language of faith is, I am satisfied not to know what Christ has not thought it proper to reveal; the language of humility is, I do not wish to know it. The language of faith with respect to the roughness of the path which leads to heaven is, It is a hard path; but as it is of God's ordering, it is no doubt the best. The language of humility is, The road is rough, but it is good enough for me. Under the combined influence of these kindred graces, the Christian holds on this way, following his Lord; and in God's good time he attains the end of his faith, even the salvation of his soul.

A D Davidson

By a humble confession of sin, we give [God] the glory of His holiness, owning He is a holy God, and we are unholy sinners, and that He is of purer eyes than that He can behold iniquity.

Ralph Erskine

Luther and the Reformation¹

15. The Disputation in Heidelberg

J H Merle d'Aubigné

Luther was not content to announce gospel truth in Wittenberg, where he resided, to the students and to the people; he wished to scatter elsewhere the seed of sound doctrine. In the spring of 1518, a general chapter of the Augustine order was to be held at Heidelberg. Luther was summoned to it as one of the most distinguished men of the order. His friends did all they could to dissuade him from undertaking this journey, for the monks had endeavoured to render Luther's name odious in all the places through which he would have to pass. It would require but little to excite a popular tumult on his journey of which he might be the victim. "Or else", said his friends, "they will effect by fraud and stratagem what they dare not do by violence." But Luther never suffered himself to be hindered by the fear of danger. He therefore closed his ears to the timid observations of his friends; he pointed to Him in whom he trusted, and under whose guardianship he was ready to undertake so formidable a journey. He set out calmly on foot on April 13.

At Weissenfels, the pastor, whom he did not know, immediately recognised him as the Wittenberg doctor, and gave him a hearty welcome. At Erfurth, two other brothers of the Augustine order joined him. At Judenbach, they fell in with the Elector's privy councillor, Degenhard Pfeffinger, who entertained them at the inn where they had found him. Luther reached Coburg, overwhelmed with fatigue. "All goes well, by God's grace," he wrote, "except that I acknowledge having sinned in undertaking this journey on foot. . . . I am overcome with fatigue, and all the conveyances are full."

The Reformer of Germany, unable to find room in the public conveyances, and no one being willing to give up his place, was compelled, notwithstanding his weariness, to leave Coburg the next morning humbly on foot. At Würzburg Luther met his two friends, the vicar-general Staupitz, and Lange, the prior of Erfurth, who offered him a place in their carriage. They thus travelled together for three days, conversing with one another. On April 21 they arrived at Heidelberg and Luther lodged at the Augustine monastery.

The Elector of Saxony had given him a letter for the Duke of Bavaria. Luther went to his magnificent castle and admired the situation of Heidelberg,

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 continuing opposition to Luther's 95 Theses, written in response to Tetzel's sale of indulgences near Wittenberg. Luther was emphasising one of the main principles of the Reformation: the Word of God, the whole Word of God, nothing but the Word of God. This is the final article meantime.

where the two beautiful valleys of the Rhine and the Neckar unite. The Duke received Luther with much kindness, and frequently invited him to his table, together with Lange and Staupitz. Luther said, "We were very happy, and amused one another with agreeable and pleasant conversation. But Luther had another task to perform. He must work while it is yet day. Having arrived at a university which exercised great influence over the west and south of Germany, he was there to strike a blow that should shake the churches of these countries. He began therefore to write some theses which he purposed maintaining in a public disputation. Such discussions were not unusual; but Luther felt that this one, to be useful, should lay forcible hold upon men's minds. His disposition, besides, led him to present truth in a paradoxical form. The professors would not permit the discussion to take place in the University, and Luther had to take a hall in the Augustine convent. April 26 was the day appointed for the disputation.

At a later period, Heidelberg received the evangelical doctrine. Luther's reputation had attracted a large audience; professors, students, courtiers, citizens, came in crowds. The following are some of his paradoxes, for so he called his theses:

"1. The law of God is a salutary doctrine of life. Nevertheless, it cannot aid man in attaining to righteousness; on the contrary, it impedes him.

"3. Man's works, however fair and good they may be, are, however, to all appearance, nothing but deadly sins.

"7. The works of the righteous themselves would be mortal sins unless, being filled with a holy reverence for the Lord, they feared that their works might in truth be mortal sins.

"9. To say that works done out of Christ are truly dead, but not deadly, is a dangerous forgetfulness of the fear of God.

"13. Since the fall of man, free will is but an idle word; and if man does all he can, he still sins mortally.

"16. A man who imagines to arrive at grace by doing all that he is able to do, adds sin to sin and is doubly guilty.

18. It is certain that man must altogether despair of himself, in order to be made capable of receiving Christ's grace.

"21. A theologian of the world calls evil good, and good evil, but a theologian of the cross teaches aright on the matter.

"22. The wisdom which endeavours to learn the invisible perfections of God in His works puffs up, hardens and blinds a man.

"23. The law calls forth God's anger, kills, curses, accuses, judges and condemns whatsoever is not in Christ.

"24. Yet this wisdom is not evil, and the law is not to be rejected; but the

man who does not study the knowledge of God under the cross, turns whatever is good into evil.

“25. That man is not justified who performs many works, but he who, without works, has much faith in Christ.

“26. The law says, Do this, and what it commands is never done. Grace says, Believe in Him, and immediately all things are done.

Five doctors of divinity attacked these theses. They had read them with all the astonishment that novelty excites. Such theology appeared extravagant, and yet they discussed these points, according to Luther’s own testimony, with a courtesy that inspired him with much esteem for them, but at the same time with earnestness and discernment. Luther, on his side, displayed wonderful mildness in his replies, unrivalled patience in listening to the objections of his adversaries, and all the quickness of Paul in solving the difficulties opposed to him. His replies were short, but full of the Word of God, and excited the admiration of his hearers.

The disputation was drawing to an end. Luther’s adversaries had retired with honour from the field; the youngest of them, George Niger, alone continued the struggle with the powerful champion. Alarmed at the daring propositions of the monk, and not knowing what further arguments to have recourse to, he exclaimed, with an accent of fear: “If our peasants heard such things, they would stone you to death!” At these words the whole audience burst into a loud laugh.

