

# 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)

Vol. 1 No. 3

May-June 2008

# Grace & Truth

Vol. 1 No. 3

May-June 2008

## Contents

Minister's Message: <i>Gracious Words</i>	1
Helps to Devotion: <i>Obedience</i>	2
Parables of Jesus: <i>3. New Cloth on an Old Garment</i>	3
Sermon: <i>What is Sin?</i>	4
Christian Doctrines Explained: <i>3. The Holy Scriptures</i>	11
The Reformation in Scotland: <i>3. Papal Persecution</i>	13
Precious Psalms: <i>3. I cried...He heard</i>	16
For Young People: <i>Birds of the Bible: 3. The Pigeon</i>	17
Gàidhlig: <i>Iarraibh Baine Fìor-ghlan an Fhocail</i>	19
Congregational News	20

---

All correspondence relating to the magazine should be sent to the Editor:  
Rev. David M. Blunt, Free Church Manse, Knockintorran, Isle of North Uist,  
HS6 5ED. Tel. 01876 510305 Email: davidblunt@fcecontinuing.org

*Grace & Truth* is published bimonthly and distributed free of charge. Donations towards costs are welcome and may be sent to the Treasurer (details on inside rear cover). Cheques, etc. should be made out to 'North Uist & Grimsay Free Church of Scotland (Continuing)'.

---

## Minister's Message: *Gracious Words*

**W**e read in Scripture of an occasion when certain men were sent by the Pharisees and chief priests to apprehend Christ (John 7:32). The Jewish leaders were fearful that many of the people were being drawn to Jesus by His preaching and His mighty deeds.

Eventually the men returned empty-handed – but with a surprising explanation. It was not that Jesus had resisted arrest, or fled. Rather it was what He had *said*. “Never man spake like this man!” was their response. Sadly the Pharisees remained as proud and arrogant as ever.

There are many things which are unique about the words of Christ. One is their brevity. It has been estimated that if all Christ's words recorded in Scripture were put together they would comprise only sixteen pages. His longest recorded sermon may be read in ten minutes. Contrast this with the philosophers and thinkers of this world! Their utterances fill volumes and yet do not begin to approach the profundity of our Lord's teachings. His words are truly weighty.

Another feature of Christ's words is their unparalleled beauty. Even unconverted men may be moved by the dignity and morality of the parables or famous sayings of the Son of God. We think of the Beatitudes, or the account of the Good Samaritan or the Prodigal Son.

If this is all men see in the words of Christ though then they are still blind. They are still in their sins. Something much more than this affected the men that went after Christ, such that they were willing to disobey their orders to seize hold of Him, even though it would likely cost them dear. What gives the words of Christ their real power?

There is the simplicity of Christ's preaching. The Lord ministered in a plain, direct and searching manner. His sermons enforced important truths in a homely way that men could easily grasp. He spoke boldly to the conscience about the great issues of life, death, judgment and eternity. We are told that “the common people heard him gladly” (Mark 12:37). Interestingly we learn that Christ's apostles used “great plainness of speech” (2Cor.3:12). Preachers today should do the same.

Notable too is the purity of Christ's teaching. Christ always rebuked sin and never excused it. He warned sinners to flee from the wrath to come. At the outset of His public ministry He said: “The kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye, and believe the gospel” (Mark 1:15). At its close He said that “repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his [own] name among all nations” (Luke 24:47). His words were wholesome, according to godliness, designed to promote holiness of life.

Above all there is the *grace* of Christ's words. When He read the Scriptures in Nazareth the people "wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth" (Luke 4:22). He read from Isaiah's prophecy and then proclaimed Himself to be the One anointed to "preach the gospel to the poor." He spoke to the deepest needs of men's hearts. He brought salvation and hope to the weary and the lost.

Consider the words which the men sent to take Christ heard from His lips: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink" (John 7:37). Gracious words indeed! Sinners today need to come to this all-sufficient Saviour. Have Christ's words been blessed to *your* soul? □

---

## Helps to Devotion (Rev. James Smith)

OBEDIENCE. "*Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?*" (Acts 9:6)

**A** truly awakened soul is willing to do anything to escape the wrath to come, and therefore applies, as Saul did, to the Lord for direction. Blessed be God, we are not left at a loss for one moment, for the direction is given to us in the plainest possible terms: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Lord, give us a strong and lively faith in Jesus, that we may commit our souls to him, and venture our all on him, and so have eternal life. When we have received pardon, and enjoy the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, then we are willing to do everything we can to glorify the thrice blessed name of him that has saved us. We only want to show our gratitude and express our love by living to him who died for us and rose again. Blessed Jesus, what wilt thou have me to do? Is there not some niche in thy temple that I may fill? Is there not some plot in thy vineyard that I could cultivate? Is there not some work that will glorify thee that I can do? O find me employment, and give me wisdom and strength to do it! Never allow me to indulge in idleness or selfishness, or be swallowed up with worldly cares; but let me live *for* thee, and *to* thee, and *like* thee. Make me willing to do anything that will please thee, or suffer anything that will bring honour to thy most holy name. Be thou my pattern!—be thou my Master!—be thou my all! Blessed Spirit, prepare me to work for Jesus; point out to me the work for which I am qualified; and give me grace to do it to the honour of my gracious Lord! May I be willing to take the lowest place, perform the most self-denying service, and suffer the bitterest reproach, if Jesus be but glorified. □

---

## **Parables of Jesus: 3. New Cloth on an Old Garment**

*“No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment, for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse.” (Matthew 9:16)*

The disciples of John the Baptist had come to the Lord Jesus with a question. They wondered why, although they and the Pharisees often fasted or abstained from food, the disciples of Christ did not. The Lord began His answer by referring to Himself as “the bridegroom.” While He was on earth it would be inappropriate for His spiritual children to mourn, but when He should be taken away, then they would fast.

