

# Grace & Truth

“For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ”

Magazine  
of  
North Uist & Grimsay  
Free Church of Scotland  
(Continuing)

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## **Minister's Message: *In Time of Trouble***

**T**he people of God, although saved from their sins, are not immune from difficulties as they live out their lives here below. The Psalmist spoke of troublous times and he had his share of them. Christ told His disciples, "In the world ye shall have tribulation" (John 16:33), and they certainly did. At the same time however the Lord assured His chosen ones of His peace and encouraged them to consider the victory which He was to accomplish at Calvary.

Christians today are in the same situation. Some believers stumble because their experience does not match their expectation. They are confident in God as their Father, in Christ as their Saviour and in the Spirit as their Comforter: accordingly they hope for an easy path to glory – but find that their way is far from smooth. We have seasons when we ascend mount Pisgah and get a sight of the promised land – but we also have seasons when we descend into the valley of Baca and our eyes are filled with tears. Scripture must be our guide from here to heaven.

As Christians we may encounter situations which try our belief in the goodness of God. Providences such as poverty, sickness and bereavement can do that. When such things come upon us we are tempted to murmur and to complain against the Lord on account of His dealings, imagining that we could arrange things so much better!

Whatever bitter things are in our cup they do not match what was endured by Job. When he suffered a sore loss he still worshipped God, recognising His sovereignty over all things: "the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job 1:21). He was wonderfully submissive to the Most High, saying: "shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? (Job 2:10). Job is an outstanding example of the sufficiency of divine grace.

We may also find ourselves facing conflict as Christians. In the "last days" we are promised "perilous times" (2Tim.3:1). Satan must have his "little season" before he meets his end (Rev.20:3,10) and we are seeing something of it now. Spiritual deception is rampant. As people are increasingly ignorant of the Bible and our national history the Church of Rome is reasserting herself, persuading many that she represents true Christianity. Our duty is to make a stand in an evil day and not to leave our ground; we are to lift up a banner for the sake of the truth (Psa.60:4). When we do so we may expect opposition, even persecution.

Perhaps you wonder as a believer, How long will my present trial last? If only I knew the outcome of it things would be so much easier to

bear! But when Daniel asked the same he was told, “Go thy way, Daniel” (Dan.12:9). He was to be obedient to God, devote himself to His service, trust in His covenant faithfulness – and be patient.

God is training up His children for their eternal inheritance. In our difficulties we pour out our hearts to Him and we enjoy His help; God does not spare us from trouble but promises to deliver us out of it when we cry to Him. And we may say that all the warfare and all the waiting of the believer is worth it: one moment spent in the nearer presence of our King will more than compensate for all the troubles we had in this life. May the Lord enable *you* to be strong for Him and for His cause. □

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### Helps to Devotion (Rev. James Smith)

TRUE SACRIFICES. *“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.”* (Psalm 51:17)

**T**he soul that sins must suffer. We must experience the pangs of deep repentance, or endure the flames of hell. No impenitent sinner can be saved; no substitute for repentance can be found. A sense of the love of God to us, or a sight by faith of Christ dying for us, will break, melt, yea, dissolve the heart; then deep sorrow is felt, and generally the tears of penitence will flow. God loves to see us properly affected with a sense of sin, and to hear us inwardly mourning over sin. The heart that sighs, groans, and bleeds, because it has dishonoured God by breaking his holy law, is more precious in the sight of God than smoking incense, a bleeding lamb, or the most costly sacrifices. Deep may be our sense of unworthiness, sad and dejected may be our spirit, and mixed with sin may be our best services; but the Lord will not despise us if we are mourning for sin. Holy Spirit, lead us to Gethsemane, and give us a sight of our Saviour there; lead us to Calvary, and let us have fellowship with Jesus there; that so our spirits may be thoroughly broken for sin, and our hearts be made truly contrite. May we look on the Pierced One, and mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son; and be in bitterness, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born. Let us go mourning over sin every day, and yet rejoice in God our Saviour. Let us grieve more and more that ever we have grieved the Lord, and at the same time enjoy his free and everlasting love. O for a strong and steady faith in Christ! O for deep, heart-affecting repentance toward God! O for a broken and a contrite heart! O for a growing hatred of all sin! □

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## **Parables of Jesus: 15. The Unmerciful Servant**

*(Please read Matthew 18:23-35)*

**T**his is a parable about forgiveness. We personally need God's pardon and we must also be willing to pardon others. We learn that the way in which we treat our brethren helps to reveal our true spiritual state.

### **Estate**

The kingdom of heaven is compared here to an earthly kingdom or estate. There is a king with great possessions, including many servants. The king decides to visit his servants and settle his accounts with them.

We are not familiar today with the relationship between an absolute monarch and his subjects or a master and his slaves. At least we know how parents and children or an employer and employees are related. If we are accountable to such superiors on earth how much more are we to God our heavenly King! We are His servants, bound always to do His will. He reckons with us now by often setting our sins before our face, challenging our conscience (Psa.50:21).

