

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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Moderator of Synod: Rev J MacLeod MA, 6 Church Ave, Sidcup, Kent, DA14 6BU; tel: 0208 309 1623.

Clerk of Synod: Rev K M Watkins BA, 252 Briercliffe Road, Burnley, BB10 2DQ; tel: 01282 835800; e-mail: kmwatkins@fpchurch.org.uk.

Assistant Clerk: Rev J R Tallach MB ChB, 2 Fleming Place, Stornoway, HS1 2NH; tel: 01851 702501.

General Treasurer: Mr W Campbell, 133 Woodlands Road, Glasgow, G3 6LE; tel: 0141 332 9283, fax 0141 332 4271, e-mail: wc.fpchurch@btconnect.com.

Law Agents: Brodies LLP, 15 Atholl Crescent, Edinburgh, EH3 8AH; tel: 0131 228 3777.

Clarks to Presbyteries:

Northern: Rev D W B Somerset BSc DPhil, 18 Carlton Place, Aberdeen, AB15 4BQ; tel: 01224 645250.

Southern: Rev R MacLeod BA, 4 Laurel Park Close, Glasgow, G13 1RD; tel: 0141 954 3759.

Western: Rev D A Ross, F P Manse, Laide, IV22 2NB; tel: 01445 731340.

Outer Isles: Rev A W MacColl MA PhD, F P Manse, Swainbost, Isle of Lewis, HS2 0TA; tel: 01851 810228.

Asia Pacific: Rev G B Macdonald BSc, 60 Hamilton St, Riverstone, NSW 2765; tel: 02 9627 3408.

Zimbabwe: Rev S Khumalo, Stand No 56004, Mazwi Road, Lobengula, PO Magwegwe, Bulawayo; tel: 00263 9407131.

Zimbabwe Mission Office: 9 Robertson Street, Parkview, Bulawayo; tel: 002639 62636, fax: 002639 61902, e-mail: fpchurchheadoffice@gmail.com.

Residential Care Homes:

Ballifeary House, 14 Ness Walk, Inverness, IV3 5SQ; tel: 01463 234679.

Leverburgh Residential Care Home, Ferry Road, Leverburgh, Isle of Harris, HS5 3UA; tel: 01859 520296.

Website of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland: www.fpchurch.org.uk.

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Editor: Rev K D Macleod BSc, 11 Auldcastle Road, Inverness, IV2 3PZ. Tel: 01463 712872; e-mail: kdmacleod@gmail.com. Unsigned articles are by the Editor.

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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, 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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Sin, Separation and Salvation

We live in a world where everything is affected by sin. We ourselves are sinners. But that was not the way God created the earth and everything in it. When God finished His work of creation, He “saw every thing that He had made, and, behold, it was very good” (Gen 1:31); nothing was in any way tainted by sin; Adam and Eve themselves were perfect in every way.

But it did not last. After Satan and other angels had fallen and been expelled from heaven, he entered the Garden of Eden. He was intent on bringing the entire human race into his kingdom. He first asked Eve a question, a loaded question designed to bring her to distance herself from the authority of what God had said to Adam. It is clear from her response that she was well aware of what God had commanded: “Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Gen 2:17).

Satan went on to contradict directly the Creator’s instruction; he told Eve: “Ye shall not surely die”. Matthew Poole, in his *Commentary*, considers that what Satan said amounted to this: “It is not so certain as you imagine that you shall die. God did say so indeed for your terror, and to keep you in awe; but do not entertain such hard and unworthy thoughts of that God who is infinitely kind and gracious: that He will, for such a trifle as the eating of a little fruit, undo you and all your posterity.” Whether or not Poole was correct in every detail here, there is no doubt that Satan has ever since made use of such ideas in his strategies for deceiving sinners. Eve was the first to be deceived; she fell into Satan’s snare, for she looked no further than the attractiveness of the fruit when she took it and ate. She ignored the authority of God’s command and the goodness of His warning. So did Adam. Both were now sinners. And all Adam’s descendants fell in him, for he was representing them in the covenant of works. Had he continued in obedience, they would have been born spiritually alive; but he fell into sin and they fell in him and are born spiritually dead.

Whatever Satan might say in his temptations, God’s warnings remained true; He will always be faithful to what He has said. God had said that, if

man would eat of the forbidden fruit, he would “surely die”. So now that Adam and Eve have eaten it, they *must* “surely die”. It is soon absolutely obvious that they were now spiritually dead, that they were unable to do anything spiritually good. They were separated from God and His grace. They could not love God; they could not trust in Him; they had no will to serve Him. When “they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day . . . Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden” (Gen 3:8).

This vain attempt to hide from God shows that they now had no desire for communion with Him. Spiritually dead as they were, they had lost the true knowledge of God; otherwise they would never have thought that they could really hide from God; they would instantly have realised that God can see everything everywhere. It is the same spiritual death that leads a sinner, as he departs further and further from God and His worship to “bless himself in his heart”, in spite of God’s threatenings, “saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst” (Deut 29:19). Satan will do all in his power to give sinners a feeling of peace when God is their enemy, just as he will do all in his power to disturb those with whom God is at peace through Jesus Christ.

Most obviously, death points to the separation between body and soul, when human beings pass from this world into eternity. Yet neither Adam or Eve died immediately after they sinned; indeed Adam lived until he was 930. But from the moment when each of them sinned, they were mortal; death, though it may not take place at once, is inevitable. Adam was told: “Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return” (Gen 3:19). And death will meet us much sooner than it met Adam.

Finally, Adam and Eve were condemned to eternal death, for as sinners they were now under condemnation. The solemn but just sentence of God was that they should be eternally separated from Him – separated from all His benefits, separated from all hope of any improvement in their condition – which meant that they would suffer in body and soul for ever and ever. Had they continued separate from God in this life, Adam and Eve would hear the sentence of final separation to be pronounced by Christ on the Day of Judgement: “Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels” (Mat 25:41).

It is the same sentence of condemnation that hangs over every sinner who will not return to God. We see in Eden the beginning of Satan’s lying, murderous work in this world; thus the Lord Jesus described him: “He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him . . . he is a liar, and the father of it” (Jn 8:44). He continues

that murderous work by doing all in his power to keep sinners in a state of spiritual death and bringing sinners down at last to eternal death. He tempts sinners to go on in the broad way that leads to eternal destruction, blinding their minds so that they do not take their danger seriously and do not see the attractiveness of the narrow way that leads to eternal blessedness.

But return to God is possible. Even in the Garden of Eden, a revelation of God's purpose of mercy was made to Adam and Eve in the promise of the coming of "the Seed of the woman", whose heel Satan was to bruise, while He was to bruise Satan's head (Gen 3:15). This was, of course, a promise of Christ coming into the world to save sinners from sin and its consequences, so that the separation between sinners and God might be removed – so that they might be reconciled to their Creator. Thus John wrote, "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil" (1 Jn 3:8). After the Fall, Satan regarded himself as the prince of this world and presumably thought his kingdom was impregnable. But Christ, the Son of God and the Seed of the woman, must have the pre-eminence, and what He did, in working out redemption for His people, was intended to weaken Satan's kingdom. As that redemption is applied through the centuries, the kingdom of darkness is indeed weakened, and the application of redemption will continue until Satan's kingdom is finally destroyed and he and his followers are cast into hell for ever.

Through Christ's reconciling work on the cross, sinners are made spiritually alive and they believe in Jesus Christ as the Saviour of the guilty. Further, all their sins are forgiven, so that they will never experience eternal death; they will never be finally separated from God. Rather they will be brought into His presence at death and will spend eternity with Him in perfect blessedness. Even the separation between body and soul will be reversed, at the resurrection, when Christ will come again to this world to raise all from their graves who have ever lived. With body and soul reunited, God's children will be able to serve Him wholeheartedly for ever.

In this sinful world, our only hope must be the saving work of Christ. Only through Him can the power of every form of death be destroyed. He died so that sinners might live. He experienced separation from God because of the sin He was bearing – its guilt, its liability to punishment. And He bore that sin away. Thus sinners separated from God by wicked works may be brought near to Him, and all who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ are actually brought near. Every form of the separation – every form of death – which sin brought into the world is to be reversed for those who believe. And the call comes to every sinner who hears the gospel or reads the Scriptures: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31).

Trials and Safety of Christ's People (2)¹

A Sermon by *Peter Hope*

Luke 12:32. *Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.*

2. **The admonition, "Fear not".** First, they are words of warning. They point to dangers and trials which might dismay the disciples' hearts. This is clearly implied in the very encouragement they convey, for if there were no causes of fear, there would be no occasion for encouragement. What then are the circumstances calculated to excite alarm? We shall not dwell on the hard lot of the early Christians. You know well what fiery trials they were exposed to, how fully verified were the frequent warnings which their Master gave them of coming evil, and how true it was that through much tribulation they were to enter into the kingdom of God. But we do not dwell on their condition, as their situation was in many respects exceptional, and our wish is to come to the ordinary circumstances of believers in our own day. Are there any causes of alarm in *their* condition and prospects?