### **Old Life**

In His parable Jesus is warning those who tend to place their confidence in the *external* things of religion. The Pharisees prided themselves in their fasting, tithing and other traditions, but they omitted the “weightier matters” of the law, such as judgment, mercy and faith (Matt.23:23). Jesus pictured such lives as like a well-used item of clothing which is worn-out and torn. What can be done to make it usable again? It could be patched up, perhaps. But we know what happens then. The new cloth is stronger than the old and simply makes the tear worse.

Because of sin we are unable to glorify God by our lives. Listen to what the Bible says about mankind since the fall: “They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one” (Rom.3:12). The garment of our personal righteousness is threadbare and ruined. Our own ‘goodness’ is nothing of the sort, for “all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags” (Isa.64:6).

### **Reformation**

What many do when aware of sin is to ‘repair’ or reform their lives. They leave off the gross or public sins which they think are the real ills afflicting them – thieving, swearing, drunkenness. They apply a ‘patch’ of good works here and there, hoping to mend themselves. For a time they appear to be successful and the conscience is quietened. But soon sin breaks out somewhere or other and it is clear that the problem remains.

Others go so far as to put on the ‘patch’ of an easy profession of faith, encouraged by worldly, smooth-talking preachers. They confess their sin and start to walk in the way of righteousness. But gradually they slip

back into their old ways. “The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire” (2Pet.2:22). They are worse than when they began, because they have ‘tried’ Christianity and it did not ‘work’.

### **New Life**

There is really only one solution. The old garment from Adam must be wholly discarded and the new one from Christ put on. We need a complete change – a new heart – for out of *it* come the things which defile us (Matt.15:19,20). Jesus said, “Ye must be born again” (John 3:7). Only then shall we begin to serve God as He requires, not “in the oldness of the letter” but “in newness of spirit” (Rom.7:6). □

---

### **Sermon: What is Sin? (Dr. John Kennedy)**

*“Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight.”*  
– Psalm 51:4

**T**here are two lights exhibited on shore for the guidance of those “that go down to the sea in ships”—the *beacon* light, to warn them away from the dangerous reef or headland, and the *harbour* light, to direct them to a place of safety. I have seen a shipwreck take place owing to one of these lights being mistaken for the other. The account of David’s sin, in the inspired history of his life, and the record of his repentance in this psalm, are like these two lights—the former warning us away from unwatchfulness, the latter guiding us back to God with confession of our sin. To take encouragement in sin from the former, instead of being warned away “from all appearance of evil,” is to run the awful risk—or rather to encounter the certain danger—of soulwreck; and not to follow David, in his return, “with weeping and supplication,” to God on His mercyseat, is to keep our souls away from the only true rest and blessedness, and still to expose them to the storm of His wrath.

In David’s penitence, of which this psalm is a record, there are the following elements:—1. A view of his sin as it is “against” and in the “sight” of God, such as causes him to justify God, in condemning him to death, according to the curse of the law, which he had broken, and as quite shut him up to the rich sovereign mercy of God, as the only fountain whence pardon could come to him, and to an atoning sacrifice such as would satisfy the justice of God, as the only meet channel for

the outflow of His grace. 2. A confession of original sin—of his total depravity—as the result of his fellowship in “the guilt of Adam’s first sin,” which alone accounted for his being “shapen in iniquity” and conceived “in sin.” 3. An earnest desire for an intimation of pardon from God. 4. Panting of heart for renewing grace. 5. Longings for the joy of God’s salvation. 6. A sense of his need of being kept from sinning in the future, as one who could not trust in himself, and who sought to be upheld by the “free Spirit” of the Lord. And 7. In the measure in which hope was restored to his heart, he desired employment in the Lord’s service, as well as preparation for it, the conversion of sinners unto God, and “the good of Jerusalem.”

It is the first of these we at present are called to consider—**David’s view of sin as “against” and in the “sight” of God.**

I. **“Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned.”** He had acted to the injury of his own soul, he had offended, by his conduct, those who feared the Lord, and by his evil example he had encouraged the ungodly to continue in sin; but yet he says, “Against Thee, *Thee only*, have I sinned.” Viewing his conduct as sin, he thinks only of its being against God. It might bring misery on himself, it might bring grief to the hearts of the godly, and it might encourage others to continue to act the part of suicides, but his conduct he regarded as *sinful* only as it was “*against*” God.

1. *It was against the law of God.* Associating the law with God, how venerable it seemed to his eyes, opened as these were, to behold the glory of Jehovah, as Lawgiver and Judge; how awful seemed to him the guilt which was involved in the breach of such a law; and how impossible escape from the law’s penalty appeared to him as he thought of the omnipotence, faithfulness, and justice of Him who was Judge of all, unless mercy came to him with a free pardon through atoning blood. One may transgress the law of his country, and his offence never be discovered; or even if it be discovered, he may not be convicted of the crime; or by some miscarriage of justice the execution may not follow the passing of the sentence. But in none of these ways can, under His government, any transgressors of the law of God escape. Sinner, seek to realise this. Have done with dreaming of being able to sin with impunity while the eye that is “as a flame of fire” is on you, while the sword of divine justice is wielded by the Almighty, and while it is impossible for God to lie. Either life, through the righteousness of

Christ being placed to your account, or death, as the wages of your sin, is the only alternative to you, and to me, and to all. "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law; for sin is the transgression of the law," and "the soul that sinneth shall die."