### **Debt**

As the various accounts are examined a defaulting servant is found. He is brought reluctantly before the king; he owes a huge amount and knows that he himself is to blame. Threatened with utter ruin, he falls down and pleads with the king to be patient. Amazingly the response is that his debt is completely cancelled.

Who can calculate what we as sinners owe to a righteous God? Our debt is to His holy law, through sins of omission and commission. Knowing your guilt, are you still trying to do your best or are you crying to the Lord for mercy? Be encouraged by this: "he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy" (Mic.7:18). When we are truly repentant then we shall be forgiven.

### **Hard-hearted**

Next we see a sad and surprising thing. The same servant goes to one of *his* debtors and angrily demands repayment. When humbly asked for more time the servant refuses and puts the man in prison until he pays, although it is only a small sum. Even the other servants are upset at this.

We can all see that there is something very wrong here. How can a man who has been shown such compassion be so hardhearted toward others who are in a similar condition? It is a solemn fact that some who claim to be freed from their sins do not have the fruits of grace.

### **Danger**

The king is soon aware of what has happened. He summons the unmerciful servant and condemns him to prison to pay for his original debt.

Do you profess to be converted? Then do not be unforgiving towards your brethren when they wrong you and seek your pardon, even many times. What are their sins against you compared with your sins against God? Cultivate a kind and generous heart. Remember, God knows your heart and He has said, “he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy” (Jam.2:13). □

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### **Sermon: *Life Eternal* (Dr John Kennedy)**

*(Taken from Dr John Kennedy of Dingwall Sermon Notes 1866-1874, published by the James Begg Society in 2008. This sermon was preached in Dingwall Free Church on May 6th 1866.)*

*“And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” – John 17:3*

**T**his chapter contains words addressed by Christ to the Father, and it furnishes us with the matter of His intercession, as He pleads in heaven as the great High Priest. But these words were spoken in the hearing of His disciples, and His intercession with the Father is therefore in a form adapted for conveying suitable instruction to them. The text is specially intended for the instruction of the disciples, and of all who in any age have access to the inspired record which contains it.

This is a very solemn and important passage. The Son of God speaks. He speaks in my nature, by His lips, as man. He speaks to His Father. The text occurs in an address to God. An utterance by the Son of God regarding eternal life – an indication by Him of what it is – how solemn and important. How wonderful that God should speak through human lips regarding life! He who appointed death for man as the wages of his sin, and from whom man departed, and by whom man was forsaken, actually

directing by a human utterance sinners to life eternal! And to have this direction in an address by the Son of God to the Father! To hear a word of hope in the pleading of the Son of God with His Father!

In addressing you from this passage, let us consider:

I. Christ speaking to the Father regarding eternal life in the hearing of sinful men.

II. The way of attaining and enjoying eternal life as indicated in the words of Christ.

I. In speaking on the first head I propose to direct your attention:

1. To the great subject about which Christ speaks.
2. The parties for whom this life is destined.
3. The speaker Himself.

1. *“Eternal life”*. *“Life eternal”*.

Often does Christ speak of life eternal. It was a great theme in Christ’s view. His mind was much inspired with it, and His doctrine is full of it. Are we like Him in this?

This life is presented to us in various aspects in Scripture. It is spoken of as a *principle* implanted *in the soul*. Eph. 2:1. Ezek. 37. It is spoken of as something resulting from, or implied in, the favour of God. Psa. 63. Thus it is put in opposition to condemnation, wrath and death. John 3:16,36; John 5:24. It is spoken of as something provided by God from everlasting. Thus we read of it in 1 John 1:2; 1 John 5:11,12. It is spoken of as the whole provision of God in Christ Jesus for the salvation of His people. Thus Christ Himself is said to be “our life”. It is spoken of as the everlasting happiness and glory to be enjoyed by God’s people in heaven. Thus it is to be understood in Matt. 25:46.

These five things must not be separated, though they may be distinguished. Life in its highest meaning is just the enjoyment of God by a creature. This is the highest life of a creature. This was the blessedness God first conferred on man formed in His own image, and the perfection and eternity of this was what He held out to man in the promise of the first covenant.

But in thinking of eternal life as secured by the Covenant of grace, we must taken into account these five things we have described, and in the following order:

[1.] I must think of eternal life in the promise of the Father to Christ in the everlasting Covenant. He promised Him this for all His people on condition of His sealing that Covenant with His blood. Eternal life is the

Father's promise to the Son depending on the fulfilment of the Son's promise to the Father. This is that eternal life which was with the Father in the first conception of it.

[2.] I must think of eternal life as in Christ the Covenant Head. He is Himself the life. The spring of it to us is in Christ. Originally it was in the sovereign electing love of God, but to us its spring is Christ. He is to us "the Beginning". And He is to be so all throughout. Not only must life flow to us from Him, through His righteousness and by His Spirit, but He is to His quickened and justified people, their loving Head in whom is the stock of their life, and from whose fulness all must flow to them, and in and with whom alone they can be made perfectly blessed in the full enjoyment of eternal life, which is the eternal enjoyment of God.