First, as to temporal things. In this respect we are placed in very different circumstances from the early followers of Christ, to whom this admonition was originally addressed. In this land, the profession and the practice of vital Christianity have not for ages endangered the life – or even, in ordinary cases, materially injured their property. Time was indeed when this was the case, and it is possible that the time may come again.

Without wishing to allude particularly to passing events, still in the trying circumstances in which we are this day assembled, it would be inappropriate to be altogether silent on the subject. Events have recently taken place among us which seem intended to warn believers to prepare for a season of trial. No one would now be surprised at occurrences which a few short years ago seemed unlikely to reappear in our enlightened age.

Let us not shut our eyes to the fact but learn the lesson it is designed to teach us. God grant that these events may be sanctified to all of us, that they may be the means of leading us to a deeper concern for our souls! God grant that we may thus be shaken out of our spiritual slumbers and be brought to consider seriously if we are indeed on the Lord's side and have Him on ours

¹The final part of a sermon taken, with editing, from *The Free Church Pulpit*, vol 3; the first head, which appeared last month, answered the question, "Who are the 'little flock' that are here addressed?" The sermon was preached at the Dumfries-shire village of Canonbie, to which Hope belonged, on 20 November 1843, shortly after the Disruption, when the local Free Church congregation was obliged by the local proprietor to worship on a public road. He refers to the events of the time at the foot of this page.

– whether we do indeed belong to the little flock of Christ and have Him for our shepherd. Let us enquire, not whether we profess to be His disciples, nor even whether we suffer for this profession, but whether we truly believe and love and obey Him.

But even though God in His good providence should disappoint the fears which many entertain: that days of trial and suffering for the Church of Christ are approaching, the Christian in this world is exposed to many trials, of which a warning is given in the words, “Fear not, little flock”. He is not in this life freed from the ills to which flesh is heir: pain, poverty, bereavement; indeed these are often sent as salutary corrections by his heavenly Father. “Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.”

But it is also true that “no affliction seemeth for the present to be joyous but grievous”, and the believer is often visited with these afflictions. He may often lie on a sickbed; his lot is often found among the poor of the earth who earn with painful toil their scanty portion of this world's goods; he often mourns the loss of his dearest earthly comforts; and often, but for the presence of the holy Comforter, his heart would indeed be desolate. He is warned to expect such trials and to prepare. Both the Word and providence of God indicate that they will sooner or later, to a greater or lesser extent, be his portion in this vale of tears.

But even though he may experience fewer of these afflictions than many other children of God, there is one great struggle in which he must engage: the conflict with death. All must meet this terrible foe and, whatever the circumstances – whether at the stake or on the battlefield, or on a quiet deathbed surrounded by affectionate relatives – there is, in itself, something appalling to flesh and blood in the approach of death. The disciples of Christ are not exempted from the trial. Before they can enter Canaan they must face “the swellings of Jordan”. And the words before us may be regarded as warning them of this.

But other trials of a spiritual kind await them; they cannot escape them. And many of the evils just referred to may affect our spiritual frame, and may then be considered as trials of a spiritual kind. The frowns of hostile power, the loss of worldly substance, the pressure of hopeless poverty, the sharp distress of pain and sickness, the bitter pang of bereavement, all these may severely try the faith and patience of the saints. And their faith and patience are in danger of failing in the hour of trial, and thus they may be led into sin. Believers are therefore to look on these evils, not only as salutary chastisements, but also as events which, if not watched for and sanctified, may become new occasions of transgression to the careless.

Although these trials of the believer's faith call loudly for watchfulness, prayer and reliance on God for grace to help us in our time of need, it is not here that the greatest spiritual danger is to be found. It is not from this quarter that the most formidable and ensnaring temptations assail the heart of the Christian. It is rather in the hour of prosperity than of adversity, of health than of sickness, of joy than of sorrow, that the heart is most prone to be lifted up and forget God. It is a sad and striking proof of man's natural alienation from God that it is when we enjoy most of His temporal blessings that we are most ready to offend and grieve the bounteous Giver of them all.

From whatever direction they may come, it is certain that temptations to sin will continually assail the believer. All the admonitions of Scripture warn of this, and also of the imminent hazard of yielding to the tempter. The believer is called to "stand in awe and sin not", to "resist the devil", to "walk circumspectly"; and the actual experience of Christians proves that these warnings point to a real danger. The believer has to maintain a sore struggle with the corruption, deceitfulness and desperate wickedness of his heart, leaguings with his spiritual enemies. The conflict is long and severe, ending only with the life of the Christian warrior, and the outcome often seems doubtful, and he is frequently constrained to cry out, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" For this incessant, vexing conflict the words, "Fear not, little flock," admonish us to prepare.

The words, "Fear not", are not only words of warning, they are, more especially, words of encouragement. It is true that they speak of difficulties and trials, but they speak of them in an accent of comfort and consolation. And it is important that Christians should take them in both these senses and act practically on them both, joining trembling with their mirth, and hope and gladness with their trembling. This is important in both temporal and spiritual trials. In the midst of the sufferings to which the early Christians were exposed, how often must those who heard them from His blessed lips have remembered these cheering words of the Saviour: "Fear not, little flock". He dealt faithfully with His followers in telling them of the trials which awaited them, but His warnings were ever accompanied with encouragement. As it was their duty to believe the voice of warning, it was also their duty to believe the voice of consolation.

He still deals faithfully with His people, and their duty is still the same: to look with calm belief at both the intimation of danger and the promise of support. In the seasons of perplexity and distress which they are taught to expect – whether they are the common ills of humanity or the special troubles of Christians – and whether we regard them as temporal evils, such as sickness, bereavement, reproach and persecution; or as spiritual trials, such

as the temptations to sin which continually beset them. In all these ills of the flesh and of the spirit, the believer is not to despair. He is not to quail before the evils which surround him; he is to be of good courage: "Fear not, little flock".

3. The special grounds for taking courage set before Christ's flock. How, it may be asked, can the believer do other than fear? What can sustain his sinking heart? There are many causes of alarm; where are his grounds of hope and confidence? Do his resources lie in his power to get the victory, in his capacity of endurance, in his strength to resist temptation? Is it from this source that he draws encouragement, and are the words, "Fear not", only the whisper of self-confidence and self-complacency? Or is the balm poured in by another hand, and derived from a different quarter?

The first ground of confidence for true believers we shall notice is: they are the "little flock" here addressed. This little flock has a shepherd, and who is the shepherd of Israel? It is the Lord Jesus Christ, who redeemed them with His own blood. "I am the good Shepherd", He said, "the good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep." "I am the good Shepherd, and know My sheep, and am known of Mine." Having finished the work which was given Him to do, the once-crucified Redeemer ascended on high, leading captivity captive, was exalted to God's right hand a prince and a Saviour, far above all principalities and powers and might and dominion, and has all things put under His feet. This "little flock" has a Shepherd who has all power in heaven and in earth; what have they to fear? Could we always realise this truth, what peace it would infuse into the mind in the time of trouble and darkness and dismay! What consolation and support it would afford under the pressure of calamity and temptation, if we could feel the blessed truth, "the Lord reigneth"!

But as the exalted Redeemer has the power, He also has the will to protect His "little flock" in the wilderness? To doubt His willingness would be worse, if possible, than to doubt His power. Who tells believers, "Fear not, little flock"? Is it not the Saviour? Though He is now on the throne of heaven, He has not forgotten His sheep. Does He not perform on their behalf all His mediatorial offices – teaching them by His Word and Spirit, making continual intercession for them, ruling over and defending them, and restraining and conquering all their and His enemies? Forget them! A mother may forget her sucking child, but He will not forget them. He has graven them upon the palms of His hands, they are continually before Him. What comforting assurances He gives that He will be with them, that He is on their side, that their cause is His! "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you." "Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am

thy God.” “My grace is sufficient for thee, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.”

If only we would steadfastly rely on it, what a happiness to think that the glorified Redeemer, possessing all power in heaven and in earth, wields it on behalf of His beloved flock! What a consolation to know that this great Captain of their salvation is near in the hour of distress and danger, and especially in temptation – that all events are under His immediate control, that He can make the wrath of men and devils to praise Him, and the remainder of wrath He can restrain! What a comfort to His people, both as individual believers and as members of the Church of Christ, to know that He is made the Head over all things to His Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all! Surely the Church and people of the Lord Jesus Christ need not despair in any circumstances.

Surely they should not be afraid when they think who is on their side, as well as who is against them. Surely, however waste the wilderness may be, the “little flock” need not be troubled when they know that the good Shepherd is near. The more fiercely the storm rages, let them cling the more closely to Him; then, in spite of the devil, the world and the flesh, this shall be their joyful song: “The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures, He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul; He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me, Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me.” Such are the ample grounds for encouragement that believers have as the “little flock” of Christ, having Him for their shepherd.

But another source of consolation is set forth in the word, *Father*: “It is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom”. What a relation to stand in to Jehovah! If we are indeed true believers in Christ, then “He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one; for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren”. “Go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.” With Jesus as our elder brother, we are the sons of God; “and if children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ”.

Listen to the Saviour’s earnest prayer to His Father in heaven for His followers, and not for His followers only in His own day, but for all who should believe on Him through their word, for all His flock in all ages: “I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given Me; for they are Thine. And all Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine, and I am glorified in them.” And what is His prayer? “I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil.”