2. *Sin is against the will of God.* Not merely against what was the will of God, but against what, at the moment when the sin is committed, is the will of God—against a present volition of the will of God bearing authoritatively on the transgressor, and in opposition to what he is about to do, or is doing. There is many a law on the Statute Book of our nation the very existence of which is unknown to our Sovereign, and which cannot be regarded as an intended expression of her will; and we must not think of a transgressor of our laws as acting in opposition to a present exercise of the Queen's will bearing on him individually. But do not approach so to conceive of the relation in which God stands to His own law, and to those by whom that law is broken. His will is ever active in volitions which accord with the claims of His commandments, and bears according to the law's demands on each individual, always and everywhere. Because of this there must be in every act of sin a collision with the will of God, the Most High, "whose name is holy." Think of the weak worm dashing himself against the will of Jehovah, as, swayed by enmity, he ventures to transgress His law, which is "holy, and just, and good." Friend, do not conceive of God as like yourself, and one to be trifled with, as if He could forget your sin; and do not imagine that such collisions with the will of God can take place with impunity though "sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily." The will of God, now expressed in the form of law, shall soon and surely be expressed in a providence by which you shall be utterly and eternally overwhelmed.

3. *Sin is rebellion against the authority of God.* The authority of God as our Lawgiver—His right to reign—rests on what He is in the infinite excellence of His being and glory. He, because of what He is, is entitled to be Lord over all—to bring His will in the form of law to bear on each rational being whom He hath created, whether their place originally was heaven or earth. There is rebellion against authority thus founded and asserted, in every transgression of His law, and this cannot be without a denial of His right to reign, without an attack on His throne. How fearful sin is as implying—necessarily implying—this! And there cannot be rebellion such as this that does not imply a claim on the part of the transgressor to the place which necessarily and eternally belongs to the Most High. The rebelling will of the creature makes this demand.

He raises himself thronewards, in his meanness and loathsomeness, and requires that Jehovah should give place to him. "Who is the Lord that He should reign over us?" is the mad shout that reaches the ear of God from the hearts of all transgressors of His law; and, as they demand for themselves the sovereignty which is God's, they ask, "Who is Lord over us?"

4. *Sin is against the name of God.* There can be no sinning that does not cast dishonour on the moral glory of Jehovah. He demands perfect love to Himself, because of what He is in the infinite loveliness of His moral character. His claim for love rests on what He is in the infinite beauty of His holiness. On this the eye of His omniscience ever rests, and to this He "is," and must be "love." And through this love to Himself He is "blessed for ever" in the enjoyment of Himself. And He cannot have this knowledge of, this love to, and this enjoyment of, Himself, and act righteously as the supreme Governor, without demanding love to Himself from all rational beings. One who did not necessarily make such a demand could not reasonably be worshipped. And there is goodness as well as authority in such a claim. If to Himself His love to Himself is the source of such blessedness, what can be more surely good than to demand love to Him from His creatures, who shall never fail to find that through love to Him satisfying blessedness shall flow into their hearts from "the fountain of living waters." But whichever of the Ten Commandments you break, you cannot do so without refusing this love to God. You cannot break any of the commandments of the second table of the law without refusing such love to God as would be expressed in submission to His authority. For He requires with equal authority love to your neighbour as love to Himself. To refuse this expression of love to Him is blasphemously to declare Him unworthy of what He demands, though His right to be loved rests on what He is in the infinite glory of His moral character. But there can be no negative feeling towards the holiness of God. If there is not love to it as the spring of action in the heart, there must be enmity. In every unconverted man there is nothing but the flesh, and the minding of the flesh is enmity against God. Think of God beholding, loving, and rejoicing in, His own infinite beauty, and at the same time having before Him the creature of His hand turning away from and hating Him because His name is holy, and expressing in his transgression of His law his enmity to what He so infinitely loves and enjoys. How marvellous is the patience of God with thee, who wast observed by Him thus dishonouring His glorious name in every one of all thy countless transgressions!

5. *Sin is against the being of God.* God cannot be without being infinitely great and infinitely holy. His greatness is the basis of His right to issue a law, and His holiness is the basis of His claim for love. His law demanding obedience in love rests on His unchangeable majesty and loveliness. It is entrenched within His being. You cannot assail that law without an attack on God. You cannot rise against the throne without setting yourself against the existence of God. Every sinner is, in intent, a Deicide. And in every “carnal mind” there is positive enmity to the very being of God. This may not be a reality in your consciousness, but it is the root of all your action in transgressing the law of God. Roots are usually hidden, and why is this “root of bitterness” undiscovered by you? It is because you keep so far away from God that you have no opportunity of discovering how you are affected towards Him. But if you were pressed by the law’s claims, and overwhelmed by the terrors of its curse, if you were left for a season without any conscious hope of “escape from the wrath to come,” and at the same time were persuaded that there can be no withdrawal of these demands and terrors, till the justice of the unchangeable and Eternal God was satisfied, then would you find in your consciousness the stirring of an enmity to God, whose cry is, “Let there be no God.” How fearful the consciousness of this! And how bitter the remembrance of this when the glory of Jehovah was so revealed to you, and the riches of His pardoning mercy, that, while having hope in Him, you went forth in loving desire after Him! But whether you are conscious of this enmity towards the very being of God or not, of all the sin in your action this is the root in your heart.