Never had an assembly listened with so much attention to a theological discussion. The first words of the Reformer had aroused their minds. Questions, which shortly before would have been treated with indifference, were now full of interest. Three young men in particular were deeply moved. One of them, Martin Bucer, was a 27-year-old Dominican who, notwithstanding the prejudices of his order, appeared unwilling to lose one of Luther’s words. He had been born in a small town in Alsace and entered a monastery at 16. He soon displayed such ability that the most enlightened monks entertained the highest expectations of him: “He will one day be the ornament of our order”, they said. His superiors sent him to Heidelberg to study philosophy, theology, Greek and Hebrew.

Soon the earliest writings of Luther appeared. Bucer hastened to compare the Reformer’s doctrines with the Holy Scriptures. Some misgivings as to the truth of the Roman religion arose in his mind. Thus the light was diffused in those days. The Elector Palatine took particular notice of the young man. His strong voice, his eloquence, the freedom with which he attacked the vices of the day, made him a distinguished preacher. He was appointed chaplain to the court and was fulfilling his functions when Luther’s journey to Heidelberg

was announced. What joy for Bucer! No one came with greater eagerness to the Augustine convent. He took with him paper, pens and ink. But while he was writing Luther's words, the finger of God, in more indelible characters, wrote on his heart the great truths he heard. The first gleams of the doctrine of grace were then diffused through his soul. The Dominican was gained to Christ.

Not far from Bucer stood John Brentz or Brentius, then 19 years of age. He was the son of a magistrate in a city of Swabia, and at 13 had become a student at Heidelberg. No one showed greater application. He rose at midnight and began to study. This habit became so confirmed, that during his whole life he could not sleep after that hour. In later years he consecrated these tranquil moments to meditation on the Scriptures. Brentz was one of the first to perceive the new light then dawning on Germany. He welcomed it with a heart abounding in love. He eagerly perused Luther's works. But what was his delight when he could hear the writer himself at Heidelberg! One of Luther's propositions especially startled the youthful scholar: "Man is not justified before God who performs many works, but he who, without works, has much faith in Jesus Christ".

A pious woman of Heilbronn, wife of a senator in that town, named Snepf, had imitated Hannah's example, and consecrated her first-born son to the Lord, with a fervent desire to see him devote himself to the study of theology. This young man, who was born in 1495, made rapid progress in learning; but either from taste, or from ambition, or in compliance with his father's wishes, he applied to study law. The pious mother was grieved to see her child, her Ehrhard, pursuing another career than that to which she had consecrated him. She admonished him, entreated him, prayed him continually to remember the vow she had made on the day of his birth. Overcome at last by his mother's perseverance, Ehrhard Snepf gave way. Before long he felt such a taste for his new studies that nothing in the world could have diverted him from them.

He was very intimate with Bucer and Brentz, and they were friends until death. He was present with his two friends at the Heidelberg discussion. The *Paradoxes* and the courage of the Wittenberg doctor gave him a new impulse. Rejecting the vain opinion of human merits, he embraced the doctrine of the free justification of the sinner.

The next day Bucer went to Luther. "I had a . . . private conversation with him," said Bucer, "a most exquisite repast, not of dainties, but of truths that were set before me. To whatever objection I made, the doctor had a reply and explained everything with the greatest clearness. O would to God that I had time to write more!" Luther himself was touched with Bucer's sentiments.

“He is the only brother of his order”, he wrote to Spalatin, “who is sincere; he is a young man of great promise. He received me with simplicity and conversed with me very earnestly. He is worthy of our confidence and love.”

Brentz, Snepf and many others, excited by the new truths that began to dawn on their minds, also visited Luther; they talked with him; they begged for explanations of what they did not understand. The Reformer replied, strengthening his arguments by the Word of God. Each sentence imparted fresh light to their minds. A new world was opening before them.

After Luther's departure, these noble-minded men began to teach at Heidelberg. They felt it their duty to continue what the man of God had begun, and not allow the flame to expire which he had lit. Brentz, although still so young, explained the Gospel of Matthew, at first in his own room and afterwards, when it became too small, in the philosophy lecture theatre. The theologians, envious at the crowd of hearers this young man drew around him, became irritated. Brentz then was ordained and transferred his lectures to the college of the Canons of the Holy Ghost. Thus the fire already kindled in Saxony now glowed in Heidelberg. The centres of light increased in number. This period has been denominated the seedtime of the Palatinate.

But it was not the Palatinate alone that reaped the fruits of the Heidelberg disputation. These courageous friends of the truth soon became shining lights in the Church. They all attained to exalted situations, and took part in many of the debates which the Reformation occasioned. Strasbourg, and England a little later, were indebted to Bucer for a purer knowledge of the truth. Snepf first declared it at Marburg, then at Stuttgart, Tübingen and Jena. Brentz, after having taught at Heidelberg, continued his labours for a long period at Tübingen, and at Halle in Swabia. We shall meet with these three men again in the course of our history.

This disputation carried Luther himself forward. He increased daily in the knowledge of the truth. “I belong to those,” he said, “who improve by writing and by teaching others, and not to those who from nothing become on a sudden great and learned doctors.” He was overjoyed at seeing how avidly the students received the dawning truth, and this consoled him when he found the old doctors so deep-rooted in their opinions. “I have the glorious hope,” he said, “that as Christ, when rejected by the Jews, turned to the Gentiles, we shall now also behold the new theology, that has been rejected by these greybeards with their empty and fantastical notions, welcomed by the rising generation.”

After the disputation ended, Luther thought of returning to Wittenberg. The Duke gave him a letter for the Elector in which he said that “Luther had shown so much skill in the disputation as greatly to contribute to the renown

of the University of Wittenberg”. He was not allowed to return on foot. The Nuremberg Augustines conducted him as far as Würzburg, from whence he proceeded to Erfurth with the friars from that city.