With Jehovah standing to them in the relation of a father, and they to Him in the relation of sons, what have Christ's "little flock" to fear? Will He suffer His children to be torn from Him and destroyed? If they truly confide in Him, will He suffer them to be tried above what they are able? Will He not with the trial make a way to escape, that they may be able to bear it? They now have all the glorious attributes of the Almighty arrayed on their side: His power, His wisdom, His goodness, His truth – and His justice, for He is faithful and just to forgive them their sins, and to confer upon them all the blessings which Christ has purchased, and it would be charging God with injustice to suppose that He would now withhold any of them. True, He may chasten them, but this is just a proof that He deals with them as sons, "for what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not?" He will make all things work together for good to those that love Him; and therefore, with God as their reconciled and loving Father, let the firm, abiding thought of every lamb in Christ's "little flock" be, "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

Finally, the more special ground of encouragement our text affords to believers is contained in the assurance, "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom". Two elements of encouragement are combined in this precious declaration: first, the value of the reward; second, the certainty of obtaining it. The word, *kingdom*, expresses the greatness of the reward. It is obviously heaven, with all its glories and joys. It is to this that the faithful people of Christ are hereafter to be welcomed. "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world".

I need make no feeble attempt to set before you the blessedness that awaits the redeemed. We might cluster together the glowing terms which the inspired writers employ: the thrones, the crowns, the white raiment, the melody of harps, the songs of triumph, the living fountains of waters, the tears wiped away by God Himself, the fullness of joy, the perfection of holiness, the immediate presence of God and of the Lamb, and all this for eternity – after thousands of ages have rolled away, the happiness only beginning, and will be only beginning at the end of thousands of ages more. We might expand, but we must conclude in the words of the Apostle, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him". But we need not dwell on this. All think of heaven as a place of happiness and glory.

It is not by contemplating the exceeding greatness of its delights that the humble believer is to be specially encouraged in his struggles here below. The eternal joys of heaven would seem sufficient recompense, were they much less entrancing than they will be. The chief encouragement will rather be found to rest in the *second* of the elements: the certainty of attaining this

inheritance. When we think of who the Father is: the Lord Jehovah who does according to His will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, surely the words, “It is your Father’s good pleasure”, should be enough to pour comfort and consolation into the Christian’s troubled heart.

If it is the Father’s good pleasure, who shall thwart it? Who shall stand between His purposes and their accomplishment? The “little flock” of Christ are His own gift to the Redeemer, and under His own special care. “My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father’s hand.” They are the objects of His everlasting love, the partakers of His covenant blessings, the heirs of His heavenly kingdom. Through every trial and every temptation He will infallibly bring them to that glorious inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for them.

If then we are indeed Christ’s people, let us be of good courage. We have Him for our watchful Shepherd and our ever-present Almighty Friend. We have His Father for our Father; we have an eternity of unspeakable blessedness in prospect, and the faithfulness of the Omnipotent One is pledged to our inheriting the kingdom, and all His attributes are engaged to secure it. In every time of trial and temptation, let us go forward with firm and well-founded confidence – confidence in our Saviour-God alone and not at all in ourselves; confidence, not in order to relax our efforts and thus be guilty of presumptuous sin, but in order to redouble them, steadfastly performing every duty in the face of whatever opposition, resisting every temptation, enduring every hardship, and braving every danger; looking at all times to Him for grace and strength. And by His grace and strength granted to us, we shall be “more than conquerors through Him that loved us”.

Nothing Impossible¹

James Foote

Rightly interpreted, there is something truly encouraging in the saying of the angel to the Virgin Mary: that with God nothing is impossible. This statement applies generally, and its application to some particular cases is obvious and important. Men might despair of various things, were it not for the omnipotent arm of Jehovah. We see some men so wedded to their sins, so accustomed to all that is evil, so averse from all that is holy, so obstinately

¹Foote (1781-1856) was a minister in Aberdeen. This article is the last point of application in one of his expository sermons in *Lectures on the Gospel According to Luke*. It has been edited. The passage expounded was Luke 1:26-38.

contemning all means for their benefit. Then we may be ready to say their conversion is impossible, or hopeless, and thus sinfully desist from all endeavours for their good, if we did not remember that the Lord has done many great things, and that He is still able to do all things.

We may think of the deceitfulness of riches, and the snares of an exalted position in life – and see some people deceived and caught in them. Then we might entertain scarcely any hope of them, for their salvation is so difficult as to have given rise to the proverb, “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God”. We would lose hope unless, after the Lord repeated that proverb, He added, “With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible”.

Sometimes the people of God may be ready to think that they are in straits and difficulties and dangers from which they cannot be extricated. But this is to dishonour the providence and the power of God. When Moses doubted whether so vast a multitude could be fed in the wilderness, God said, “Is the Lord’s hand waxed short? Thou shalt see now whether My word shall come to pass unto thee or not.” Let not the contrite and desponding think that they cannot be saved, that their sins are too heinous to be pardoned, or that it will be impossible for them to hold out against their various temptations. True, their ruin would be inevitable if they only had themselves to look to, but “the Lord’s hand is not shortened that it cannot save, neither His ear heavy that it cannot hear”. Jesus Christ is able “to save them to the uttermost all that come unto God through Him.”

Whatever God has said He will bring about, let us not doubt that it is possible, or certain, that He will do so. Why, for instance, “should it be thought a thing incredible with [us], that God should raise the dead?” The Lord shall “change our vile body”, and fashion it “like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself”. What is there, consistent with wisdom and justice, that God cannot do? Is anything too hard for Him? In a word, if we trust in our own strength, nothing spiritually good can be accomplished; but if we trust in the Lord’s strength, everything will be achieved. With us nothing is good, but through God everything good is possible.

Here then is the secret of the whole: to renounce ourselves and to rely firmly on divine strength. “All things”, said Jesus Christ, “are possible to him that believeth.” “Hast thou not known? Hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching of His understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly

fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.”

John Hooper – a Reformation Puritan¹

3. “Mixed and Mingled Religion”

Rev K M Watkins

It was May 1549 when John Hooper arrived back in England – an England that was changing, and changing for the better. Under young King Edward VI, who had come to the throne on his father Henry’s death at the beginning of 1547, hopes were growing for further reformation. This had attracted Hooper, who “returned to England with a deep appreciation of what had been achieved in Switzerland and also a realisation of what needed to be done here”.² His Puritanism had gathered momentum in Zurich and he was determined to see the same biblical purity applied in his homeland. In the end, Hooper would find “the Church in England a most unwilling pupil”.³ Indeed, “not long after his return . . . Hooper’s optimistic view of the pace of reform would clash with the moderate, measured goals of the ‘evangelical establishment’”.⁴

But things began well. Hooper was soon appointed chaplain in the house of Edward Seymour, Duke of Somerset, who was Lord Protector and arguably the most powerful man in the land, given that the King was so young. Hooper preached every day to large assemblies. “There is such a concourse of people at my lectures, that very often the church will not hold them”, he wrote to Bullinger.⁵ Hooper was able to set the message of the Bible before others

¹This article is based on the third part of a paper given at the 2016 Theological Conference. Hooper was heavily influenced by the writings of the Zurich reformers, Zwingli and Bullinger, and given that King Henry VIII’s version of reformation retained so many remnants of Romanism, he was exposed to persecution in England. He therefore left for the Continent, arriving in Zurich in early 1547, where he published three books contending for a more thoroughly biblical reformation in England.

²Robert W Oliver, “The External of Worship”, in *Anglican and Puritan Thinking*, Westminster Conference Papers 1977, p 59.

³W Morris S West, “John Hooper and the Origins of Puritanism”, in *The Baptist Quarterly*, vol 15, issue 8 (October 1954), p 346.

⁴Carrie Euler, *Couriers of the Gospel: England and Zurich, 1531-1558*, Theologischer Verlag Zürich, 2006, p 187.

⁵Letter to Henry Bullinger, written from London on 5 February 1550, *Original Letters Relative to the English Reformation*, vol 1, The Parker Society, ed Hastings Robinson, Cambridge, 1846, p 75.

with passion and conviction. The Dutch Reformer, Martin Micron, who was in London at the time, wrote, “What a concourse of people, how many lives have been changed. . . . If the Lord God . . . increases His Spirit in Hooper, I do not doubt but that he will be the future Zwingli of England.”⁶

However, the more the common people heard him gladly, the more the old guard opposed him. One of his chief opponents was the Bishop of London, Edmund Bonner, who had never forsaken his Romanist views. The King’s Council had appointed a day for Bonner to affirm the Protestant faith, but instead he preached against it and asserted transubstantiation, the foundational error supporting the mass. Hooper was there, and his zeal for truth meant that he was willing to be involved in the more difficult aspects of reformation. He preached against Bonner’s views and also witnessed against him in proceedings before the Council which put Bonner into prison. Thus Hooper made another deadly enemy. He wrote to Bullinger words which were to prove prophetic: “I had a sharp and dangerous contest with that Bishop. . . . Should he be again restored to his office and episcopal function, I shall, I doubt not, be restored to my country and my Father which is in heaven”.⁷ The interests of biblical truth had demanded the stand against Bonner, and Hooper could not resist that call.