[3.] But before any of Adam's race can have or enjoy life, they must be quickened. For by nature all are dead in trespasses and sins. A principle of spiritual life must be implanted in the soul. Without this, there can be no seeking or knowing or enjoying of God. There can be no coming unto Christ and unto God through Him. It is on the rigour of this life, that the enjoyment depends. The soul's blessedness cannot be perfect till this life is perfect, and till it has opportunity according to its perfectness.

[4.] But ere any can have a right to the enjoyment of God, they must have an interest in His favour. In other words, they must be justified, delivered from guilt, and accepted as righteous in the sight of God. This is to have a right to God as a portion, which is just to have a right to life.

[5.] Life in the actual enjoyment of God in Christ is that which is specially referred to here. This life in foretastes here on earth and in perfectness in heaven – life in the hope of His favour – in trust in His truth and grace – in delight in His character – in the enjoyment of His communion – in peace and pleasantness in His ways – while here on earth; and life in the perfect vision of His glory, and the perfect enjoyment of His communion, and the perfect discharge of His worship in heaven forever and ever. This is the "life eternal" of which Christ here specially speaks.

## *2. The parties for whom this life was destined.*

These are indicated by Christ in the words, "as many as thou hast given Him" (v.2). He was not appointed to give eternal life to "all flesh" but to "as many" of all flesh "as the Father had given Him".

These were like "all flesh," fallen in Adam. They were dead in trespasses and sins. They were under a sentence of death. They were enemies of God. They were under the dominion of the great enemy of God

as the prince of this world, and they were in His grasp as the executioner who hath the power of death over all the children of wrath. And yet to these Christ had to give eternal life, according to the purpose and appointment of the Father, and His own undertaking as the Covenant Head.

There is no advantage gained, and there is a great advantage lost, by considering those who shall be heirs of life eternal, only in the latter view of them. Some may think that they gain something by ignoring their relation to God's purpose and to Christ as Covenant Head. They think they gain:

[1.] A more encouraging view of God's character. They cannot conceive how it does not straiten the aspect of His grace to conceive of Him as purposing to save only some. But what is there in this, more than in the fact that only some shall at the last be actually saved, to cast a shade on the free rich grace of God, I cannot conceive. The same part you had to do with in the purpose and providence. And by conceiving of Him as actually doing what He purposed to do, you have before you the manifest glory of His wisdom, omniscience, immutability and omnipotence, all of which is hidden according to the Arminian view of redemption.

[2.] A clear warrant to believe. Now what is your warrant to believe? Is it the aspect which God's character presents to you? Is it your conclusion from the doctrines of God's word? No. It is just the call of God in the gospel. Without this, I dare not come. I may desire to come, but I cannot venture unless I am actually called by God. If I have this, this is all my warrant.

And when I am called to come to receive eternal life in Christ according to the Covenant of grace, I am called to receive what is infallibly sure. This is the great advantage gained. I lose nothing, but I gain this.

### 3. *The speaker.*

[1.] It is the Son of God who speaks. He knoweth as none else can know about eternal life. He knows this in the enjoyment of God, as Himself "God over all blessed for ever" (Rom. 9:5), and as the only begotten of the Father "rejoicing always before" His Father (Prov. 8:30). I cannot think that is the very life which He enjoys as the Son of God, which He giveth as the good Shepherd to His sheep. I cannot think that it was as the Son, He was the eternal life with the Father according to 1 John (1 John 1:2). It was as He was set up as the Covenant Head He was so. True, it is the Son who is the Covenant Head, but it is as Covenant Head He is the life. Unless He were the Son, He would not be "the life" to His people; but it is as the Son is

Covenant Head, He becomes so to them. He is well fitted to be “the word of life”. As the Son, He is “the word of God”, and the Son being federal Head, is the word of life. And it is as the word of God appeareth – as the Son appeareth as the word of God, He is the word of life. Just as He appeareth as the only begotten of the Father, He is known as full of grace and truth (John 1:14). It is the same fountain, even the Godhead, out of which His people are filled, though their mode of receiving out of it is altogether diverse from His. It is too in union to Him, and in His sight, and in fellowship with Him, this eternal life is enjoyed by His people all.

[2.] It is the man of sorrows who speaks. He who is the Surety of His people, who as such engaged to give them eternal life, and who ere He could do so, engaged to purchase it for them with His blood. Thus alone could even He procure life for them. He is now under the sentence (when He spake these words) of death. It is out of the midst of His humiliation, and on the eve of death, He speaks of life. He could never speak of it if He were not in such a case – Oh, how affecting ought the words of eternal life to be to us, coming from the lips of the man of sorrows.

[3.] It is the Christ of God who speaks. As such, He has been appointed to reveal eternal life. He, and only He hath the words of eternal life. He speaketh the words of God. And He can bestow the gift of life as well as declare the words of life. He has the right, the power and the heart to give eternal life to whomsoever He will. And He invites you to come to Him.