II. But the Psalmist confesses that he had done **“this evil in” His “sight”** as surely as he had sinned against the Lord.

1. It was in His sight, for *it was done under His all seeing eye.* Nothing can be done anywhere, at any time, or by any one that is not fully observed by God. And is the eye of God to be no check upon us? A child sometimes may take liberties because his father cannot see him. He acts dishonestly who acts thus. But the child who has, as his father, one entitled to both his love and respect, acts most presumptuously if he is not restrained by knowing that such a father’s eye is on him. If he refuses to be careful because his parent’s eye is on him, he is both callous and presumptuous. But think of your being as completely watched by the Omniscient as if there was no other being on which He had to rest

His eye, and, while thus the object of His undivided attention, trampling His law under foot! O the marvellous longsuffering of God!

2. It was done in His sight, because done *before His omnipresence*. It is the glory of God that, while He cannot be contained except in the infinite and Eternal immensity of His own being, He, in His infinite being and in all His moral glory, can be in every spot throughout all the universe, and therefore is thus present where thou art sinning. You cannot find a place to sin but in the presence of His majesty and glory. O think of how God is thus insulted to His face whenever and wherever thou art committing sin!

3. It is done in His sight, for it is done *when He is near to you* in the action of His providence. At the very moment when you are sinning He is putting forth His power in upholding you, and each token of His goodness, conveyed to you by the operation of His power—and conveyed to you at that moment—you use, as they reach your hand, as a weapon wherewith to contend with Him! It is while you “live, move, and have your being in Him” you are transgressing His holy law!

4. It is done in His sight by you, for it is done by you *when He is near to you in the gospel*—while He stands and knocks at your door. O think of the glory which He hath revealed, and which shines from “the face of Jesus Christ,” of the love which He has commended, and of which He testifies to you, of the precious blood of His Son “shed for the remission of sins,” of the “great salvation” which in Christ He presents to you, of the urgent calls addressed to you authoritatively requiring your acceptance of “His unspeakable gift,” and of His patience in still continuing to plead with you, and then consider what must be implied in your doing evil in His sight when He has thus approached you!

5. In the case of David, and in that of every child of God, sin is committed in His sight, *because done by one who was brought near to Him by being adopted into His family*. Child of God, never approach to think that the grace which you have received can extenuate the guilt which you contract by lawbreaking. Instead of this, your privileges as a child give you a power which no other has of aggravating your sin. No sin can be greater than yours. Is there nothing in the glorious greatness and rich grace of your Father to make you specially afraid of sinning? And surely there are no circumstances in which sin so aggravated can be committed, as by him who does “evil” amidst the blessings which surround him in a state of grace, on whom shines light from above the mercyseat, and before whom walked his Elder Brother, leaving him an example that he should follow His steps.

6. “This evil” was done by the Psalmist in His sight, *because it was done by one in whom dwelt the Holy Spirit*. This is, in a special sense, true of all sins committed by those who are “the temples of the Holy Ghost.” He is in them, and specially and graciously present with the life which He has begotten in them, and forth from beside His presence there comes forth the evil lusting, and under its influence, the “enticed” will goes forth in sinful action. How intensely aggravated sin thus issuing and “finished” must be! Combine thoughts of the majesty and holiness, with thoughts of the grace, of the Spirit’s presence in the heart, and then consider what doing “evil” in His sight must imply.

7. The Psalmist did “this evil” in the sight of the Lord, *because he had done it after enjoying intimate communion with Him*. His sinward movement began when he was lying on the bosom of divine love. And it began in his being lifted up in pride because of what he had enjoyed. How fearfully this aggravates his evildoing! How ought his enjoyment of the light of God’s face to have attached him to his Father and to His law! But he came forth from His fellowship to sin. And he made his enjoyment, while near, a reason for departing, in his pride of heart, from “the fountain of living waters!”

**Application.** 1. Mark well the difference between considering sin in its bearing on God, and viewing it merely in its bearing on yourself. For this indicates the difference between a true and a counterfeit conviction of sin. You may be much afflicted by a sense of the danger to which you have exposed yourself by sinning, and from that danger you may be most intensely anxious to escape. To secure a sense of deliverance from death what would you not do, what not sacrifice of carnal indulgence, what not suffer that would be penance to the flesh? But there is no such view of sin before your mind as constrains you to justify God in condemning you to death, as persuades you that there can be no hope for you unless the name of God, which you dishonoured, shall be glorified, as shuts you up to the cross of Christ as the only channel through which pardoning mercy can flow out from God to you as a sinner, or as enables you to have any right conception of the grace to which alone you may hopefully appeal. Only the man who heartily confesses “Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight,” can heartily add a vindication of divine justice such as we have in the words, “That Thou mightest be justified when Thou speakest, and be clear when Thou judgest,” can honestly cry for the application of atoning blood, or can make a guileless appeal to the lovingkindness and mercy of the Lord.