As soon as he arrived, he went to his old teacher’s house, Jodocus. The aged professor was much grieved at the path his disciple had taken. He had written to the young doctor reproaching him, and Luther desired to reply in person. Not having been admitted, he wrote to Jodocus: “All the university, with the exception of one licentiate, think as I do. More than this, the prince, the bishop, many other prelates, and all our most enlightened citizens, declare with one voice, that up to the present time they had neither known nor understood Jesus Christ and His gospel. I am ready to receive your corrections and, although they should be severe, they will appear to me very gentle. Open your heart therefore without fear; unburden your anger. I will not and I cannot be vexed with you. God and my conscience are my witnesses!”

The old doctor was moved by these expressions of his former pupil. “I made him understand at least,” said Luther about these Roman Catholic scholars, “that all their sentences were like that beast which is said to devour itself. But talking to a deaf man is labour in vain. These doctors obstinately cling to their petty distinctions, although they confess there is nothing to confirm them but the light of natural reason, as they call it – a dark chaos truly to us who preach no other light than Jesus Christ, the true and only light.”

Luther left Erfurth in the monastery’s carriage, which took him to Eisleben. From there the Augustines of the place, proud of a doctor who had shed such glory on their order and on their city, his native place, conveyed him to Wittenberg with their own horses and at their expense. Everyone desired to bestow some mark of affection and esteem on this extraordinary man, whose fame was constant increasing.

Bannerman’s *The Church of Christ*¹

3. The Power of the Church

Rev A W MacColl

When we come to discuss the actual power of the Church, we must ask, What is its source? The answer is that the power of the Church is derived from positive Divine warrant, and not from the consent of its members or from the state.

¹The last article, in January, discussed some “aspects of the Church”: its twofold character as visible and invisible, and its twofold character as catholic and local. All references in the text are to James Bannerman, *The Church of Christ*, Banner of Truth reprint, 2015.

Christ's Headship over the Church. These statements regarding the origin and source of Church power “necessarily involve the proposition, that the Lord Jesus Christ is the only Head of the Church” (p 202). Christ is both the founder and the administrator of the Church. Her existence at first, and “her life and well-being ever since”, depend entirely on Him (p 207). “The Church has no store of life apart from Christ being in it; the ordinances of the Church have no deposit of grace apart from Christ present with them; the office-bearers of the Church have no gift of power or authority or action apart from Christ ruling and acting by them. It is most important to remember that it is in this high and very special sense that we are to understand the expression, that the Lord Jesus Christ is the only Head of the Church” (pp 207-8). Bannerman stresses that this “cardinal doctrine lies at the foundation of every other that concerns the Church of Christ, and ought to be guarded with the utmost jealousy and care” (p 208).

The Rule or Law of Church Power. Office-bearers and laws must exist in the Church, simply because it is an organised society. The rule for the use and administration of Church power is, of course, the Word of God. Christ's will is nowhere expressed or announced, except in the Bible. “His will must be the only rule for the guidance of the Church in matters in which it is called upon to act” (p 222). Not only is the Church responsible to obey Christ's will as every other moral creature is, but an added obligation applies to the Church as a result of Christ's Headship and Kingship over it, “a double sovereignty of nature and grace” (p 223).

This principle of obedience to the will of Christ is clearly biblical. Scripture provides express precepts, clear examples and general principles which, taken together, prove that there “is enough in the Word of God to be, and which was intended to be, a distinct and complete guide for the Church in the exercise of its powers of action and administration” (pp 224-5).

At the same time, we must also bear in mind that there is a distinction between what is essential and what is merely expedient in the Word. Scripture is a full and complete guide for the former, but concerning the latter, “there is nothing expressed in Scripture directly; and something is to be left to the discretion of the Church and its office-bearers” (p 226). Times and length of services, for example, may be included here. Of course, it may not always be easy to draw the line between what is fundamental and accidental. “The rule of the Apostle is the clearest and most applicable, which seems to intimate that the discretionary authority of the Church is limited expressly to the things of ‘decency and order’” (p 227).

Therefore laws made by Church authority are *declaratory*, “involving in them no other or new authority beyond what is previously binding”. They

are “limited to the object of explaining and applying the law previously uttered by Christ in reference to such matters” (p 228). “Beyond this the legislative function of the Church does not extend” (p 229). Furthermore, office-bearers are ministerial and subordinate, “having no authority or discretion of their own, and being merely ministers or servants to carry out the will and execute the appointments of Christ” (p 229). Their functions are ministerial, not lordly.

When we consider decisions of Church courts, we notice again “the great and fundamental principle that the mind of Christ, revealed and expressed in the Bible, is both the rule and the limit of Church power. If the judgement or decision pronounced in the lawful exercise of their authority by the Church or its office-bearers be in accordance with the principles of the Word of God, that decision was before pronounced in heaven; and it is both valid and binding upon the conscience, not only because it is consistent with God’s Word, but also because it is a decision lawfully pronounced by a lawful tribunal appointed by Christ for the purpose.” Bannerman adds that “no judgement of any Church whatsoever can bind the conscience, except in so far as, and no further than, it is grounded upon the Word of God” (p 231).

In the case of last resort, when persuasion has failed to induce the Church to reconsider its decision, one remedy remains “and an ultimate one”: a person “may transfer the case for judgement to a higher tribunal, and for relief and freedom to his own conscience may take appeal from the act of the Church of Christ on earth to the judgement of Christ Himself in heaven. Under the solemn protection of an appeal so taken, his conscience shall be free, and the sin shall not be on him, but on his judges” (p 231). In light of subsequent history, it is of interest that Bannerman makes no reference at all to a right of continued protest or any right to protest against decisions of a supreme judicatory, after all means have been exhausted to induce the Court to reverse its decision.