**II.** These words indicate how eternal life is to be attained and enjoyed. It is surely of importance to know this from Christ Himself. Unless I attain and enjoy it thus, I cannot attain and enjoy it at all.

There are two things here claiming our attention:

1. The object of this knowledge. “The only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.”

2. The knowledge of God in Christ which is required in order to eternal life.

1. *“The only true God”*.

By this expression we are not to understand God invested with the attribute of truth. It is as if it were “the only real God,” in opposition to all idols. Thus we must understand it in 1 John 5:20,21.

He is the true God of whom these two things may be affirmed:

[1.] That He is over all – entitled to pre-eminence, and exercising supreme authority, and

[2.] That He is the source of all being and of all good.

Now it is in Christ Jesus that He can be known as such. Apart from Jesus Christ, He may be known as the Lawgiver and Judge with whom, as Supreme, you have to do. But there are these three things awaiting to a right knowledge of Him as the “true God”:

[1.] It is but a partial view of His character that is before the mind. There may be some conception of His holiness, truth and avenging justice, but not of His whole character, and not even of these attributes as they are revealed in Christ Jesus.

[2.] There is no according of the pre-eminence by the heart to God. The heart is in rebellion against the law, government and throne of God.

[3.] There is no knowledge at all of Him as the fountain of living waters. The soul is under the ban of the curse, under a sentence of exclusion from God and from all good, exposed to His wrath and curse. The living God is known only as one into whose hands it is a fearful thing to fall. There can be no life in that knowledge.

But when Jesus Christ is known, God is known in Him as the true God:

[1.] “Jesus Christ whom” He “hath sent” must be known. He must be known as Jesus Christ the sent One – the Son of God in the flesh as the Saviour appointed and anointed by God.

(1) This Jesus Christ must be known as the gift of the Father. A gift of love. This appears in the Person given, and in the grand design for which He was given. He was sent to glorify God on the earth, and to purchase eternal life for those whom the Father gave Him. In Him, as thus sent, the only true God manifests Himself. He reveals His glory and makes known His will. Jesus Christ reveals the Father as He Himself is manifest in the flesh, and carries out the design of the Father in the work given Him to do.

(2) This Jesus Christ is the only way of access unto God. He is so, as to His Person and work. He Himself is the way, and He became so by the rending of His flesh in the endurance of death for His people.

(3) This Jesus Christ holds all the provision of the Father’s love. All this is conveyed with Him as a gift to men by the gospel.

In Jesus Christ therefore, God manifests Himself as God and as the God of salvation. Through Him, He calls thee to come and acquaint thyself with Him, and in Him thou wilt find all that is necessary in order to fit thee for the enjoyment of Him.

[2.] Through Jesus Christ, God is therefore known as the true God.

(1) Because He is seen to assert and exercise supreme authority, even

in His dealings with Jesus Christ. This is a more manifest assertion of supreme authority than that given from Sinai.

(2) Because He so manifests His glory as to appear entitled to supremacy. Majesty, truth, righteousness, holiness.

(3) Because in Jesus Christ He reveals Himself as the fountain of living waters. The God of all grace. The Covenant God. "This is the true God and eternal life" (1 John 5:20).

## *2. The knowledge.*

This is not any kind of knowledge. It must be of one kind. It may be of various degrees. Man cannot acquire it of himself. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, because they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. 2:14).

[1.] This knowledge must be spiritual knowledge – not only in the matter, but also in the mode of it. The natural man cannot have spiritual knowledge. He may have some knowledge of things that are in themselves spiritual, but his knowledge is natural. It must be, if himself is so. How rare, how gracious, this knowledge! None can have it not born again of God.

[2.] It must be believing knowledge. I call it so, rather than knowledge with faith, because it is by faith in the word this knowledge is derived, and when obtained, results in trust. It is from the believed testimony that this knowledge is derived, and he who hath it, trusteth in the Lord. It is not mere speculative knowledge. It is the privilege of the poor and needy.

[3.] It is an approving knowledge of God. His character and His will, as revealed in Jesus Christ, approved of. The heart delights in the revelation of God in Christ.

[4.] It is attended by communion with God. God is approached by, and He approacheth His people. E.g. Two friends, acquaintance, how formed and extended.

This knowledge is life eternal because thus life found, because thus life enjoyed.

## **APPLICATION**

1. The light of this text discovers many a wretch in our congregations. For all are so, who know not God, and have never found Christ and life. Oh, what can they have who have not life? And yet how easy, how painless, how careless are these miserable beings.

2. The light of this text discovers much wickedness, as well as much

wretchedness. Oh, the iniquity of forsaking the true God, and of despising the words of eternal life and Him who spake them.

3. The light of this text reveals the way of life. Oh, how precious is this light to those who are sitting in darkness under the shadow of death. The knowledge of God through Christ and by the Spirit. Oh, care you not to have it?

4. This text reveals to us the blessedness of the heirs of life. It is of God's good pleasure they are what they are, and have what they have. Oh, the glorious prospect before them!