Events in the political realm moved swiftly through the latter half of 1549. Somerset, Hooper’s patron, fell from favour, and a new leader emerged: John Dudley, Earl of Warwick, later to become Duke of Northumberland. Rather than falling with Somerset, Hooper’s position was maintained by his becoming Dudley’s chaplain. Things still looked hopeful for reform, for it suited Dudley politically to favour more thorough reformation, to which the King was most amenable.

In February 1550, Hooper was chosen to preach before the King and Council the so-called Lenten sermons. In his bold and outspoken seven-sermon series on Jonah, he seized the opportunity to demand wholesale reform. The English Reformation had started – but it was only a start. It was not enough that the Church’s doctrine had been reformed – its worship and practice needed to be reformed as well, in a full Zurich-like Reformation – “to reform this Church of England unto the primitive state and apostolical doctrine” as Hooper put it in his fourth sermon.⁸

⁶Quoted by W Morris S West, “John Hooper and the Origins of Puritanism”, in *The Baptist Quarterly*, vol 16, issue 1 (January 1955), p 24.

⁷Letter to Henry Bullinger, written from London on 7 November 1549, *Original Letters*, vol 1, pp 69,70.

⁸*Writings of Dr John Hooper, Bishop of Gloucester and Worcester. Martyr, 1555*, The Religious Tract Society, nd, p 144. Further references to this volume are in the text of the article, prefaced by *W*.

In the Epistle Dedicatory prefacing the printed version of these sermons, Hooper warned that the devil “will do the best he can to preserve a mixed and mingled religion, that shall neither plainly be against, nor wholly with him; and so use the matter that partly God’s truth shall take place, and partly the superstitious inventions of man. The which mingled and mixed religion is so much the more dangerous as it is accounted for pure and good; therefore it is earnestly forbidden by God, as the examples of the Scripture declare” (*W*, p 85). Again, “Christ cannot abide to have the leaven of the Pharisees mingled with His sweet flour. He would have us either hot or cold; the lukewarm He vomiteth up, and not without a cause. For he accuses God of ignorance and foolishness who intends to adorn His doctrine and decrees with human cogitations” (*W*, p 86).

Hooper had good reason to attack “mixed and mingled religion”. The Puritan in him had been much stirred by remnants of Romanism contained in *The Book of Common Prayer* published the previous year.⁹ The section on the Lord’s Supper was especially grievous to Hooper’s Puritan sentiments. The word *mass* was even used in its title: “The Supper of the Lord and the Holy Communion, commonly called the Mass” (p 193). The officiating minister was to wear Romanist garments: “The priest . . . shall put upon him the vesture appointed for that ministration; that is to say, a white alb” (p 193), which a recent dictionary has defined as “a loose, sleeved, full-length, gownlike white linen vestment . . . worn with other vestments as by the celebrant of mass”.¹⁰ The minister was to perform his duties at an *altar* rather than a table: he was responsible for “setting both the bread and wine upon the altar” (p 200) and was to pray “turning him[self] to the altar” (p 202). The liturgy included prayers for the dead: “We commend unto Thy mercy (O Lord) all other Thy servants, which are departed hence from us, with the sign of faith, and now do rest in the sleep of peace: grant unto them, we beseech Thee, Thy mercy, and everlasting peace” (p 203). Communicants were to kneel when receiving the sacrament: “meekly kneeling upon your knees” (p 204).

Even where doctrinal progress had been made, the Church of England struggled to put it into practice. In a revealing letter to Bullinger written at the end of 1549,¹¹ Hooper had acknowledged that “there are here six or seven bishops who comprehend the doctrine of Christ as far as relates to the Lord’s

⁹The quotations from the 1549 *Book of Common Prayer* in this paragraph are from *The First Prayer-Book of King Edward VI*, The Ancient and Modern Library of Theological Literature, London, 1888.

¹⁰*Webster’s New World College Dictionary*, fourth edition, 2010.

¹¹The quotations in this and the following paragraph are from Hooper’s Letter to Henry Bullinger, written from London on 27 December 1549, *Original Letters*, vol 1, p 72.

Supper, with as much clearness and piety as one could desire”. But they were not “reforming their churches according to the rule of God’s Word”.

Hooper explained: “The public celebration of the Lord’s Supper is very far from the order and institution of our Lord. . . . In some places the Supper is celebrated three times a day. Where they used heretofore to celebrate in the morning the *mass* of the apostles, they now have the *communion* of the apostles; where they had the *mass* of the blessed virgin, they now have the communion which they call the *communion* of the virgin; where they had the principal, or high mass, they now have, as they call it, the high communion. They still retain their vestments and the candles before the altars; in the churches they always chant the *hours* and other hymns relating to the Lord’s Supper, but in our own language. And that popery may not be lost, the mass-priests, although they are compelled to discontinue the use of the Latin language, yet most carefully observe the same tone and manner of chanting to which they were heretofore accustomed in the papacy. God knows to what perils and anxieties we are exposed by reason of men of this kind.”

Hooper used his sermons on Jonah to entreat the authorities to forsake this “mixed and mingled religion” and embrace full reform: “Most gracious King and noble counsellors, as you have taken away the mass from the people, so take from them its feathers also, the altar, vestments, and such like as have apparelled her; and let the holy communion be decked with the holy ceremonies with which the high and wise priest Christ, decked and apparelled it first of all” (*W*, p 90).

Hooper appealed throughout the sermon series to the regulative principle. In the second sermon he said that we should “offer no other worship and religion unto God than He Himself by Word requires. If we do, we offer an idol of our own head, and honour the devil under the person and name of God” (*W*, p 106). In the sixth sermon, he argued for a return to biblical simplicity: “Let us submit ourselves, all our wisdom and learning, unto His Word; and think that what Christ and His apostles have instituted and used, can in nowise be bettered by us” (*W*, p 173). Hooper was a Reformation Puritan indeed! Everything added by man was to be removed; let worship be just as God has appointed in Scripture.

Hooper was rejecting and condemning what was already becoming, under Archbishop Cranmer’s leadership, the settled approach of Anglicanism. Imported from Luther’s Germany, not from Zwingli’s Zurich or Calvin’s Geneva, things not forbidden in Scripture were seen as *adiaphora* – matters indifferent – and could be used or not used as the Church saw fit. That always leads to the “mixed and mingled religion” which Hooper so much hated.

Hooper referred to the altars, which had still not been removed from the

English churches. The doctrine of the once-for-all sacrifice of Christ had overthrown the heresy that the mass was a sacrifice. With all boldness he spelt out the practical implications: “Turn the altars into tables, according to the first institution of Christ . . . for as long as the altars remain, both the ignorant people, and the ignorant and evil-persuaded priest, will always dream of sacrifice” (*W*, p 133). The Puritan was at work.

Even the architecture of the English churches needed to be changed: “This I would wish, that the magistrates should put both the preacher, minister, and the people in one place, and shut up the partition called the chancel, which separates the congregation of Christ one from the other, as though the veil and partition of the temple in the old law yet should remain in the Church; when, indeed, all figures and types ended in Christ” (*W*, p 136).

He especially spoke against the prescriptions for ordination that had recently been published by Cranmer entitled, *The Form and Manner of Making and Consecrating of Archbishops, Bishops, Priests and Deacons*. The oath concerning the King’s supremacy required the ordinand to swear on the saints, using the words, “So help me God, all saints and the holy Evangelist”.¹² Hooper expressed his surprise: “Whereat I did not a little wonder”.¹³ He marvelled at the requirement that “he that will be admitted to the ministry of God’s Word or His sacraments must come in white vestments. . . . Sure I am, they have not in the Word of God that thus a minister should be apparelled. . . . It is rather the habit and vesture of Aaron and the Gentiles, than of the ministers of Christ” (*EW*, p 479). Hooper’s opposition to the Roman Catholic vestments would fuel a veritable storm a few months later. He spoke against the strange extra-biblical practice of the ordinand holding the communion bread and cup in one hand and the Bible in the other at his ordination. To manifest the absurdity of it, he asked, “Why do they not as well give him in his hand the [baptismal] font and the water? For the one is a sacrament as well as the other” (*EW*, p 479).

Hooper dealt at length with the sacraments. He said: “The sacraments are as visible words offered unto the eyes and other senses, as the sweet sound of the word to the ear, and the Holy Ghost to the heart” (*W*, p 155). He corrected the abuses of Baptism: “The matter and element of this sacrament is pure water: whatsoever is added, oil, salt, cross, lights, and such others, are the inventions of men; and better it were they were abolished, than kept in the Church: for they obscure the simplicity and perfectness of Christ our

¹²*The Two Liturgies with other Documents set forth by Authority in the Reign of King Edward the Sixth*, The Parker Society, ed Joseph Ketley, 1844, p 169.

¹³*Early Writings of John Hooper*, ed Samuel Carr, The Parker Society, Cambridge, 1843, p 479. Further references to this volume are in the text of the article, prefaced by *EW*.

Saviour's institution. I pray the King's majesty and his most honourable Council to prepare a ship, as soon as may be, to send them home again to their mother church, the bosom and breast of man" (*W*, p 169).