The Nature of Church Power. In discussing the nature of church power, Bannerman reminds us that there are two kinds of power in general among men, civil power and spiritual power. Civil power can only ultimately rest on the fact that the civil magistrate is the “steward of God’s right to rule over the persons and properties of His creatures” (p 234). Church power, while also of Divine institution, is completely different in nature, however. It is purely spiritual. The different categories of Church power demonstrate that this power is entirely spiritual. Traditionally, the different ways in which Church power has been put into practice have been grouped under three headings:

(1.) *Power of Doctrine.* This “is a spiritual authority on the part of the Church to be a witness and interpreter, ministerially, of the truth of God to

the consciences and understandings of men; and it is essentially incompatible with any power addressed to aught but the conscience and the understanding” (pp 236-7). He notes that a “compulsory power can never secure my belief: it may force my submission, or hypocritical pretence of submission, to certain truths, but not the conviction of the understanding or the assent of the heart” (p 236).

(2.) *Power of Administration.* Church power in dispensing ordinances is merely administrative. In regard to laws, it is no more than declaratory. “The Church has no physical influence, *ex opere operato*² . . .” to make ordinances of virtue other than the spiritual grace Christ communicates through them (p 237).

(3.) *Power of Discipline.* Where there is “a discipline not spiritual, not addressed to the understanding and conscience, [it] cannot be [Church] discipline in the proper sense of the term at all . . . compulsion is not merely improper, but impossible”. It is a discipline instituted solely for spiritual ends, namely, “that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord”. Bannerman points out that a “spiritual result must, from the very nature of things, be accomplished by a spiritual instrumentality” (p 238).

That the administration of Church power implies a *spiritual* and not a *temporal* authority may be demonstrated by express statement from Scripture, especially from the Lord Himself. “Render unto Caesar . . .” (Mt 22:16-21) shows the broad separation between the two provinces of civil and spiritual jurisdictions. “It shall not be so among you . . .” (Mt 20:20-28) shows that the power in His kingdom is not exercised in the way temporal rulers exercise their power. Again, “My kingdom is not of this world . . . that I should bear witness to the truth” (Jn 18:36-7).

Christ’s kingdom is not to be upheld or protected by the civil sword. It is a heavenly, not a temporal, kingdom. It is founded on the truth of God, and upheld only by the authority of truth. Some, of course, may question Bannerman here and point to the example of those Covenanters who took up arms to defend themselves. The essential point to bear in mind, however, is that the spiritual kingdom itself cannot be defended except by spiritual means. The Covenanters certainly stood for the spiritual prerogatives of the King and Head of the Church in general, but their specific purpose for taking up arms was to defend the religious and civil liberty of Christ’s subjects, which is a slightly different matter as it involves temporal matters as well.

The irreconcilable distinction in nature between spiritual and temporal authority is the very reason why they can exist together in perfect harmony.

²That is, the correct performance of a rite by a priest, in and of itself conveys grace to the recipient.

The things of God are not inconsistent with the things of Caesar, just because they are fundamentally distinct. The clear inference from this is that the Establishment Principle involves no compromise of principle on the part of either Church or state.

The terrible consequences of confounding these two jurisdictions have been seen in history. Anabaptists in Germany at the Reformation and Sectaries in seventeenth-century England alike claimed civil authority to inherit the earth as the elect. But the consequences of the papacy grasping secular power were even more serious. History will ever show “that Popery has never failed, *where circumstances permitted the assumption*, to claim the temporal, along with the spiritual, authority and to grasp the double sword of civil and priestly power” (p 245). She made herself rich trafficking with the merchants of the earth and “the bodies and souls of men” (Rev 18:2-13).

The Extent and Limits of Church Power. *The Westminster Confession of Faith* shows that decisions of Church authorities impose the obligation on Church people to receive these decisions because they are (and only if they are) consonant with the Word of God; but also because they are made by a power that is in itself God’s ordinance for governing His Church. Any decision made in accordance with the Word of God “will show itself to be from God by the power or blessing it carries along with it” (p 250).

“The power of the Church is one of authority and not only of advice . . . because it is Christ’s ordinance for rule. . . . The power of the Church is a power of blessing, and not a power without a blessing” (p 250). It is clear that Church power therefore is real power.

Those who advocate the Congregational or Independent form of Church government are bound by their own principles to hold that the power of office-bearers is largely that of *advice*, more than actual authority. They assert that decisions of congregational office-bearers can only be made with the consent of the membership. Bannerman quotes some leading advocates of Congregational Independency, who held that the power of discipline is only valid with the consent, concurrence and sanction of the ordinary membership. This, he argues, “is not authority, in the proper sense of the term”, when those who are ruled can reject the lawful decisions of their rulers. Thus Independency comes far short of the right and scriptural doctrine on the extent of Church power. Such, he argues, are “inconsistent with the nature of every orderly and well-regulated society” (p 255).

The Independent view, moreover, is “inconsistent with the many explicit statements of Scripture on the nature and extent of Church power” (p 257). We read in the Epistles of the various titles given to Church officers, such as bishop, elder, ruler and pastor. These all bespeak authority to rule over the

flock. This is also true about the duties given to them to perform, such as “reprove” and “rebuke”.

From this we can see that obedience is required of the membership of the Church: “Obey them that have the rule over you”; “Submit yourselves”. We also have actual descriptions of Church power in exercise, such as dealing with the man in Corinth. Taken together, these show that Church power is *real* power “and not a nominal one, dependent on the consent or concurrence of the governed”. This sufficiently repudiates the Independent view of Church power (p 259).

The limitations on Church power are fourfold:

(a) It is limited in that *it is purely spiritual*. Thus discipline cannot partake of civil or semi-civil penalties, as opposed to the Romanist claims to civil supremacy as well as ecclesiastical.

(b) It is limited by *the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ*, since it is purely ministerial.

(c) It is limited by *the Word of God*, for it has no authority beyond what the Scriptures teach.

(d) It is limited by *the rights of conscience*. This limitation, Bannerman argues, provides the conscience of the individual believer with “a sanctuary which is blessed and sanctified by Christian freedom within, and over the threshold of which authority, even the authority of the Church cannot pass. Within that sanctuary none but the Lord of the conscience may enter; and because it is His dwelling-place and home, His presence protects the conscience from the intrusion of the Church” (pp 260-61). This point must be held in connection with a particularly striking statement, where Bannerman asserts that “the right of conscience to be free from the commandments and authority of man is identical with the right of every man to obey God” (p 169).