5. The light of this text exposes the awful loss of all who live and die without God in Christ as their portion. □

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## **Christian Doctrines Explained: 15. The Redeemer**

Q.21. *Who is the Redeemer of God's elect?*

A. The only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the eternal Son of God, became man, and so was, and continueth to be, God and man in two distinct natures, and one person, for ever.

Last time we studied God's plan of salvation for fallen mankind, known as the covenant of grace. Central to this scheme is the Saviour or Redeemer – our Lord Jesus Christ. Before we look at His great work of redemption we must be clear about His identity, for the success of the former is dependent upon the latter. Precisely who is this Redeemer of God's elect people?

### **Title**

The title 'Redeemer' given to Christ indicates what was required to save lost sinners. To redeem means to purchase or buy back that which is captive. God's people, with all mankind, were in slavery to sin, Satan and the world. In this state they were liable to death and to hell. To deliver them from sin and every other enemy a ransom was required, to be paid to the offended justice of God. Jesus Christ was the one found and called to this mighty work: there was none other qualified for it.

### **God**

We need to know that the Redeemer is *a divine Person*. He is the Second Person of the blessed Trinity, the glorious Son of God. Angels and saints are sons but Christ alone is the natural and eternal Son. He did not

become God's Son because of His work, whether at His incarnation, baptism or resurrection. Rather, because He *was* the Son of God the work 'became' or suited Him. The divine name 'Lord' belongs to the Redeemer as the only Son and Sovereign. "He is Lord of all" (Acts 10:36).

### **Man**

To perform His role as Redeemer the Son of God *became man*. "God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law" (Gal.4:4,5). God over us (Rom.9:5) became God with us by taking flesh in the virgin's womb (Matt.1:23). The human name 'Jesus' was given to Mary's son by Joseph through divine command to identify Him as the Redeemer. "Thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matt.1:21).

It was necessary that the Redeemer should be man to enable Him to obey God's law and suffer its penalty on our behalf. It was necessary too that the Redeemer should be God in order that His obedience and sufferings might be of sufficient value to accomplish their purpose.

### **Union**

When the Son of God became the son of Mary *a unique union* took place such that "God was manifest in the flesh" (1Tim.3:16). Without ceasing to be what He always was He became something He previously was not. Our Redeemer is not two persons but one divine Person with a human nature. His two natures, the divine and the human, although inseparably united remain distinct and unconfused. The official name 'Christ' or 'Anointed' indicates the Redeemer's authority and ability for His task. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel" (Luke 4:18). □

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## **The Reformation in Scotland: 15. Triumph in Edinburgh**

*(The articles in this series are taken from "History of the Church of Scotland" by William M. Hetherington, first published in 1842.)*

**I**n this extremity the Protestants found it necessary to apply more impressingly to Queen Elizabeth for aid from England. This had indeed been done some months before, when they became convinced that hostilities must ensue; and the intercourse with England had been conducted chiefly by Knox and Henry Balnaves of Hallhill, on the

Scottish side, and Cecil on the English. Knox apprised Cecil of the great popish league, devised by the princes of Lorraine, for the suppression of the Reformation throughout Europe, to which the dethronement of Elizabeth was essential; and suggested a great counter-league of Protestant powers, of which Elizabeth should be the head. Cecil could appreciate the scheme; but it was not so easy to induce Elizabeth to engage in it, requiring, as it necessarily did, great and immediate sacrifices and exertions for a remote, and what might appear a contingent, good. Assistance in money was sent, but with a sparing hand; and part of it was intercepted, and fell into the possession of the Queen-regent. But now, when the Protestant cause appeared to be sinking in Scotland, in consequence of the direct aid received by the Queen-regent from France, the English court perceived the necessity of sending an army to the assistance of the Congregation. A short time before the Protestants retired from Edinburgh, they were joined by William Maitland of Lethington, one of the ablest statesmen of his time, who had previously been secretary to the Queen-regent. Upon his arrival, Knox, who had no relish for the intrigues of mere politicians, immediately relinquished the direct management of all diplomatic matters to Lethington, expressing great satisfaction at being relieved from duties so uncongenial to his mind. Lethington was sent to England to endeavour to procure assistance; and it was finally resolved that an English force should be sent to Scotland, to co-operate with the Protestant lords in expelling the French troops out of the kingdom. A contract to that effect was concluded at Berwick, between the Duke of Norfolk and the Scottish commissioners, on the 27th of February, 1560.

The war now assumed a more determined aspect. The French troops, being aware of the approach of the English, returned to Leith, and prepared to defend it to the last extremities. Before the arrival of the English forces, the Queen-regent was allowed by Lord Erskine to enter into Edinburgh Castle; thus withdrawing herself from being personally exposed to the dangers and horrors of a war which she herself had caused. Several sharp encounters took place between the besiegers and the besieged; but as the English fleet had the command of the sea, no supplies could be transmitted from France to the garrison at Leith, which was daily become weaker. The French court employed every art of policy to induce Elizabeth to abandon the support of the Protestant lords, and almost succeeded. But being at length convinced that England's own security and best interest were involved in the support of Scotland, she gave orders to prosecute the siege with the utmost vigour. The resolution

of Elizabeth convinced the Court of France that it was in vain to prolong the contest. A treaty was therefore proposed between France and England, the basis of which was, that the troops of both countries should be withdrawn from Scotland; and ambassadors were appointed to meet in Edinburgh, to complete its arrangement and ratification.