2. Almost all religious errors spring from defective views of sin, as these are the result of defective views of God. In these days it is becoming common to ignore all divine attributes but love, and so to conceive of divine love as something utterly inconsistent with His righteousness and holiness, and as therefore requiring the removal of all impressions of those thoughts which the revelations of the Old Testament and the true doctrine of the cross are fitted to produce. And all relations between God and men, such as are indicated in Scripture, are kept out of sight, and for all these there is substituted a supposed relation of universal fatherhood on the part of God, the faith of which is all that is required to make men safe and happy. Towards this is the drift of religious thought in these days, though only in a few instances has the position indicated been reached. Against this rationalised scheme of grace all would do well to be on their guard. It may for a season act as a sedative, but just as surely it will act as a deadly poison. Know God, and know sin as against Him, and attain to some acquaintance with the mystery of the cross, then the plausible sophistries of rationalistic teachers will fail to draw thee aside from “the old paths” in which the fathers walked with God.

3. Only a heart in which there is love to God can be duly affected by viewing sin as against Him. Only from such a heart can true repentance flow. Let your prayer then be, “Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.” □

---

### **Christian Doctrines Explained: 3. *The Holy Scriptures***

Q.3. *What do the scriptures principally teach?*

A. The scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.

**A** Christian knows God far better than he does any person. He is more sure of the character, mind and will of the Lord than he is even of those who are closest to him in this world. How can this be?

#### **Infallible**

In our Bible we have a truly great treasure, for “holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2Pet.1:21). We may be sure that it is God’s word. The Scriptures are infallible or incapable of error. Many clever men have attacked the Bible, trying to undermine its

credibility and authority, but their efforts are all in vain. As well might a man attempt to remove Mount Everest with a toothpick as destroy this impregnable Rock by his arguments.

In Genesis we have the accurate account of the universe's origin and man's purpose here. In Revelation we learn the final destiny of men. Above all, wherever he turns in the Bible, the believer finds Christ (Luke 24:44). Have you heard the voice of the Good Shepherd speaking to your soul (John 10:14,27)?

## **Unity**

The Bible contains sixty-six books but is one volume. It was written by forty men, but has one Author. It contains two Testaments but has one theme. That so many different men, separated by their background, culture and by many centuries, should yet teach the same things, is powerful evidence that their message is from God.

In Scripture there is poetry and prose, history and prophecy, parable and plain speech. Through all these forms God reveals Himself to us in a way we can understand. There are two great divisions we may make in the Bible's teaching.

## **Belief**

The Bible instructs us firstly in what we are to *believe*. What is God like? What has He done? How are sinners saved? There are as many answers to these important questions as there are religions in the world. There is but one place to obtain the *right* answers. "To the law and to the testimony" (Isa.8:20). Jesus said to sceptics of His own day who denied the resurrection of the body, "Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures" (Matt.22:29). He quoted them constantly Himself.

## **Duty**

The word of God also teaches us what we are to *do*. In the Bible we have the law and the gospel. God's law is summed up in Ten Commandments, but because we cannot keep them we have the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ. Faith and repentance are required of us, with the use of the 'means of grace'.

Let us study carefully the Bible's doctrines. Let us "hold fast the form of sound words" (2Tim.1:13). For ignorance of the Scriptures many are being "tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine" (Eph.4:14). But, "the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits" (Dan.11:32). □

## **The Reformation in Scotland: 3. Papal Persecution**

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

The report of the martyrdom of this noble youth spread rapidly throughout the kingdom, and men began to inquire why Patrick Hamilton was burned, and what were the opinions which he had held and maintained to the death. When these opinions were related, the public mind was not only excited, but enlightened also; and many began to call in question much which they had never before doubted, and to admit sacred truths with which they had till then been utterly unacquainted. Several even of the friars began to preach and defend doctrines savouring strongly of the Reformation, and, at the same time, to declaim loudly against the licentious and ungodly lives of the bishops and the chief men of the ecclesiastical body. The Archbishop and his familiars, alarmed and irritated, spoke of burning some, in order to terrify and silence others; but a bystander, with a mixture of shrewdness and mockery, warned the Archbishop to act warily, and if he burned any more, to burn them in cellars; “for the smoke,” said he, “of Mr Patrick Hamilton hath infected as many as it blew upon.” So rapidly, indeed did these reforming doctrines spread, that in a short time, Alexander Seaton, a Dominican friar, and confessor to the king, publicly preached in a strain directly subversive of the very essence of Popery. The following were his leading propositions:—That Christ Jesus is the end and perfection of the law,—that there is no sin where God’s law is not violated,—and that to satisfy for sins lies not in man’s power, but the remission thereof cometh by unfeigned repentance, and by faith apprehending God the Father, merciful in Jesus Christ his son. Such doctrines, publicly preached by a bold and eloquent man, occupying an influential position, gave dire offence to the corrupt priesthood, who accordingly called him to account for certain heretical opinions which he was accused of holding. His able defence, and the favourable regard of the king, which he then enjoyed, saved him for that time; but the Archbishop secretly influenced the young and licentious monarch against a man who was too faithful and severe a monitor; and Seaton, becoming aware of the secret machinations against him, fled to Berwick, and wrote to the king a remarkable letter, defending himself, retorting the charge against his enemies, and demanding the protection of just and impartial laws. This letter is given at length in Knox’s History of the Reformation, and is well deserving of

an attentive perusal, as containing the first attempt, by a Scottish reformer, to point out the duty of the civil magistrate respecting civil matters; asserting it to be the duty of the king, to which he is "bound by the law of God, to cause every man, in any case accused of his life, to have his just defence, and his accusers produced to conform to their own law." It will be observed, that while this asserts the power and the duty of the sovereign in what regards the life, and by consequence the property, of the subject, it leaves the accused person to be tried by the laws of that court which he is assumed to have offended, and by consequence to suffer, if convicted, the punishments which such court may be competent to inflict. To this letter, and the principle very ably stated in it, we direct the reader's attention the more, in consequence of the misrepresentations of party writers, who refer to it as admitting the right of the king to judge directly in matters of doctrine.