Homosexuality (2)¹

Section 2: Some Common Arguments in Favour of Homosexuality Discussed. 1. *To be opposed to homosexuality is the same as being racist.* Pro-homosexual lobby groups and the media portray those who condemn homosexuality as being similar to racists who discriminate against people on the basis of their ethnicity or colour of skin,

But the obvious difference is that racism is discrimination against “who”

¹This paper has been prepared by the Religion and Morals Committee of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. The first section gave “direct scripture testimony against the sin of homosexuality”. This section concludes the paper.

a person is, whereas being opposed to homosexuality relates to “what” a person is. Racism is wrong because it discriminates against a person because of their ethnic origin or skin colour which is amoral. But to be opposed to homosexuality is to condemn a person for their immoral behaviour regardless of their ethnicity or skin colour.

The homosexual chooses to be a homosexual, whereas one cannot choose one’s ethnic origin or one’s skin colour. You cannot therefore equate racism with being opposed to the sin of homosexuality.

2. *People are genetically homosexual and therefore cannot help this tendency.* This kind of reasoning proceeds from evolutionary thinking which denies that man has a soul and that there is such a thing as sin. But if we allow that man is a spiritual being, capable of sin, then we can understand how homosexuality, along with all other sins such as adultery, fornication and theft, ultimately proceeds from the sinful nature of man.

It is true that some may be more prone to this sin than others, just as some men are more prone to anger or dishonesty than others. But this does not make their anger or dishonesty to be any less sin. And as already mentioned, often the sin of homosexuality leads on from a life of prior sin and rejection of God.

Romans 1:26 informed us that the sin of homosexuality was “against nature”: “for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature”. Reason itself shows that homosexuality is sin. Even irreligious men, who have not fallen into this sin themselves, often have an aversion to it, and are repulsed by it as that which is against nature.

3. *Homosexuals love one another, so this legitimises their relationship.* The churches which support homosexuality often use the argument of love, as do the sodomites themselves. This makes a new morality where human love supersedes the commandments of God. The moral standard which God has given to man is based on His nature and the declaration of His will; so it is unchangeable. Whatever affection exists between homosexuals does not change the fact that homosexuality is sin in the eyes of God.

The argument based on love can be seen to be fallacious. Suppose a brother says he loves his sister and wants to marry her – would this love make that relationship proper? Or if one who was inclined to another sin such as bestiality or paedophilia claimed love as their warrant, would this make the act lawful?

Love to God is the first part of the moral law, and that duty embraces obedience to His commandments including those which forbid homosexuality.

4. *Only the act is sin not the orientation.* It has become increasingly common in some Christian circles to agree with the biblical testimony that

homosexual behaviour is wrong, but argue that homosexual orientation is not sinful. This dangerous argument is flatly opposed to the scriptural principle that holiness is required in nature and thought, as well as in practice. We have seen that often homosexuality is placed alongside adultery as a sin in Scripture. The Saviour said of adultery: "I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Mt 5:28). This rule on the spirituality of the law applies surely to homosexuality as well, and therefore the very disposition or orientation toward homosexuality is sin. As mentioned above, Paul in dealing with the sin in Romans 1:26 describes it as a "vile affection" pointing to the inner desires of the soul, not merely the outward behaviour. And in verse 28 of the same chapter, the root of the sin is said to be a reprobate mind: "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".

Similarly, in James 1:14 we read that "every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed". So lust, flowing from the sinful orientation of the heart and mind, is what leads men to commit actual sins. The following verse reads, "Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death". Romans 1:27, "And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another," again makes clear that "orientation" is lust and therefore sinful. From this sinful fountain within flows the act of homosexuality, as the same verse goes on to describe: "men with men working that which is unseemly".

To suggest therefore as some do that someone may be a born-again Christian and yet cherish a homosexual tendency is the same as to say that one may have grace and yet still cherish a murderous or adulterous disposition. Those who have a tendency toward this sin are to seek grace not only to refrain from outward practice of it, but to be delivered from the very tendency itself. And this very grace is promised in Scripture. Romans 6:14 declares, "Sin shall not have dominion over you", and in 1 Corinthians 10:13 we read, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it". Grace is able to subdue and conquer the sinful orientation toward homosexuality.

5. *Homosexuals should be allowed to marry.* Those who contend for homosexual marriage are faced with the Saviour's positive and clear description of marriage as being only between one man and one woman. In Matthew 19:4,5 we read, "Have ye not read, that He which made them at the

beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?"

Legalising same-sex marriage not only further promotes the sin of homosexuality itself but it serves to undermine the whole scriptural doctrine of marriage as being between one man and one woman. It is therefore yet another attack on the institution of marriage, one of the foundation pillars of society at large.

The propagation of the human race is hindered and reduced in proportion as this sin prevails.

Research carried out in Denmark has shown that, even apart from aids, the life expectancy of a homosexual male is approximately 51 years of age, compared with more than 70 years of age for men in general. Other research by the Family Research Institute, Colorado, USA, came to a similar conclusion.

6. *All sin is an infinite evil; therefore why single out homosexuality?* Some, even within the Church, try to tone down the heinousness of the sin of homosexuality by diverting attention to the fact that all sin is abhorrent. Of course this is true, and every sin is an infinite evil in the eyes of God. Nevertheless, as *The Larger Catechism* states, "All transgressions of the law of God are not equally heinous; but some sins in themselves, and by reason of several aggravations, are more heinous in the sight of God than others". The example of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the express declaration of Scripture that this sin is an "abomination", even compared to other sins, are sufficient evidences that this sin is especially heinous in the eyes of God.

It is also true that the homosexual agenda has become so prominent and aggressive in our day that it is necessary to respond with a robust defence of the Scriptural grounds for opposing this sin in particular.

This emphasis does not alter the fact that Scripture shows that the sin of unbelief and Christ-rejection is even greater. It will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of Judgement than for those who had the gospel but who did not receive it, as numerous parts of Scripture show, including Matthew 10:14,15: "And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgement than for that city".

Conclusion. A careful look at the passages of Scripture discussed in this paper shows that homosexuality is a sin that destroys individuals in their bodies and souls as long as it is not repented of.