While the ambassadors were on their way to Scotland, the Queen-regent, who had been for some time declining in health, became seriously ill; and, sending for some of the chief Lords of the Congregation, expressed her regret at the sufferings which the kingdom had endured. She also sent for John Willock, and conferred with him for some time on religious matters; but, after his departure, received extreme unction, according to the rites of the Romish Church, and expired, on the 9th Knox says, Spotswood says the 10th, of June 1560.

On the 16th of June the ambassadors arrived in Edinburgh, and began their negotiations. The death of the late Queen-dowager had removed one of the main obstacles to peace; and the troubled state of political matters in France tended to make the ambassadors of that country more disposed to pacification than they might otherwise have been. It proceeded, however, with the usual tardiness of state diplomacy, and was signed on the 7th of July 1560. By this treaty it was provided, that the French troops should immediately be removed from Scotland; that an amnesty should be granted to all who had been engaged in the late resistance to the Queen-regent; that the principal grievances of which they complained in the civil administration should be redressed; that a free parliament should be held in the month of August next, to settle the other affairs of the kingdom; and that, during the absence of their sovereigns, the government should be administered by a council of twelve, all natives of the kingdom, to be partly chosen by Francis and Mary, and partly by the estates of the nation. On the 16th July the French army embarked at Leith, and the English troops began their march to their own country; and on the 19th the Congregations assembled in St Giles's Church, to return public thanks to God for the restoration of peace, and for the success which had crowned their exertions.

The parliament, which had met formally during the presence of the ambassadors on the 10th of July, adjourned until the 1st day of August, according to the treaty, both dates being specified in the records of its acts. When the circumstances in which they were assembled, and the affairs on which they were called to deliberate, are taken into consideration, this must be regarded as the most important meeting of the estates of the kingdom that had ever been held in Scotland. It

engrossed the attention of the nation, and the eyes of Europe were fixed on its proceedings. Although a great concourse of people resorted to Edinburgh on that occasion, yet no tumult or disturbance of the public peace occurred. Many of the lords spiritual and temporal who were attached to Popery absented themselves; but the chief patrons of the old religion, as the Archbishop of St Andrews, and the Bishops of Dunblane and Dunkeld, countenanced the assembly by their presence, and were allowed to act with freedom as lords of parliament. M'Crie states:

“The all-important business of religion was introduced by a petition presented by a number of Protestants of different ranks; in which, after rehearsing their former endeavours to procure the removal of the corruptions which had infected the Church, they requested parliament to use the power which Providence had now put into their hands for effecting this great and urgent work. They craved three things in general: that the antichristian doctrine maintained in the Popish Church should be discarded; that means should be used to restore purity of worship, and primitive discipline; and that the ecclesiastical revenues, which had been engrossed by a corrupt and indolent hierarchy, should be applied to the support of a pious and active ministry, to the promotion of learning, and to the relief of the poor. They declared, that they were ready to substantiate the justice of all their demands, and, in particular, to prove that those who arrogated to themselves the name of clergy were destitute of all right to be accounted ministers of religion; and that, from the tyranny which they had exercised, and their vassalage to the court of Rome, they could not be safely tolerated, and far less entrusted with power, in a reformed commonwealth.”

The attentive reader will mark, in the preceding outline of this petition, the statement of certain great principles which he will have occasion subsequently to trace in active operation. He will mark the request, not only for purity of worship, but also for *primitive discipline*,—a point of vital importance in any Church, but one which worldly-minded men will always hate and oppose. He will mark, also, that while our Scottish reformers still wished ecclesiastical revenues to be devoted to *ecclesiastical*, and not *civil* purposes, they did so, not for the sake of their own aggrandisement, but purely for the public good, purposing a threefold division and application of them,—one-third for the support of colleges and schools, one-third for the support of the poor, and the remaining third for the support of the ministers of religion. No other national Church ever exhibited a spirit at once so generous and self-denying, and so wisely and nobly zealous in devising large and liberal

schemes for promoting the welfare of the kingdom. But such schemes were far too generous to find favour in the sight of the avaricious nobility and gentry, and far too enlightened to be adequately understood, either by the men of that age, or even yet, of our own. Unfortunately for the public welfare, in all ages and countries, men of the world, judging others by themselves, cannot understand, and will not believe, the self-denying and generous spirit of true religion, and therefore always regard with jealousy every proposal made by the servants of Christ; and even the more manifestly self-denying and generous it is, the more suspicious are they that it must contain some peculiarly deep design. The applicability of these remarks will soon be made evident. □

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### **Precious Psalms: 15. A Heavenly Hope**

*“Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?” (Psalm 15:1)*

**M**any today do not believe in an afterlife, thinking instead that we cease to exist at death. Where an eternal existence is accepted the assumption is often made that all will go to heaven. That David should ask the question above shows us that this is not the case. The rest of the psalm is God’s answer, in which the heirs of heaven are described.