The fierce persecuting zeal of the Archbishop Beaton, and his council of prelates, abbots, priors, &c. was ineffectual. Many learned men, especially Gawin Logie, principal of St Leonard's, and John Winram, the sub-prior, either directly taught or secretly connived at the teaching of the reformed doctrines; while considerable numbers of the inferior orders of the clergy abandoned the errors of Popery, cast aside the impure and extravagant legends of saints, and became earnest preachers of the gospel. Fear and rage inflamed the hearts of the persecutors, and increased their cruelty. Norman Gourlay and David Straiton were condemned at Edinburgh; and, after being half-strangled, were cast into the flames, at Greenside, on the 17th August 1534. Henry Forrest was burned at St Andrews about the same time.

In February 1538, Robert Forrester, gentleman, Duncan Simpson, priest, Friar Kyllor, Friar Beveridge, and Dean Thomas Forrest, were condemned to death, and burned in one huge pile on the Castle Hill of Edinburgh. There is an incident connected with the last-named person, which deserves attention, as exhibiting the ignorance of the bishops. We give it in the words of Archbishop Spotswood. "This poor man, not long before, had been called before the Bishop of Dunkeld, his ordinary, for preaching every Sunday to his parishioners upon the epistles and gospels of the day, and desired to forbear, seeing his diligence that way brought him in suspicion of heresie. If he could find a *good gospel* or a *good epistle*, that made for the liberty of the holy Church, the bishop willed him to preach that to his people, and let the rest be. The honest man replying, *that he had read both the New Testament and the Old, and that he had never found an ill epistle or an ill gospel in any of them,*

---

the bishop said, *I thank God, I have lived well these many years, and never knew either the Old or the New: I content me with my portuise* [a book containing the daily service of the Roman Church] *and pontificall* [an office-book for bishops]; *and if you, Dean Thomas, leave not these fantasies, you will repent when you cannot mend it.* Dean Thomas answered, that he believed it was his duty to do what he did, and that he had laid his account with any danger that might follow.”

In the course of the same year, 1538, Jerom Russell, a friar, and a young man named Kennedy, of Ayr, were both burned at the same stake in Glasgow. At first, the heart of Kennedy, glowing with all the fresh feelings of youth, shrunk from the prospect of such an early and fearful death; but spiritual strength being graciously imparted to him in his hour of weakness, he fell on his knees, breathed forth his fervent thanks to God for the heavenly comfort he had received, and then exclaimed, “Now I defy death! Do what you please; I praise God, I am ready!” This scene made such an impression upon the Archbishop of Glasgow, that he would have spared the lives of the heroic martyrs, had he not been urged on to the dreadful deed by the bloody brotherhood around him. The two young sufferers perished together at the stake, exhorting each other to endure patiently their short agonies, for the sake of Him who died to destroy death, and to purchase for his followers eternal life; and their calm Christian fortitude awoke the deep sympathy of the pitying and admiring spectators.

Hitherto the persecution of the reformers had been carried on nominally under the authority of James Beaton, archbishop of St Andrews; who, however, was in his latter years greatly under the influence of his nephew, David Beaton, a man of great talents, still greater ambition, and immitigable cruelty of disposition. He had been educated in France; and after his return to Scotland, he was sent by the king to negotiate respecting the marriage of his own sovereign with a French princess. This was an object on which the hearts of the Scottish clergy were most earnestly bent, being apprehensive lest James should comply with the proposal of Henry VIII. of England to give to the Scottish monarch his own daughter in marriage. The deep designs of the clergy were successful. The minds of Henry and James were estranged from each other; and first a daughter of the French king, and, upon her early death, Mary of Guise, became successively united in marriage to the Scottish king. For these services the King of France prevailed upon the Pope to raise David Beaton to the rank of a cardinal, by which title he is hereafter to be designated. □

## **Precious Psalms: 3. I cried...He heard**

*“I cried unto the Lord with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill.” (Psalm 3:4)*

**D**o you ever pray? There is hardly anyone who has never said a prayer. You may have been taught to pray at home. At school you said the Lord’s Prayer. In church your ‘Amen’ is joined with the congregation. But do you really *pray*?

### **Spirit**

There is a great difference between saying a prayer and truly praying. Paul was once as other Pharisees, who “for pretence make long prayer” (Matt.23:14). After his conversion the change could be seen: “behold, he prayeth” (Acts 9:11). He had received the “spirit of grace and of supplications” (Zech.12:10). Without the Holy Spirit’s aid we would not know what we should pray for or how we should pray for it (Rom.8:26,27). David knew this divine help, as the psalm shows. What can we learn?

### **Burden**

David had a burden upon his heart. He was faced with a conspiracy against his throne – tragically it was led by his own son Absalom (2Sam.15:10-12). David took his trouble to the Lord, his soul cried to heaven. Perhaps a crisis at some point in your own life has driven you to call upon God for help. “Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee” (Psa.55:22).