In the Lord's Supper, the believer "doubts no more of an inward friendship, familiarity, concord, peace, love, atonement, and fatherly pity and compassion through Christ, by the means of faith, than he doubts that his mouth outwardly receives the signs and sacraments of God's mercies. To excite this faith and belief in the merits of Christ in us, the bread is called His body, and the wine His blood" (*W*, p 172). As to administering the Supper, he said, "The more simple it is, the better it is, and the nearer unto the institution of Christ and His apostles. If he have bread, wine, a table, and a fair tablecloth, let him not be solicitous nor careful for the rest, seeing they are not things brought in by Christ, but by popes . . . as the candles, vestments, crosses, altars! For if they are kept in the church as indifferent things, at length they will be maintained as necessary things" (*W*, p 170).

The Puritan cares about things that others do not, such as posture and gestures used in worship. Hooper expressly condemned kneeling at the Lord's Table. John Knox had come to the north of England at this time, and administered the Supper with the communicants sitting, not kneeling. Two years later, Knox would also preach before the King and Council and issue "a ringing attack"¹⁴ on kneeling. Hooper said: "The outward behaviour and gesture of the receiver should be without any kind of suspicion, show, or inclination of idolatry. Wherefore, seeing kneeling is a show and external sign of honouring and worshipping, and heretofore grievous and damnable idolatry has been committed by the honouring of the sacrament, I would wish . . . that the communicators and receivers should do it standing or sitting. But sitting, in my opinion, were best" (*W*, p 172).

Hooper was a Protestant. He condemned the papal system as "the nest of abomination" (*W*, p 97). He sought for the thorough extirpation of all remnants of Romanism. He argued against the false pity that allowed Romanist clergy to remain in their posts. Like the sailors did with Jonah, if they would not reform, "cast them all into the sea, that is, put them out of their office, and put better in their places" (*W*, p 126). But what drove Hooper was no sectarian hatred of Roman Catholicism. It was a love of Scripture. "His motivation . . . was his unswerving belief in the truth and sufficiency of Scripture and in the ideal of the New Testament Church." The Bible was sufficient in all things: "The written Word of God is as perfect as God Himself" and "needs not that blasphemous and vile help of the Bishop of Rome" (*W*, p 151).

¹⁴Elizabeth Whitley, *Plain Mr Knox*, John Knox Press, 1960, p 57.

Hooper's conclusion at the end of the seventh sermon could not have been bolder: "If your Majesty do these things, the blood of your people shall not be required at your hands. But . . . if not, the King of Nineveh, with his people, shall rise at the latter day, and condemn both King and Council. . . . Let us, therefore, believe and amend, or else we must perish" (*W*, pp 191, 192). Hooper had no doubt about the biblical duty of civil magistrates to ensure true religion in the land. Both Church and state were responsible for getting rid of all "mixed and mingled religion".

The Personal Duties of Communicants¹

James Grierson

How ought communicants to maintain a conscientious, habitual attention to the personal and secret duties required of communicants? It is a matter of the utmost importance, and this is how they ought to regard it. Without such attention to secret duties, there is no likelihood – not even a possibility – that duties either in public or at home will be performed adequately. Then the honour of Christ and the interests of religion must be seriously injured.

If communicants therefore would seek to promote either their own spiritual improvement, or the welfare of the spiritual kingdom to which they profess to belong, they must apply themselves with the greatest diligence to their secret duties. The faithfulness and relish with which these duties are carried out provide the true means of estimating the real amount of spiritual life in the soul – just as a thermometer placed in the shade is the true means of estimating the degree of heat in the whole body of the surrounding air.

It is not difficult to determine what these duties are. Among the first of them is self-examination. It is indispensable to the thorough knowledge of our heart and life, of our imperfections and necessities. Without it nothing effective can be attempted, and no suitable plan adopted, for promoting one's own improvement. Yet this self-examination cannot be conducted properly, nor can this self-knowledge be attained, without examining the Holy Scriptures diligently each day. The Scriptures were given by inspiration of the One who knows what is in man, and in them we are given a key to all the intricacies of the human heart. And after this self-knowledge has been ascertained it is just as important to watch the state of the heart.

¹Another extract, with editing, from Grierson's volume, *The Lord's Supper*. It is the fourth point in a chapter headed, "The general conduct which all who partake of the Lord's Supper should be careful afterwards to maintain".

The vessels of the sanctuary had not only to be examined, but kept constantly clean and fit for daily use. A person in poor health, or recovering from sickness, is careful to notice his state and progress from day to day. Similarly communicants are especially bound to keep their hearts “with all diligence” and to be on their guard against the entrance and indulgence of evil thoughts and of all the corrupt affections “which war against the soul”. But in order for them to perform this duty aright, it is necessary that, in their most secret prayer, they should be under the abiding impression of God’s invisible presence – that “all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do”; that His eyes are over them continually; that He searches the heart and tries the reins of the children of men; and that He will one day “bring every work into judgement, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil”.

Under this deep and solemn impression, communicants are habitually to attend to the duty of self-examination, after having partaken of the Lord’s Supper. It is also their duty to spend some portion of every day in studying the Holy Scriptures. This latter duty they are to practise,—not merely to obtain a more thorough knowledge of their own hearts, but also to acquaint themselves more fully with God – with the revealed counsels of His will and with the exceeding riches of His grace.

Nor are the Scriptures to be only searched and read; they are to be the subject of much serious and profound meditation. This is another secret employment in which communicants are to engage habitually. They are to meditate on His perfections, as displayed both in His works and in His Word. In particular, they are to meditate on these perfections as set forth in that glorious plan of salvation, to all parts of which their thoughts are directed in the ordinance of the Supper. They are to meditate, moreover, on the personal interest which they themselves seek after, or actually possess, in a plan so glorious; and on all the loving-kindness and tender mercy that He has, in numberless instances, manifested to them individually.

We need scarcely add that all these private religious duties are to be consecrated by frequent, fervent prayer. Without this, no other duties can be conducted profitably. We have already seen prayer to be necessary for the growth of all Christian graces. And these graces are indeed inseparably connected with the various private religious duties to which we have just referred. Communicants must always be conscientious about the duty of praying to God in secret, or they will act inconsistently with the profession they have made by sitting at a communion table. To neglect prayer is to neglect one of the most important means by which the Lord’s Supper is made useful for their spiritual improvement and comfort.

Obituary

Mr Norman Thomson

Norman Thomson was born in Skigersta, one of the villages in Ness, Isle of Lewis, on 6 April 1935. His parents, Mr and Mrs Angus Thomson, were careful to instruct their children in the teaching of the Word of God, and his grandfather, Donald Thomson, was a missionary in the Ness congregation until his death in 1948.

While the godly examples Norman witnessed in his youth were not sufficient in themselves to bring salvation to his soul, yet they clearly made some impression by the time he first left home for sea at the age of 16. When he met his former classmate Malcolm (Calum) Gunn in London one day, Norman took Calum to show him his ship. On being questioned as to why there was a Bible beside his bed in the cabin, Norman stated his belief that, if one read a chapter of it every morning, things would go better during the day. While neither of the two young friends had any concern of soul at this stage of their lives, this shows how the example of family worship can make a deep impression on tender minds. "Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Prov 22:6).

The time came in the Lord's sovereign purpose when He brought Norman, then aged around 20, under a deep conviction of his lost and ruined condition as a sinner before a holy God. This work of the Holy Spirit took place on a vessel which was sailing out of Buenos Aires, and so powerful was the effect of what he was passing through in his mind that Norman on one occasion had to be carried out of the wheelhouse by other crewmen.

No comforter could he find among the crewmen, who were nonplussed as to what he was experiencing and no comfort visited his tempest-tossed soul from the One whose way is in the sea and in the waters great His path. He remained under this intense law work for around two weeks until the Lord in His great mercy revealed Himself to Norman as a sin-forgiving and merciful God in Christ. The rain was over and gone and he began to drink of the fountain of life, the streams whereof make glad the city of our God. The impression made by this experience never left our friend, and we believe that much of the solemnity, fervency and spirituality which ever afterwards characterised his prayers, can be traced to this initial meeting between the spirit of Norman Thomson and the Spirit of God.

Norman professed faith in Christ for the first time at the Ness communion in October 1956. He was a lively, intelligent man, with a retentive memory, who relished spiritual conversation. Where Norman excelled was in the gift

of prayer, especially in public. We never heard him pray without feeling that there was a very evident connection between his soul and the Hearer of prayer even when, in his latter years, his faculties were much impaired. Such strength in prayer was, we believe, a fruit of much secret wrestling with the Angel of the Covenant and demonstrates in Norman's case that "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh". He loved to meditate on the truth and was particularly well-versed in the Old Testament Scriptures. He often quoted the words, "When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them" (Is 41:17).

On one occasion while sailing in the Pacific, he was greatly impressed with the portion in Numbers 16 about Aaron staying the plague in the camp of Israel. When he heard an action sermon on this passage, in North Uist many years later, he recalled with evident delight the effect this part of the Word produced on him in the days of his first love.

Norman was ordained to the eldership in the Ness congregation in 1987, and around that time there were a number of able and spiritually-minded office-bearers in the congregation, including his godly younger brother, Finlay. In addition to Ness, he was able over the years to keep services in other congregations, including North Tolsta, Breasclate, Halkirk, Staffin and also in the Aberfeldy area.