From the above attempts to claim that homosexuality is not morally evil,

it naturally follows that its supporters abhor any call to homosexuals to repent, because such a call of repentance of course infers that homosexuality is sin. It has been shown previously that Scripture calls homosexuality a sin and therefore the duty of all homosexuals is to repent of this and all their sins, turning to God in Christ for pardon and cleansing.

The same love for the truth and for souls, that compels us to draw attention to the biblical view of homosexuality, also prompts us to speak of grace and the gospel. Homosexuality is not an unpardonable sin. It is clear from 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, referred to already, that those who were “effeminate” and “abusers of themselves with mankind” may repent and be saved: “And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor 6:11). Their former identity was not so much homosexual as sinner; now they had a new and true identity: they had been given a new nature.

This is what we desire for everyone. Salvation is freely offered in the gospel of Christ to sinners, whatever their sins may have been. “Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near: 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” (Is 55:6-7). “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved” (Acts 16:31).

Book Review

Daily Thoughts from Samuel Rutherford, published by Reformation Press, paperback, 98 pages, £6.45, obtainable from the F P Bookroom.

Rutherford’s letters have long been well perused and much loved by the people of God in Scotland and in many other lands. This book consists of extracts from these letters. One brief quote is allocated to each day of the year, providing a very concise set of daily readings.

Many of the quotes are aimed at providing consolation to the believer under affliction and when engaged in the spiritual warfare with sin, Satan and the world. So to those feeling overcome, rather than overcomers, in the life of grace he says, “The thing that we mistake is the want [lack] of victory. We hold that to be the mark of one that hath no grace. Nay, say I, the want of *fighting* were a mark of no grace, but I shall not say the want of *victory* is such a mark.”

Others sound a warning trumpet and are of a searching nature to arouse those who slumber and sleep in a profession of Christ. To such he has this

to say: "It cost Christ and all His followers sharp showers and hot sweats ere they got to the top of the mountain. But still our soft nature would have heaven coming down to our bedside when we are sleeping, and lying down with us, that we might go to heaven in warm clothes. But all that came there found wet feet by the way, and sharp storms that did take the hide [skin] off their face, and found tos and fros, and ups and downs, and many enemies by the way."

Then there are those which direct to duty and especially to the exercise of faith. One such piece of advice is as follows: "Only by living by faith, and by fetching strength and comfort from Christ, can you be victorious and have right to the precious promises of 'the tree of life', of 'the hidden manna', of the gifted 'morning star' and the like, made to those who overcome".

These sayings of Rutherford are choice and have the sweet savour of one who was enabled by grace to soar high in close communion with Christ while in the furnace of affliction. If there is any regret, it is that there are relatively few quotes which direct the reader to the loveliness of Christ; a theme which fills Rutherford's letters throughout with a glorious strain. There are one or two though, including this expression: "I want [lack] both pen and words to set forth the fairness, beauty and sweetness of Christ's love, and the honour of this cross of Christ [tribulation from Christ]".

As some of these quotes show, old Scots words, along with other phrases considered quaint or obscure, are explained in brackets. These explanations are helpful on the whole, although there are some which may be considered unnecessary or slightly puzzling.

Any publication which promotes Rutherford's precious letters will be welcomed by those who have a taste for experimental and Christ-centred religion. This unique presentation of his writings in a daily-reading format is highly commendable and may be useful in giving readers an appetite to read the whole of his letters for the first time or once again. (Rev) *ID MacDonald*

Faith looks at God's Word, calling the things which be not as though they were, and is commonly forced to contradict sense. Sense judges from what it sees; faith from what God says. Sense is governed by what appears; faith by what God says shall be. Sense looks inward; faith looks outward. Faith can answer the seeming contradictions which sense opposes to it from the Word of God, which cannot be broken. And when sense is ready to despair, and all its fine frames and feelings are gone, then it is the believer's happy privilege still to trust in the Lord, and to have a good hope because of the word of His grace.

My time is short; I must be up and doing; I must go briskly on with my work, leaving it to my Lord to find me strength for it and success in it. His blessing I expect here and for ever; not for anything I have done; and yet I would labour as hard as if heaven was to be the reward of my labours.

William Romaine

Notes and Comments

Further Change in the Free Church

A few months ago, the Kirk Session of the Bon Accord Free Church in Aberdeen issued a “strategy document”, giving as a reason that “every organisation – including a local congregation like Bon Accord – needs a strategy that outlines its objectives and provides direction as to how those objectives are to be met”. The document is partly in response to a Presbytery visitation in 2015 which detected “a feeling among many that [Bon Accord] was going through the motions” and that “there was little evidence of meaningful interaction (on the part of the leadership) with the congregation on matters of vision and strategy”; and partly because the congregation has recently completed an expensive refurbishment of its building. Among the “objectives” of the congregation, the strategy document lists preaching and teaching, proclaiming the good news of the gospel, and being a prophetic voice in society.

For corporate worship, the primary purpose is “to gather believers for the worship of God allowing us to praise, pray, and be instructed, equipped, and enthused for service,” with an important secondary purpose being “to provide opportunity for unbelievers to participate in our worship services and so hear the gospel message and witness gospel life”. The document identifies one needed change, which is “to make our worship services more accessible while maintaining our commitment to Biblical worship”. The people who may find the present corporate worship unduly inaccessible are “outsiders (visitors from other church traditions and those who make no Christian profession)”.

Let us consider then an “outsider” from a conservative Presbyterian “church tradition” (which until recently would have described the Free Church) who happens to enter Bon Accord on the Sabbath. He wears the ordinary formal dress of his day – a suit and tie – but he notices that hardly anyone else regards the occasion as formal enough for such clothing. His wife and daughters are in hats, in obedience to the timeless injunction of 1 Corinthians 11, but they are virtually the only women so dressed.