### **Faith**

David prayed to a God in whom he trusted – “my God” (v.7). Many prayers are not accepted in heaven because those making them have not first been “accepted in the beloved,” Jesus Christ (Eph.1:6). They have never come to the throne of grace crying “God be merciful to me a sinner” (Luke 18:13), trusting in the precious blood to remove their guilt.

### **Confidence**

Though David faced many foes, after he prayed he lay down and slept (v.5)! Because God was his “shield” (v.3) he was confident that his enemies would not prevail. Are we also persuaded concerning God that, “if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us” (1John 5:14)? □

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

### *3. The Pigeon – Bird of Sacrifice*

*“And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons” (Luke 2:24)*

If you have studied birds at all, then you will have discovered one thing. It can be difficult to tell them apart! One species may look like another in shape, size and colour. Often the best way to identify a bird is to listen to its call or to observe it in flight. Even then it may not be easy to know which is which.

When we come to the birds of the Bible there are difficulties too! The names given to the different birds mentioned there do not always tell us exactly what they are. For instance, we read of the dove, the turtledove and the pigeon. These all belong to the one family, which has hundreds of species. Generally the larger species are called pigeons and the smaller species are known as doves.

You will be familiar with the wild pigeon which inhabits our towns and cities in great numbers, feeding on scraps and roosting on large buildings. The common or domestic pigeon has long been used as a source of food and has also been bred to produce a great variety of shape and colour. But perhaps the most famous pigeon breed is the carrier pigeon. With its remarkable ‘homing’ instinct and rapid flight it has been used to carry messages since Roman times. Today these homing pigeons are entered in races. When released they can find their way back to their lofts from a distance of 500 miles or more!

We can learn a great lesson from this bird. Whenever the pigeon is mentioned in the Bible it is always in connection with the same subject: *sacrifice*. Do you know what a ‘sacrifice’ is? A sacrifice is a life set apart from other uses and offered up to God. The message of the gospel is that for sinners like ourselves a special sacrifice was needed to save us.

God commanded man to offer sacrifices. The first sacrifice made was when animals were killed to provide coats of skins for Adam and Eve after their fall (Gen.3:21). Abel their son offered to God the best of his flock (Gen.4:4). Noah sacrificed animals and birds after he came out of the ark (Gen.8:20). Abraham prepared carcasses the day God made a covenant with him (Gen.15:9,10). Sacrifice then was at the centre of Israel’s worship.

Under the law of Moses there were various kinds of animal sacrifice offered by the people and their priests but they had one thing in common. They involved the shedding of blood. They represented a life given up in death on behalf of others. Together these sacrifices pictured the great sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ at Calvary and prepared Israel for his coming. What does the pigeon, the bird of sacrifice, teach us about Christ?

The pigeon was a *clean* bird according to the law. This meant that God allowed it to be used for food. Birds of prey, those that live by eating flesh, were forbidden. But not all birds which were fit for food were to be offered on the altar. Of all the clean birds only pigeons and doves were appointed for sacrifice. There is something attractive about their character which speaks of Christ. Are they not symbols of purity and gentleness? In his life Jesus was “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners” (Heb.7:26). He “offered himself without spot to God” (Heb.9:14).

Only the *poor* offered pigeons. Others would bring a lamb. When Mary and Joseph brought the child Jesus to the temple (to be presented to the Lord) they offered a sacrifice of birds (Luke 2:24). It revealed how poor they were. So Christ was born into a lowly home. It was part of that humiliation which was necessary for our salvation. He “made himself of no reputation”; he “humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Phil.2:7,8).

It was *young* pigeons that were sacrificed. Does that not remind you of our Lord? When Jesus began preaching and teaching publicly he was “about thirty years of age” (Luke 3:23). This was the age at which priests began their service in the temple. Yet only three years later the earthly ministry of our great High Priest was at an end: he was “cut off out of the land of the living” (Isa.53:8). But Daniel shows us that Christ died as a sacrifice for others: he was “cut off, but not for himself” (Dan.9:26).

*Two* pigeons were presented for sacrifice. There were two great offerings in Israel. In the sin offering the bird was killed and some of its blood sprinkled upon the altar (Lev.5:7-9). In the burnt offering the bird was killed and its carcass burned to ashes upon the altar (Lev.1:14-17). Christ has fulfilled both of these!

Jesus offered “one sacrifice for sins for ever” (Heb.10:12) when he died on the cross for his people. He became a sin offering, bearing their sins. He became a burnt offering, suffering in their place. Such was his devotion to God and his love to men. Jesus saves sinners by his own supreme sacrifice! Are *you* then trusting in his precious blood? □

---

**Gàidhlig: *Iarraibh Bainne Fìor-ghlan an Fhocal*  
(Seonaidh Mac ‘ill Eathainn)**

---

Nach prìiseil da riireabh a chomhairle tha Peadair a cuir a’ dh’ionnsaidh na eaglaise a chum is gum fàs I anns a chreidimh. Tha e togail fa ‘r comhair gu bheil sinn mar naoidheanan air ‘ur n’ùr-bhreith agus air an aobhar sin a’ cuir feum air a’ bhi beathachadh air an àon ni tha cudromach agus nach eil ri fhaotainn ach ann am focal an Tighearna agus sin tre Iosa Crìosd ‘ur Slanuighear. Feumaidh sinn a’ thuigsinn gur e Crìosd a mhain am bunait air a’bheil ‘ur creidimh air a’thogail agus gur E ‘ur dochas airson ‘ur dachaigh nèamhaidh. Tuigidh gach àon againn sìmplidheachd na briathran a tha Peadair a’cleachdadh oir tha sinn mìn-èòlach gur e am bainne a’ mhainn a dh’fheumas naoidhean mar bhiadh.