Apart from his time at sea, Norman's working life was spent in various places, including periods in Greenock, Lochaber and Perthshire. He married Anne Macritchie, from Dell, in Ness, who was a like-minded companion until her death in 1993. Norman's care for his first wife in her illness was noteworthy. The Lord provided another helpmeet for Norman in His great goodness, in Christine Macdonald, from the Isle of Skye, whom he married in 1998 and who cared for Norman most lovingly and dutifully during a prolonged period after he took a series of strokes.

Norman Thomson was a strong character, with a mercurial temperament. He was great admirer of the North Country Separatists, such as Sandy Gair, John Grant and Joseph Mackay, and in many ways he reminded us of them. Like them, he had much secret communion with the Lord and seemed often to have deep experiences in the spiritual life. But, also like them, he could be too hasty in his speech at times.

We think that Norman towards the end of his days could have heartily agreed with the following remarks of the late Tommy Macleod, who was a godly elder in the Gairloch congregation at one time. Once when speaking to the question, he likened the old Christian to a horseshoe fixed for many years above the entrance to a blacksmith's smithy to advertise the kind of

work that was taking place inside. Unlike other such horseshoes, this particular one – if it could only talk – might complain of its inactivity and coldness and might feel it was only rusting away while others were being profitably used. Where, it might ask the blacksmith, is all the energy and care you showed towards me when you first formed me? But the smith would reply, You may well complain of your current condition, but never forget that I put a shape upon you then that you will never lose.

Tommy Macleod’s observation certainly illustrates the sentiments of many old believers who have the complaint that Norman himself often uttered, “O that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me; when His candle shined upon my head, and when by His light I walked through darkness; as I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle” (Job 29:2-4). Sovereign grace, however, put an indelible stamp upon our late friend and we believe that that grace has now blossomed into perfect holiness, complete likeness to Christ and eternal glory.

Norman and Christine moved to the Isle of Skye in 2011 and latterly Norman lived in the Budhmor Care Home in Portree, where he was kindly looked after. Norman Thomson departed from this world in Broadford Hospital, on 27 March 2016 to be, we fully believe, with the Lord, which is far better. We extend our sympathy to Christine and to Norman’s wider family. “I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water and the dry land springs of water” (Is 41:18).

(Rev) *A W MacColl*

The Sin of Unbelief¹

1. It Denies God’s Truthfulness

W S Plumer

In the Old Testament, God expresses His displeasure against unbelief. By Moses He says to Israel: “Ye did not believe the Lord your God”; “Ye rebelled against the commandment of the Lord your God, and ye believed Him not, nor hearkened to His voice” (Deut 1:32, 9:23). Again, God complains of Israel: “They would not hear, but hardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in the Lord their God” (2 Ki 17:14). By the psalmist, God says, “They believed not in God, and trusted not in His salvation” (Ps 78:22). By another prophet He thus threatens them: “If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established” (Is 7:9).

The New Testament is no less clear. The great sin of the Jews under the

¹Taken, with editing, from *The Rock of Our Salvation*.

ministry of John the Baptist was their unbelief (Mt 21:32). The Son of God marvelled at the unbelief of His own disciples, and sharply rebuked it (Mk 6:6; Lk 24:25). The Lord Jesus Himself expressly says: "He that believeth not is condemned already"; "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him" (Jn 3:18,36). Paul says that the natural branches were broken off by unbelief (Rom 11:20). Unbelief hinders prayer: "How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed?" (Rom 10:14). "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not" (2 Cor 4:4). "God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Th 2:11,12). "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death" (Rev 21:8).

Unbelief may relate to any doctrine, or promise, or threatening of God. It commonly has special reference to the Person, work, offices and sufferings of the Saviour. Then it is a rejection of Him as He is offered in the gospel. He demands our affectionate confidence, and we withhold it.

Unbelievers are of two classes, speculative and practical. All speculative unbelievers are also practical unbelievers, but some practical unbelievers have no intellectual doubts about the truths of the Bible. Speculative unbelievers are of two sorts. Some rage and rail and blaspheme; others doubt, hesitate, are sceptical. This latter class alternately hope that the Bible is not true and fear that it is true. Meantime they live as if it were not true, and so are practical unbelievers. If they do not deny, they suspect. This is truly unbelief. Not to credit is to disbelieve. Not to receive is to reject. A refusal to obey the gospel is as truly dangerous as a scornful denial of its claims. The object of this chapter is to show the sin of unbelief. It is a great offence against God in many ways. It is very wicked and deserves God's hot displeasure.

1. Unbelief is a very heinous sin, because it is *a challenge to God's truthfulness*. God's word is His testimony. It is the highest testimony ever given. When a judge gives a decision or a jury gives a verdict contrary to good evidence, all right thinkers have just one opinion. We take the testimony of men. We act wisely in so doing. But "if we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater" (1 Jn 5:9). Man is fallible; man is corrupt; man often deceives; man is often deceived. Yet, in some cases, man is and must be believed. Under certain circumstances everyone gives credit to the word of man.

Much more then should we believe God, who is infallible, who cannot lie. From the days of Moses until now the best governments on earth have held that two or three witnesses are sufficient to prove any fact. If so, shall we not

believe the Trinity of persons in the Godhead? Jesus adopts this kind of argument when He says, "I am not alone; but I and the Father that sent Me. It is also written in your law that the testimony of two men is true. I am one that bear witness of Myself, and the Father that sent Me beareth witness of Me" (Jn 8:16-18).

The testimony of Christ confirming all the doctrines taught by the prophets and by Himself was open, clear, decisive. The very highest proofs of His knowledge, veracity and sincerity, were amply given. The testimony of His Father was given in an audible voice from heaven. It was repeated in the many stupendous miracles wrought by almighty power. In these the Third Person of the adorable Trinity also bore testimony in a manner both striking and convincing. In Hebrews 2:3,4, Paul argues thus: "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, [that is, Christ,] and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him; God also [that is, the Father] bearing them witness both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost . . . ?" So the Three that bear record in heaven have given testimony upon earth. Their witness is harmonious, unequivocal, often repeated, and accompanied by infallible signs. He therefore who lives in unbelief discredits and impeaches the testimony of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. That this is a heinous sin cannot be doubted.

The Scriptures say that the believer "hath set to his seal that God is true". They as distinctly say, "He that believeth not God hath made Him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son" (1 Jn 5:10). This language is indeed awful, but it is just. God's honour in regard to His veracity is dear to Him. He never will part with it. He says, "My glory will I not give to another". The heavens and the earth shall pass away, but His word shall not pass away; every jot and tittle shall be fulfilled. Because God is perfect, He is jealous of the honour of His name. An evil being may be reckless of his reputation for veracity, but a good being never. To man you can offer no greater indignity than to say he lies. How dreadful then the sin of making God a liar!

Besides, God has made His Word the chief means by which to test the confidence of His creatures in His truth: "Thou hast exalted Thy word above all Thy name"; that is, above all which Thou hast made Thyself known by. And the chief message of God's Word is redemption by His Son, together with histories, laws, doctrines, promises and threatenings. His Word is truth selected from the boundless field of omniscience. It is more precious than gold, than much fine gold. His words are fitly spoken. They are like apples of gold in a network of silver. They are more precious than rubies.

To disbelieve them is to trample pearls under our feet. It is to take the covenant of God and treat it with contempt. Unbelief has therefore the nature of sacrilege. It puts the holiest things to base uses. Moreover, God has not only pledged His Word, but He has added to it the awful solemnity of an oath. He who disbelieves His Word charges Him with falsehood. He who discredits His oath charges Him with perjury. A witness may give his testimony upon oath, and we may decide in the teeth of all he swears, but in so doing we declare our utter lack of confidence in his statements. If God is displeased at anything, it must be at this atrocious insult.

Nor is this all. To disbelieve God is to believe His enemies, and especially His great adversary, the father of lies. Eve believed the devil rather than her Maker. When Ahab rejected the testimony of the man of God, he was ready to believe the lying prophets of Baal. Chateaubriand² says, “Men are ready to believe anything when they believe nothing. They have diviners when they cease to have prophets; witchcraft when they cease to have religious ceremonies; they open the caves of sorcery when they shut the temples of the Lord.” He who does not believe God surely believes the great deceiver. Such impiety is shocking to all right-minded persons. Its wickedness is manifest to all whose consciences are not seared as with a hot iron.

Book Reviews¹

Flowers from a Puritan's Garden, Illustrations and Meditations, by CH Spurgeon, published by the Banner of Truth Trust, paperback, 320 pages, £6.25. It was while Spurgeon was writing his commentary on Psalm 119 that, as he explains in his preface, he “was brought into most intimate communion with Thomas Manton, who has discoursed upon that marvellous portion of Scripture with great fulness and power”. He goes on to tell us that “inasmuch as Manton used but a few figures and illustrations, it came into my head to mark them all, for I felt sure that they would be very natural and forcible”. He proceeds, “I thought it worthwhile to go through volume after volume and mark the metaphors; and then I resolved to complete the task by culling all the best figures out of the whole of Manton’s works (22 volumes). Thus my communing with the great Puritan ends in my clearing his house of all his pictures, and hanging them up in new frames of my own. As I leave his right to them unquestioned and unconcealed, I do not rob him, but I bless him by giving him another opportunity of speaking.”