#### **Wish**

It is sad to listen to some speaking about their hope for the world to come. It quickly becomes obvious that their ‘hope’ is nothing more than a fond wish. It has no real basis, no guarantee of fulfilment. These poor people have no solid, biblical ground under their feet; in the end their hopes will be dashed. “The hope of unjust men perisheth” (Prov.11:7). As well do we ‘hope’ for good weather today, or ‘hope’ to live to a good old age, as to hope to go to heaven without a promise from God.

#### **Idea**

Part of the problem is wrong ideas of heaven. To some it is simply a continuation of the good things they have enjoyed here. “To morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant” (Isa.56:12) might sum up their outlook. To others heaven means an end to war, suffering and sorrow. But what causes these miseries? Is it not sin in our hearts? Without a remedy for this we cannot expect to arrive at perfect joy and peace.

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## **Holy**

In the Bible heaven is God's abode, His "dwelling place" (2Chron.30:27). David sees it as a 'tabernacle' or tent. To Israel this would signify both their individual homes and their collective place of worship. Heaven then is for God's family; it is a fellowship between Him and His believing sons and daughters. It is also God's 'hill'. This indicates that the way to glory is *upward*. We need God's grace to pardon our sins and enable us to follow and obey Christ. A holy place, a holy God and a holy people. This is the true heaven. □

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## **For Young People: *Plants of the Bible***

*(These articles were first published in "The Explorer", our denomination's youth magazine)*

### **4. *The Balm – Grace***

*"Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?" (Jeremiah 8:22)*

**A**s we have already seen the Lord Jesus Christ came into this world in order to die. The death of Christ was remarkable for many reasons but chiefly because of the fact that it happened at all. Jesus lived a holy and blameless life and yet he died. The one man who was without sin nevertheless suffered the awful penalty of sin! It can only be that on the cross Jesus took the place of others.

This is just how the Bible explains the death of Christ. It tells us that "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust" (1Pet.3:18) and that "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many" (Heb.9:28). Jesus himself said: "the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matt.20:28). Why is the death of Christ so important to us?

God created everything very good. The first man Adam was pure and holy like God. He was God's servant and friend. A special test was made of Adam's obedience when God said to him, "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But 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.2:16,17).

Through the subtlety of Satan Adam failed this test. In eating the forbidden fruit Adam committed sin, for "sin is the transgression of the

law” (1John 3:4). God punished Adam by death as he had promised. The moment Adam sinned his soul died and he no longer knew God or enjoyed his presence. He became liable to eternal punishment. And since Adam represented us all then this is our state too.

How poor is our condition as sinners! In God’s sight we are sick and though men may try there is nothing they themselves can do about their sickness. “The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment” (Isa.1:5,6). Is there any help at hand?

When we are ill we look for a medicine that will make us better. It ought to be the same with our souls. Jeremiah lamented the state of his own people. They knew exactly what to do when their bodies were sick but they refused God’s remedy for their sinful souls. They were guilty of theft, murder and idolatry yet they would not even admit that anything was wrong! They needed a ‘balm’ for their souls.

Balm is a sort of ointment. The region of Gilead east of the river Jordan was famous for its balm. It was an oily substance, sticky like honey, which was obtained from the balsam tree by cutting into its bark. It was applied to the skin to soothe pain and heal wounds. This reminds us of another tree from which healing comes. From the cross of Calvary where Jesus was wounded for our transgressions the balm of God’s grace flows to a sin-sick world. What can balm teach us about God’s grace?

Balm was *necessary*. A man would not be able to recover from an affliction without such a medicine. Just as balm was needed to heal the body so God’s mighty grace is needed to restore our souls. “For by grace are ye saved through faith” (Eph.2:8). Salvation does not come by our own works but from the work of Christ in his life and death. This is the message of the gospel!

Sadly there are many, even those who have often heard that “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,” who try to save themselves by their own works. They try to cover the wounds of their souls with a plaster that they themselves have made: their good deeds, their respectability, their religion. But these are “physicians of no value” (Job 13:4). Our very heart is sick and we must go to the Great Physician himself, the Lord Jesus Christ. He heals every repentant sinner, immediately and permanently.

Then balm was *abundant*. In biblical times balm was in plentiful supply. So it is with God’s grace. Our sins are very many and very great

but the grace of God is able to deal with them all. “But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound” (Rom.5:20). When we come to Christ the grace of God both soothes the pain of our guilt and heals our hearts from sin.

Apparently the balsam tree does not grow in Gilead now. God’s grace though will never come to an end. The wonder of it is that it is not only all-sufficient but everlasting. If we have been truly saved from our sins then we may be sure that we will be saved forever. For the sake of his dear Son who died for them, the Lord will give “grace *and* glory” to his people (Psa.84:11).