Tha sinn air a’ bhi faicinn anns na seachdainean mu dheireadh na h-uain agus na làoigh air am breith agus tha e na thlachd ro mhòr dhuinn a’ bhi ga faicinn ri cleasachd de gach sèorsa air feadh nan pairceanan. Chi sinn cho cudromach ‘sa tha am bainne dhoibhsan aig àm am breith agus gu cinnteach nach bi iad bèo as èugmhais. Tha mise agus thusa mar seo gu spioradail. Cha dean sinne as èugmhais focal an Tighearna; ‘s e ‘ur biadh agus ‘ur suspainn. Tha am Focal na neart dhuinn cuideachd agus ‘s e a’ chumas sinn air an t-slighe. ‘S e a’chuireas soills air ‘ur slighe dhuinn a’chum is gluaseamaid anns an t-solus agus nach bi sinn ri tuisleachadh mar anns an dorchadas.

Tha am bainne air a’shàmhladh le Peadair chum is gum faic an neach a tha air ùr-bhreith ann an Crìosd gum bi e a’ tòiseachadh leis a ni a tha gu bhi feumail agus bunaiteach dha is gum fàs e ann an gràs agus ann an èolas ar Tighearn’ agus ‘ur Slanuighear Iosa Crìosd. (2 Peadair 3:18) Tha an sgriobtuir ag innse dhuinn ann an ait’ eile: “Gu fìrinneach tha mi ag ràdh sibh, Mur iompaichear sibh, agus mur bi sibh mar leanabanaibh nach teid sibh a steach do rìoghachd nèimh”. (Mata 18:3) Tha sinn ri mòran fhòghlam air slighe na naomhachd agus bhiodh e iomchuidh gum bitheamaid ri greimeachadh air an fhiosrachadh a tha na bhunait anns a chreidimh; eadhon mar leanaban. Mar na h-ùain agus na làoigh thig an latha anns am bi sinn a’ cuir feum air biadh is treise agus nach math gu bheil gach ni tha sinn ri cuir feum air againn anns an Fhocal. Thuirt an salmaidh:

Tha d’fhocail bunaiteach gu bràth,  
‘s na nèamhaibh àrd’, a Dhe:

Tha d’fhirinn is do thairisneachd  
buan-mhaireannach gach re:

Salm 119:89-90

□

---

## **Congregational News**

### **Magazine**

We are pleased that copies of 'Grace & Truth' are taken by many beyond our congregation. May the magazine be a blessing to all who read it.

### **Fellowships**

We hold a fellowship in the manse usually after the evening service on the second Sabbath of each month. The meetings begin at 8.00pm and all are welcome. The subject for the year is 'The Worship of God'. In May we hope to look at New Testament Worship; in June we hope to look at Prayer. Further details may be found on the website.

### **Pulpit Supply**

The minister and his wife expect to be away during the month of June. The Sabbath Services on 8th & 15th June and the Prayer Meetings on 4th, 11th & 18th June are due to be conducted by the Rev. Macaulay Macleod.

### **Website**

It is encouraging to know that our website has been of interest and help to those who have visited it. As well as reading useful information about our congregation and denomination visitors may download the sermons preached at our services and also back-issues of the magazine. The site is found at: [www.northuistandgrimsayfcc.org.uk](http://www.northuistandgrimsayfcc.org.uk)

### **Prayer**

We encourage you to remember in prayer those of our number who have undergone surgery in recent days and months. We are thankful to the Lord for signs of progress in their recovery. Please continue to pray also for the Lord's blessing upon our services, that the word preached would bear fruit in those who hear it and that others would come under the sound of the gospel.

The General Assembly of our Church is due to take place in Liberton Kirk, Edinburgh from Monday 19th to Thursday 22nd May. Let us bring the deliberations of the Assembly before the Lord, that what is debated and decided may be according to His perfect mind and will. We trust that the Moderator-Designate, the Rev. John Keddie, will be upheld in his duties during the Assembly. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Psa.46:1). □

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

*Minister:* Rev. David M. Blunt

Free Church Manse, Knockintorran, Isle of North Uist, HS6 5ED

Tel. 01876 510305

Email: davidblunt@fccontinuing.org

*Session Clerk:* Mr. John Maclean

“Aignish”, Knockline, Isle of North Uist, HS6 5DT

Tel. 01876 510351

Email: seonaidhhs@tiscali.co.uk

*Clerk to Deacons' Court:* Mr. John Maclean

“Aignish”, Knockline, Isle of North Uist, HS6 5DT

Tel. 01876 510351

Email: seonaidhhs@tiscali.co.uk

*Congregational Treasurer:* Mr. Lachlan M. MacLeod

11 Strumore, Lochmaddy, Isle of North Uist, HS6 5AG

Tel. 01876 500297

Email: MacLeodLM@aol.com

*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.

Issued by the Kirk Session of  
North Uist & Grimsay Free Church of Scotland (Continuing)