²French writer, politician and diplomat, prominent in the first part of the eighteenth century.

¹Both books reviewed here may be obtained from the Free Presbyterian Bookroom.

There follows the result of Spurgeon's endeavours: over 300 pages of rich, if quaint, illustrations by Thomas Manton, each of them followed by a very practical meditation by Spurgeon. A very helpful 13-page index concludes the work.

One of the many examples is the following under the title, "No Old Age in Grace": "We have our infancy at our first conversion, when liable to childish ignorance and many infirmities; we have our youth and growing age, when making progress in the way of grace towards perfection; and lastly, we have our perfect manly age when we are come to our full pitch, when grace is fully perfected in glory. In Scripture there is nothing said of a fading and declining time of old age in grace."

Spurgeon comments on this: "The fact being that, unlike the natural life, the spiritual life does not conclude in declining strength and inevitable decrepitude, but continues its progress even beyond the grave. We go from strength to strength, not from strength to weakness. The old age of grace is maturity, not decay; advancement, not decline; perfection, not imbecility. In the advanced years of nature we lose many of our faculties, but in advanced grace our spiritual senses are more quick and discerning than ever. The aged man feels the grasshopper to be a burden, and the clouds return after the rain; but to the advanced believer the greatest loads are light and the rain is over and gone. Old age goes down to death, but ripe grace ascends to everlasting life.

"Lord let me grow ripe but not rotten, maturing but not decaying, for Thy glory's sake."

This book contains many such helpful illustrations and meditations and the reviewer warmly commends it to our readers. (Rev) *W A Weale*

Conversations with a Dying Man, by Samuel Rutherford, published by Reformation Press, paperback, 77 pages, £4.95.

Samuel Rutherford's skill as a physician of souls is very evident in the republication by Reformation Press of this short and profitable work, originally entitled, *The Last and Heavenly Speeches, and Glorious Departure, of John Gordon, Viscount Kenmure*. Viscount Kenmure, was one of Rutherford's parishioners and was indeed instrumental in having Rutherford settled as minister of Anwoth in 1626. He was married to the pious Jane Campbell, sister of the Marquis of Argyll, who is familiar to readers of Rutherford's *Letters* as Lady Kenmure.

Nevertheless, Gordon declined to attend a meeting of the Scots Parliament in 1633 at which he should have defended the cause of truth against the imposition of Episcopalian innovations in the Church. He admitted that desire

for worldly preferment and fear of incurring the King's displeasure weighed more with him than the fear of God at that period. The following year, Gordon's health began to deteriorate and it became apparent that an early death was drawing near. He was only 35 years of age.

Deeply troubled in his conscience over his failure to speak on God's behalf in the Parliament, Gordon insisted on Rutherford remaining with him for the last fortnight of his life, and the narrative records the conversations which took place between them, as well as Gordon's farewell counsels to others around him at that time. "I never dreamt", he solemnly stated, "that death had such a terrible, austere and gloomy countenance." Bitter was his exclamation, "Woe, woe be to honours or anything else bought with the loss of peace of conscience and God's favour."

It is interesting to note that his pastor seemed initially to entertain a very hopeful opinion of Gordon's condition, but then a solemn interlude took place when the nobleman snatched at an illusory hope of recovery to health. This was accompanied by a noticeable coldness and slackening of his spiritual concerns. Rutherford dealt with these dangerous symptoms in a most skillful manner, unsparingly using the lance of the law to deepen Gordon's sense of his sin. And the Lord abundantly blessed this faithful dealing to prepare the way for abundant gospel consolation, peace of conscience and a triumphant departure from this world.

To read this welcome republication would be highly beneficial, not only for pastors confronted with the solemn issues of death in the course of their duties, but especially for those who are drawing near to the great eternity and those who have a concern for such people.

(Rev) *A W MacColl*

Notes and Comments

Ashers Bakery

Two years on from the Northern Ireland Appeal Court hearing, the United Kingdom Supreme Court is now considering the case of the Ashers Bakery. This is a full four years from the original incident; and the decision of the Supreme Court is not expected before the end of this year or possibly the beginning of the next. At the end of the hearing, the President of the Supreme Court, Lady Hale, said that people should not expect an answer on the case immediately: "People will of course not expect the answer any time soon . . . these cases are by definition complex and difficult".

Biblically, the case is not complex and difficult at all. Homosexuality is a gross evil, and so too is its promotion; and nobody should be compelled to

promote sodomy. All the complications in the case arise from our evil laws which permit and protect homosexuality. Furthermore, one suspects that the delays in the case have as much to do with political and media pressure on the judges to favour homosexuality as with any complications in the law. Faced with a simple situation, that could surely have been foreseen by our law-makers, Ashers consulted God's law and soon concluded that they should not make the cake. Had they consulted British law, even with the help of our top judges, it would have taken months or even years before they knew whether they had a legal obligation to bake the cake. If the law over baking a cake is "complex and difficult", what is it like in matters that really are complicated? Truly, the Lord is holding our law-makers and legal system up to ridicule.

DWBS

Seventh Day Adventists

In the last few months, cards have dropped through UK letter boxes inviting householders to request a free book which claims to explain the link between the European Reformation and the European Union. The book, *The Great Controversy*, duly arrives on the doorstep of respondents. The contents page seems Reformed, naming among others, Wycliffe, Hus and Luther. Biblical quotations in the book are mostly from the Authorised Version. On closer inspection, however, we can see that it is published by Advent Books and the author, Mrs E G White, was in fact one of the founders of the Seventh Day Adventists (SDA) cult. Apparently this current effort is part of a world-wide campaign to bring millions more into its fold.

The sect began in New York in 1840 through the influence of a Baptist preacher, William Miller. He predicted that, based on his understanding of the book of Daniel, Christ would return to the earth sometime between 21 March 1843 and 21 March 1844. The failure of this prediction – which became known as the Great Disappointment – resulted, understandably, in many becoming disillusioned. However, one follower of Miller, Hiram Edson, claimed to have seen a vision of Jesus standing at the altar of heaven and concluded that Miller had been right about the time although wrong about the place.

The explanation given was that "Jesus's return was not to earth but a move into the heavenly sanctuary as is referenced in Hebrews 8:1-2". This perversion of Scripture, known as the Sanctuary Doctrine, is a fundamental SDA belief. True Christians trust in Jesus, as their High Priest, interceding for them at God's right hand on the throne in heaven, but Adventists hold that "Christ entered the first part of the sanctuary in heaven and, after a prophetic period of 2300 days, entered the second phase of His atoning ministry, a

work of blotting out sin". They teach that, from His ascension until 1844, Jesus had been applying the forgiveness He purchased on the cross in the first part of the sanctuary, but in 1844 He entered the second part and began to "investigate" the lives of those who had supposedly received forgiveness to see if they were worthy of eternal life. Only those who passed this test could be assured of being with him when He returns to earth. Clearly this is far removed from the scriptural truth of justification by faith alone.

After Miller's revelations and Edson's vision, the "prophetic" ministry of former Methodist, Ellen G White, gained prominence. A prolific writer, she produced over 5000 articles and 40 books and also claimed to have received around 2000 visions and dreams before her death at 87 in 1915. SDAs state that "her writings speak with prophetic authority and provide comfort, guidance, instruction and correction to the church". Whilst they claim that "the Bible is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested", it is clear that Mrs White's teachings and visions form much of their belief system. They claim, "The spirit of prophecy was manifest in the ministry of Ellen White. Her writings are inspired counsel from the Lord and authoritative in doctrinal matters." It is one of her books that passes through the door of an inquirer. In *The Great Controversy* she repeatedly wrenches out of context quotations from Luther, Wesley, Baxter, Spurgeon and other godly men, to try to substantiate her doctrines.

Like Jehovah's Witnesses, Adventists deny the existence of hell – in spite of the multitude of warnings given to us in the pages of Scripture. SDA doctrine is that lost souls are annihilated. They also reject the scriptural truth that the souls of believers go to heaven at death. These souls, they insist, have to wait "unconscious" until the resurrection. While – unlike Jehovah's Witnesses – Adventists accept the full divinity of Christ, they heretically imply His liability to sin, stating that "Jesus Christ possessed a human nature that not only was weakened by sin, but had propensities toward sin itself. His nature was like that of Adam after the fall. Because of his success in overcoming sin, Jesus is primarily our example." SDAs also believe that the punishment of the sins of the redeemed are laid on Satan – not on Jesus – as the ultimate scapegoat. As their name suggests, they observe the Sabbath on Saturday – not the first day of the week, which is given to us in the New Testament as the Christian Sabbath.