He hears musical instruments playing, which makes him uncomfortable when he remembers the opposition to such things in the Scottish Church from the Reformation onwards, the silence of the New Testament, and the ordination vows taken by most Free Church office-bearers. Though familiar with the 1650 Psalter (authorised by the General Assembly, which discharged the use of any other Psalter), he does not recognise the version of the few psalms that are sung, and he does not feel able to join in with the numerous hymns. Following the biblical practice, he stands for prayer (which is in the

unfamiliar “you” form, popularised in the later twentieth century) but finds that he alone is on his feet. The version of the Bible jars on him, as the work of someone with no ear for the English language, and betraying signs of a faulty textual base.

The visiting preacher refers, perhaps, to the Pope as “a Christian brother”, or speaks of the suffering of the Father in the death of His Son. At this point, it may be, our visitor, shocked by the false doctrine, the blasphemy, and the unfaithfulness to ordination vows, walks out; wondering to what extent he and some of these people are of the same religion. There was perhaps not one thing in the service that was unchanged from 30 years ago.

Many aspects of the “strategy document” are commendable – whatever the wisdom of producing such a document may be – but the Aberdeen Free Church Kirk Session should consider the offence that they are giving to conservative Christians, even of their own denomination, by their modernising and schismatic practices. The biblical strategy would be for them to put the helm hard over and return to “the old paths and the good way” (Jer 6:16).

DWBS

Conscientious Objection (Medical Activities) Bill

In January the Conscientious Objection (Medical Activities) Bill had a second reading in the House of Lords. Introduced last year by Baroness O’Loan, it seeks to protect the conscience rights of all medical practitioners – and to ensure that they are not discriminated against over their objections to “end of life practices”. It specifically highlights abortion, withdrawal of life-sustaining treatment, and actions under the provisions of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act (1990).

Nuala O’Loan has had her moments of controversy in Northern Ireland’s politics but her commitment to the pro-life cause seems without question. In 2014 – shortly after being appointed – she resigned, on conscientious grounds, from a prominent medical ethics committee of the British Medical Association – on discovering that one of its aims was to extend the British Abortion Act of 1967 to Northern Ireland. She said, “I felt immediately that I had to step down . . . there is no space for a dissenting decision”.

She believes that the basic nature of human life from conception is “something which is fundamental to my whole set of belief values, so I could not go ahead to subscribe to any response . . . which is the extension of the Abortion Act in all its terms to Northern Ireland”. She said she will continue to “express [her] views on abortion in the House of Lords and I have already done so”. The current Bill is the result.

Her contention is that many medical professionals are being pressurised

into compromising their beliefs. Some young doctors, she said, believe that they simply cannot take up employment in, for instance, obstetrics and gynaecology, because they feel they will be thwarted in their career prospects if they refuse to participate in arranging or performing abortions. She adds, A “lack of conscience rights is putting people off joining some areas of the medical profession . . . so there is a pressing need for statutory rights which actually protect those who need protection”.

The 1967 Abortion Act allows for conscientious objection, specifying: “No person shall be under any duty, whether by contract or by any statutory or other legal requirement, to participate in any treatment authorised by this Act to which he has a conscientious objection: provided that in any legal proceedings the burden of proof of conscientious objection shall rest on the person claiming to rely on it” (Abortion Act 1967; Section 4 (1) (The Conscience Clause)). But, in practice, some doctors and nurses do face discrimination when they refuse to become involved, even indirectly, in procedures that end in a termination.

In 2014, the Supreme Court overturned a ruling by the Court of Session, which had decided in favour of two Scots midwives who conscientiously refused to supervise staff who were working under them while performing an abortion. The Supreme Court disregarded the midwives’ rights, and overturned the Court of Session’s decision, concluding that the conscience provision in the Abortion Act 1967 did not cover this aspect of their employment. Sadly it appears inevitable, in the current moral climate, that the rights of health care workers will be violated in other areas also. Doctors and nurses report facing discrimination in their professional lives when they conscientiously object to the withdrawal of food and fluid from a dying patient in end-of-life care. Pharmacists also were recently threatened with guidelines that would force them to provide drugs that bring about an abortion.

Dr Mary Neal, a leading conscientious objection expert and lecturer at Strathclyde University, lends her support to the Bill, saying, “There is a pressing need for statutory conscience rights which actually protect those who need protection. The current law fails to do this; so this Bill is a necessary and timely step.”

Thirteen peers spoke in support of Baroness O’Loan’s Bill, but ten spoke against it. It is telling that several of those who opposed the Bill said that they had been briefed by the British Pregnancy Advisory Service (BPAS), and Dignity in Dying. One opponent was Baroness Barker, spokeswoman for the Liberal Democrats, who said it was “thoroughly disingenuous” and another, Baroness Thornton, said it “flies in the face of Labour Party policies”.

(continued on page 96)

FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SCOTLAND - CONGREGATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS - 2017

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

NORTHERN PRESBYTERY

Aberdeen	Rev D W B Somerset	16,812.50	18.75	1,062.50	18.75	18.75	18.75	187.50	18.75	18,156.25
Creich, Dornoch, etc	Rev W A Weale*	4,289.00	106.00	200.00	115.00	71.00	90.00	492.50	174.50	5,538.00
Daviot, Tomatin & Stratherrick	Rev D W B Somerset*	3,782.50	226.25	544.50	248.90	201.50	210.50	664.00	190.00	6,048.15
Dingwall & Beaully	Rev K D Macleod*	18,782.25	554.50	1,704.75	413.25	324.50	393.25	1,345.05	520.75	24,018.30
Halkirk, Strathly, Thurso & Wick	Rev W A Weale	11,230.00	150.00	950.00	150.00	150.00	115.00	600.00	150.00	13,495.00
Inverness	Rev K D Macleod	25,526.25	1,054.25	2,567.75	698.25	637.50	526.50	5,280.75	765.00	37,052.25
Kinlochberrie & Scourie	Rev W A Weale*	2,440.00	115.00	427.50	100.00	65.00	70.00	1,120.00	15.00	4,352.50
		82,822.50	2,224.75	7,457.00	1,744.15	1,468.25	1,420.00	9,689.80	1,834.00	108,660.45