Finally balm was *costly*. The balm of Gilead was traded and fetched a good price (Gen.37:25). Here grace differs from balm. Grace is very costly – but it cannot be bought by us! Jesus paid a great price to purchase grace for sinners when he suffered at Calvary; salvation is now God’s gift to all who believe in Christ! “Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Rom.3:24).

We should think about the balm of Gilead and think about our needy souls. Have we discovered this great truth, that “Jesus Christ maketh thee whole” (Acts 9:34)? If we are lost and go to hell at the end, none of us shall be able to say that it was because there was no Saviour and no grace! □

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**Gàidhlig: An aite gu’m bu chòir dhuibh a radh, Ma’s toil leis an Tighearn... – Sheumais 4:15 (Seonaidh Mac’ill Eathainn)**

**T**ha focal na firinn a’ sealltainn dhuinn gu ma soilleir gu bheil e cho nàdarra dhuinn gu bhi falbh a reir ‘ur n’ ana-miannan agus gum bu choir dhuinn a bhi faighinn air a reir sin. Tha sinn a’ smaoinichadh gu bheil ceart-chòir againn air na h-uile nithean agus sin aig àm a tha freagarrach dhuinn. Seall mar eiseimplair, mar a’chì sinn anns a chaitheal seo fhein, Seumas 4:3, “Tha sibh ag iarraidh, agus chaneil sibh a’ faotainn, do bhrìgh gu bheil sibh ag iarraidh gu h-olc, chum gun caith sibh e air bhur n-ana-miannaibh”. Tha seo ag innseadh dhuinn gu bheil sinn ag iarraidh gu cearr agus nacheil còir againn air anns an t-seadh sin, chionns nacheil sinn ga iarraidh mar bu choir dhuinn.

Bha àm n’ur n’eachdraidh agus chluinneadh tu aig gach aon aig an robh speis do dh’àdhbhar a’ Chruthaidheair, “ma’s toil leis an Tighearna”. Cha robh duine faireachdainn gun robh coir air ni sam bith ach mar a’ bha Freasdal ri cuir ris. Tha sinne beo ann an linn anns nach eil mòran a’

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cleachdadh nan briathran seo ach glè ainneamh. Tha cheist ri thogail air an adhbhar sin agus freagairt ri thoirt seachad carson a tha suidheachadh air atharrachadh chum na h-ìre seo. Nach bu mhath dhan h-uile duine bhi cuir na ceiste riuthe fhein agus coimhead nan cridhe fhein agus beachdachadh air a chuspair a tha iad a' fagail a mach as a chùis. Tha an earrann a' deanadh follaiseachadh dhuinn nacheil ann ach aon doigh air am faod sinn ar n' iarrtaisean a' chuir agus sin a' dh'ionnsaigh an Tighearna a mhainn. Tha cinnt air a' thoirt dhuinn anns an earrann seo, "bithidh sinn bèò agus nì sinn".

Bheil thu fhein a' faireachdainn falamhachd na'd bheatha a tha cuir ceist ort? Bheil ionndrainn na'do bheatha a tha do- thuigsinneach dhuit? Bheil Cuspair na Dochais air fhàgail a mach as do bheatha agus imcheist ort do nach d'fhuair thu freagairt fhathast. An aite bhi leanntainn ort anns an doigh a thagad nach cuir thu'n gnìomh na briathran a' thog sinn an diugh: "Ma's toil leis an Tighearna, bithidh siinn bèò, agus nì sinn so, no sud". □

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## **Congregational News**

### **Death**

As a congregation we were saddened at the passing on 26th March of Mrs Kate Ann Stewart, 4 Bruach Gorm, Carinish. We remember the family in their loss, that they would know the Lord's comfort. "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom" (Psa.90:12).

### **Fellowships**

Our monthly fellowships this year are on the theme 'Our Bible and How we Got it'. They are held in the manse beginning at approximately 8.00pm and all are welcome. God willing on May 30th we will consider the Canon of Scripture and on June 20th the Preservation of Scripture.

### **General Assembly**

The Commission of Assembly met on 20th April and agreed to continue an Appeal against the Opinion of Lord Uist in the case regarding the church property in Broadford, while at the same time seeking a satisfactory negotiated settlement with the residual body of the Free Church. The General Assembly is due to meet in Liberton Kirk, Edinburgh from Monday 17th to Thursday 20th May. Please pray for God's blessing on the proceedings and on the Moderator-Designate, the Rev. David Fraser. "Give us help from trouble: for vain is the help of man" (Psa.60:11). □

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*Services:*

Sabbath: 12.00noon; 6.00pm

Wednesday: 7.30pm

Communions: 2nd Sabbath in April and September

All services are held in the church at Bayhead.

*Website:* [www.northuistandgrimsayfcc.org.uk](http://www.northuistandgrimsayfcc.org.uk)

Sermons preached in the congregation are recorded and may be downloaded from the website. Alternatively they are available in CD or tape format. Please contact the minister for further details.

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North Uist & Grimsay Free Church of Scotland (Continuing)