Alarming and in spite of these delusions – and there are many more – a section of modern American Evangelicalism is now leaning towards accepting SDAs as Christians. For well over a century, from its inception in 1840, true Evangelicals viewed SDAs as a cult, but in recent years there has been a watering down of that view as can be seen by a recent statement by

the *Christian Research Institute*, an Evangelical apologetics ministry in America: “Since SDA does accept the foundational doctrines of historic Christianity (the Trinity, Christ’s true deity, His bodily resurrection, etc) we do not believe that it should be classified as a non-Christian cult. It is our conviction that one cannot be a true Jehovah’s Witness, Mormon, Christian Scientist etc, and be a practising Christian in the biblical sense of the word; but it is possible to be a Seventh-day Adventist and a true follower of Jesus, despite certain distinctive Adventist doctrines which we consider to be unbiblical.” Truly we live in perilous times when professing Christians are prepared to accept into fellowship a group which denies fundamental doctrines of Scripture. But we all need to be vigilant in the face of what passes through our letter boxes.

KHM

Assisted Suicide

Advocates of assisted suicide are attempting to initiate a new inquiry into the subject by the Scottish Parliament, in the hope of bringing in legislation which will permit this evil practice. According to a report in *The Scotsman*, prominent supporters are emboldened by what they regard as a “more progressive outlook” among “pretty close to half” of the MSPs in the current Parliament. Proposals to legalise what is groundlessly termed “the right to die” have already been defeated twice at Holyrood, but an opinion poll earlier this year claimed that 74% of those questioned now support a change in the current legislation in this area, up from 69% in 2014.

The House of Commons overwhelmingly rejected a change in the law regarding suicide when it was last debated there, but a test case being heard in the English Court of Appeal, at the time of writing, is only serving to intensify the pressure mounted by “euthanasia” campaigners.

In spite of all the overwhelming arguments against the barbaric and godless practice of assisted self-murder, such as the danger to vulnerable groups in society, there seems to be a relentless drive to tear down all the age-old safeguards and sanctities which Christian civilisation has thrown around human life, from its earliest to its latest stages. That a considerable majority of the population should be relatively positive towards assisted suicide ought to come as no surprise to us in this evil and self-destructing generation. As with abortion, we have little doubt that, if assisted suicide is ever legalised in this country, the initial proposals would sooner or later give way to further-reaching and more pernicious changes, for “the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel” (Prov 12:10). The brutalising effects on society which this would inevitably bring are fearful enough to contemplate, but the ultimate consequence would be the eternal ruin of multitudes of precious souls.

Under the pretext of a false, short-sighted compassion, the supporters of assisted suicide are assiduously serving the interests of the great destroyer of human life; “he was a murderer from the beginning and abode not in the truth because there is no truth in him” (Jn 8:44). It is therefore the duty of Christians to do all they lawfully can to oppose any “taking away of our own or the life of our neighbour unjustly” and, above all, to plead with the Creator and Sustainer of life that He would arise in mercy “to hear the groaning of the prisoner, to loose those that are appointed to death” (Ps 102:20). *AWM*

Church Information

College and Library Fund

By appointment of Synod, the first of two special collections for the College and Library Fund is due to be taken in congregations during June.

W Campbell, General Treasurer

Southern Presbytery Protest to Dr J R Beeke

I am writing to you as the President of the Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary. My reason for writing is to express the profound dismay felt by this Presbytery on learning about your intention to include unnecessary Sabbath travel in the itinerary for the “Rhine River Reformation Cruise”. Our protest is based on the information found at the address, <http://www.joelbeeke.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Rhine-River-Reformation-Cruise-THEFINAL.pdf>, accessed on 26 March 2018.

The PRTS website says that its core confessional principle is the Reformed Faith as embodied in the Three Forms of Unity and the Westminster Standards. The Westminster Standards say that “the Sabbath is to be sanctified by a holy resting all that day, even from such worldly employments and recreations as are lawful on other days; and spending the whole time in the public and private exercises of God’s worship, except so much as is to be taken up in the works of necessity and mercy” (*Shorter Catechism*, Q 60). The itinerary for the cruise involves boarding a vessel on the Lord’s Day and disembarking on the Lord’s Day, a week later. How can these activities be described as “a holy resting all that day” or a “work of necessity and mercy”?

How can those who will have responsibility for the day to day organisation and oversight of tour members avoid the “omission or careless performance of the duties required” by the Fourth Commandment, when the itinerary includes boarding one Sabbath and disembarking the next Sabbath? “The Fourth Commandment forbiddeth the omission or careless performance of the duties required, and the profaning the day by idleness, or doing that

which is in itself sinful, or by unnecessary thoughts, words, or works, about our worldly employments or recreations” (*Shorter Catechism*, Q 61).

How can deckhands, officers, stewards, cooks, waiters, dockers, drivers and others be “in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day” when the cruise you have arranged requires them to be engaged in unnecessary Sabbath work? God allows us six days of the week for our own employments, words, works, and recreations. He challenges a special propriety in the Sabbath Day. His resting on the Sabbath is our example. He consecrated the Sabbath Day for His own worship, and blesses it. “The reasons annexed to the Fourth Commandment are, God’s allowing us six days of the week for our own employments, His challenging a special propriety in the seventh, His own example, and His blessing the Sabbath Day” (*Shorter Catechism*, Q 62). Ought we not to have a holy fear of trampling it underfoot?

The commercial provision and the public use of transport run in systematic disregard of the Fourth Commandment ought to be regarded as a desecration of the holy Sabbath, a dishonour to and a provocation of the God who gave it. We are reminded of the words of Nehemiah to the nobles of Judah: “What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the Sabbath day? Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? Yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the Sabbath” (Neh 13:17,18).

Our sincere hope and prayer is that you will do all in your power to exclude unnecessary Sabbath travel from the Rhine River Reformation Cruise’s itinerary. “If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on My holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour Him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it” (Is 58:13,14).

In addition to these things, it is with great sadness that we note the PRTS, who are regarded in some circles as the modern-day custodians of “the old paths”, are willing to use the term “Sunday”, in preference to the Scriptural terms for the Lord’s Day, the Christian Sabbath.

Acknowledgement of Donations

Congregational Treasurers acknowledge with sincere thanks the following donations:

Edinburgh: Anon, £20; Friend, £100; Friend, £100 per Rev DC; Friend, Cymru, £140.

Gairloch: RFM, Inverasdale, £100 per Rev AEW.

Glasgow: Estate of late Mrs Helen Gillies, £1000. *Bus Fund:* Anon, £10, £10, £10. *Eastern Europe Fund:* Anon, £70, £64, £70, £64. *Jewish & Foreign Missions Fund:* S Gillies, £20. *Where Most Needed:* Anon, £20, £20 per DWN.

Greenock: *Jewish & Foreign Missions Fund:* Anon, £50, £50. *TBS:* Anon, £50.

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.
- 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) Miavaig:** Sabbath 12 noon Gaelic, 6 pm English; Wednesday 12 noon. Manse tel: 01851 672251. Contact Rev A W MacColl; tel: 01851 810228.
- Ullapool:** Sabbath 11 am, 6 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. Manse: Quay Street, IV26 2UE; tel: 01854 612449.

England

- Barnoldswick:** Kelbrook Road, Sabbath 11 am, 6 pm; Friday 7.30 pm; Wednesday 8 pm, alternately in Sandbach and Gatley. **South Manchester:** Sabbath 6.00 pm, in Trinity Church, Massie Street, Cheadle (entry at rear of building). Rev K M Watkins BA, 252 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 7.15 pm. Rev J MacLeod MA, 6 Church Ave, Sidcup, Kent, DA14 6BU; tel: 0208 309 1623.

Northern Ireland

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

Canada

Chesley, Ontario: Church and Manse, 40 Fourth Street SW. Sabbath 10.30 am, 7.30 pm; Tuesday 8 pm. Contact: Mr David Kuiper; tel: 519 363 0367; or Mr Gilbert Zekveld; tel: 519 363 5899. Manse tel: 519 363 2502.
Vancouver: Burnaby Community Room, 3605 Gilmore Way, Burnaby, BC, V5G 4X5. Sabbath 9.30 am, 6.30 pm. Contact: Mr Douglas Spratt, tel: 604 990 4051, or Mr David Kuiper; tel: 519 363 0367. E-mail: info@fpchurchvancouver.ca.

USA

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

Australia

Grafton, NSW: 172 Fitzroy Street. Sabbath 11 am, 6.30 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. Rev G G Hutton BA PhD, 3 Martin Crescent, Junction Hill, NSW 2460; tel: (02) 6644 6174; e-mail:grafton@internode.on.net.
Sydney, NSW: Corner of Oxford and Regent Streets, Riverstone. Sabbath 10.30 am, 6 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. Rev G B Macdonald BSc, 60 Hamilton St, Riverstone, NSW 2765; tel. (02) 9627 3408; e-mail:sydneyfpchurch@aapt.net.au.

New Zealand

Auckland: 45 Church Street, Otahuhu. Sabbath 11 am, 6 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. Rev J D Smith, 9 Pedlar Place, Conifer Grove, Auckland; tel: 09 282 4195.
Gisborne: 463a Childers Road. Sabbath 11 am, 6 pm; Wednesday 7.30 pm. Rev C Hembd, 14 Thomson St, Gisborne 4010; tel: 06 863 3140.
Tauranga: Girl Guide Hall, 17th Avenue, 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 Levvtskyi; tel: 00 38 048 785 19 24; e-mail: dlevvtskyi@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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