SOUTHERN PRESBYTERY

Barnoldswick	Rev K M Watkins	14,386.81	284.26	1,040.75	138.75	201.75	428.25	956.75	205.00	17,642.32
Broadstairs	Rev J MacLeod*	8,809.71	117.46	469.85	117.46	469.85	-	587.31	-	10,571.64
Chesley	Rev R MacLeod*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,740.33	2,740.33
Dundee, Perth & Stirling	Rev D Campbell*	3,117.50	237.50	467.50	137.50	131.25	153.75	268.75	131.25	4,645.00
Edinburgh	Rev D Campbell	22,000.00	371.00	1,878.00	217.00	325.00	1,089.00	1,687.00	300.00	27,867.00
Fort William & Oban	Rev R MacLeod*	390.00	20.00	40.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	40.00	20.00	570.00
Glasgow	Rev R MacLeod	28,004.70	1,627.14	1,773.12	1,766.40	1,551.10	827.73	5,487.75	1,219.25	42,257.19
Greenock (Preaching Station)	Rev R MacLeod	2,346.25	40.00	768.75	57.50	31.25	50.00	801.25	66.25	4,161.25
Larne	Rev K M Watkins*	255.00	5.00	105.00	10.00	-	15.00	10.00	5.00	405.00
London	Rev J MacLeod	28,343.84	1,951.25	1,677.50	433.44	138.44	48.44	365.00	48.44	33,006.35
Santa Fe, Texas	Rev D Campbell*	18,725.00	-	22,669.00	-	-	-	33,878.67	14,390.00	89,662.67
		126,378.81	4,653.61	30,889.47	2,898.05	2,868.64	2,632.17	44,082.48	19,125.52	233,528.75

OUTER ISLES PRESBYTERY

Achnore	Rev J R Tallach	3,383.75	532.50	376.25	205.00	243.75	230.00	1,638.75	251.25	6,861.25
Ness	Rev A W MacColl	7,487.50	20.00	55.00	10.00	20.00	22.50	45.00	22.50	7,682.50
North Harris	Rev J B Jardine	9,140.00	81.25	206.50	77.75	100.75	88.25	167.75	108.75	10,241.00
North Tolsta	Rev J R Tallach*	13,207.00	635.00	784.75	421.75	349.75	346.75	1,364.75	627.25	17,737.00
North Uist	Rev J B Jardine*	8,285.00	242.50	525.00	217.50	212.50	190.00	550.00	252.50	10,475.00
South Harris	Rev J B Jardine*	6,893.00	274.50	593.00	285.50	312.00	268.50	589.00	277.50	9,459.00
Stornoway	Rev J R Tallach	24,319.25	1,068.00	1,369.75	719.00	777.50	699.75	1,982.25	1,051.25	31,986.75
Uig	Rev A W MacColl*	2,025.00	63.00	140.00	55.00	45.00	30.00	175.00	78.00	2,611.00
		75,010.50	2,916.75	4,016.25	1,991.50	2,061.25	1,875.75	6,512.50	2,669.00	97,053.50

The Government spokeswoman in the House of Lords, Baroness Chisholm, confirmed that in all matters of conscience, the Government took a neutral position. The Bill will now proceed to the Committee stage for further discussion. Certainly the current law is woefully inadequate to protect medical workers – and clearly certain areas of specialist healthcare, such as obstetrics and gynaecology, are becoming extremely difficult to work in with a clear conscience.

Of course the fundamental matter is that God requires “all lawful endeavours to preserve our own life, and the life of others” – from conception to old age. Woe to those nations which have such blood on their hands, implementing practices to end life which are diametrically opposed to God’s holy law. They are then putting pressure on those who question such actions to conform to their secular values. We should pray for God’s Holy Spirit to give us tender consciences in seeking to follow Him and pray that laws will be enacted to protect life – not to take it away. Those who hold Christian values in the medical sphere need our support to be allowed to act according to their informed consciences. We hope and pray that this Bill will eventually become law.

KHM

Church Information

Jewish and Foreign Missions Fund

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

W Campbell, General Treasurer

Acknowledgement of Donations

The General Treasurer acknowledges with sincere thanks the following donations:

Eastern Europe Fund: Anon, Ps 60:4, £50.

Jewish & Foreign Missions Fund: Zimbabwe Mission: C Godfrey, £150; Anon, £20; Mr N Pearce, Cmryu, £140; Anon, Ps 60:4, £50, Anon, £13 000. Thembisio Home: Anon, £100.

Congregational Treasurers acknowledge with sincere thanks the following donations:

Glasgow: West End Fish Bar, £25. *Bus Fund:* Anon, £20, £20, £10. *Eastern Europe Fund:* Anon, £65, £60, £65, £65, £62, £73. *Home Mission Fund:* Anon, £100. *Jewish & Foreign Missions Fund:* Anon, £100, £10. *Sustentation Fund:* Anon, £200, £100.

Greenock: *Jewish & Foreign Missions Fund:* Anon, £500, £80. *TBS:* Anon, £500.

Inverness: Mr N Pearce, Cmryu, £140; Anon, £100. *Bus Fund:* Anon, £50. *Jewish & Foreign Missions Fund:* Anon, towards salary for African ministers, £20.

North Harris: Estate of late Mr John A Fraser, £1000.

Portree: *Bus Fund:* Anon, £10. *Sustentation Fund:* Anon, £5000. *TBS:* Anon, £1000, £500.

Santa Fe: Edinburgh Friends, for church repairs, \$50; Covenanters in Western PA, for building repairs, \$1000; Edinburgh Friends, for the relief of our brethren in Santa Fe affected by flooding, \$130.

Uig: Friends, £200. *Communion Expenses:* CBA, £200; Friend of the Cause, £20; Anon, £30.

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). **Lairg:** 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 Barrton 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 R MacLeod, 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 pm. Contact Rev R MacLeod; tel: 0141 954 3759.
- 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; **Strathry:** 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.
- Kinlochberrie:** 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. **Achmore:** 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) Mivaig:** 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 Brierciffe 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

Sancta 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 Levyskiy; tel: 00 38 048 785 19 24; e-mail: dlevyskiy@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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