

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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July-August 2008

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Minister's Message: A New Creature

One of the ways in which the Bible shows itself to be the inspired Word of God is that it deals so plainly and thoroughly with the most important issues facing mankind. Even in a single chapter we may learn much about life, death and beyond.

One of the great portions of the New Testament is Second Corinthians Chapter Five. There the apostle Paul tells us that believers, in common with others, must experience physical death. Our "earthly house" is soon to be "dissolved" (v.1). The tie which binds our body and soul together will one day be loosed and our spirit will return to God who gave it. Yet the prospect does not fill the child of God with fear. Instead, knowing that his sins have been pardoned in the blood of Christ, he "groans" inwardly, longing eagerly and waiting confidently for that day when he shall depart his body and enter his heavenly home, to be present with his beloved Redeemer (vv.2-8).

Make no mistake, death *is* to be feared if our sins are not forgiven: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (v.10). It was a knowledge of how fearful is the divine wrath against sin that drove the apostles on in their labours to bring their fellow-sinners to repentance (v.11).

If physically we experience life followed by death then spiritually it is the other way round. We are all born into this world "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph.2:1). Because His people were "dead" Christ died in order that they might live – live unto Him (vv.14,15). To be truly converted means to be regenerated or made spiritually alive. To such God grants "the earnest of the Spirit" (v.5) as a token that they belong to Jesus Christ and have a title to the heavenly glory.

Regeneration is a work of God. He puts a new principle in the souls of His people whereby they are made holy. This happens through a union with Christ, the Saviour who has life in Himself and quickens whom He will (John 5:21,26). Faith, repentance and indeed all the graces of the Christian spring from the life of regeneration.

True Christians are "new creatures" or new creations (v.17). This indicates a most profound change! Regeneration is like the first creation in a way. It too is performed in conjunction with the word of God: "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2Cor.4:6). We remain the same persons

of course, we are still flesh and blood creatures, but our souls are renewed. This is essential if we are to enjoy eternal life, for “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3).

Are all things become new to you? Has the Spirit of God so worked in you that you have the new thoughts, desires, joys and hopes of a believer? Or are you still consumed by the old, weary and worn things of a sinful, passing world? This is the test of whether the gospel has been blessed to us. Seek the Saviour who promises to His own that they shall enjoy a more abundant life – or else you must perish eternally. □

Helps to Devotion (Rev. James Smith)

ASSURANCE. “*Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation*” (Psalm 35:3)

That the Lord does assure many of his people of their salvation, few will be prepared to deny; and that the desire to possess and enjoy this blessing is felt by all who are taught of God, no experienced Christian will question. Indeed, we cannot understand how any one can be really convinced of his danger, and realise the desert of sin, without wishing to possess an unquestionable evidence of deliverance from it. By his presence in the soul, by the application of his word, and by the witness of the Spirit in the heart, he does in a most satisfactory way assure the believer that he is saved. My soul, art thou saved? Hast thou the witness in thyself that thy sins are pardoned, and that thou hast passed from death unto life? O Lord, seeing thou dost indulge poor sinners with a knowledge of their salvation and an assurance of thy love, condescend, in thine infinite mercy, to say unto my soul, “I am thy salvation.” Manifest thyself to me as my God; assure me of an interest in thy love, and so banish all my doubts, fears, and painful misgivings. I wish to be thine,—wholly, entirely, and for ever thine; and to devote myself, body, soul, and spirit, to thy service. I desire most heartily to be holy; and as confidence in thy love lies at the very root of holiness, I beseech thee to give me that confidence, and enable me with comfort to say, “Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation.” Let me have the witness in myself, not only that thy Word is true, but that I am interested in its gracious promises and glorious privileges. O send, send thy Spirit to bear witness with my spirit that I am born of God, and meet for glory! □

Parables of Jesus: 4. New Wine in New Bottles

“Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved.” (Matthew 9:17)

This parable has a similar lesson to the one in the previous verse. It teaches very clearly the need we sinners have of a saving change by the power of the Holy Spirit. We preach the gospel with a desire of seeing such a work of God in many lives.

Old Bottles

In Palestine in Bible times bottles were made of whole goatskins. In them water, milk and other liquids were kept. A small bottle provided refreshing water for a traveller on the road. Bottles large enough to supply the needs of a whole family were carried upon the back. Leather is a tough material and if looked after will last for many years. Eventually though it will become weak and split apart, especially in a hot, dry climate.

God made man in His own image, upright and able to keep all His commandments (Ecc.7:29). In his original state man enjoyed the presence of God. Then man destroyed himself by his fall into sin. He lost all righteousness, became corrupt, and is in danger of perishing eternally. Divine wrath is upon him. He is no longer a fit vessel for communion with God.

New Wine

In wine which has recently come from the grape the process of fermentation continues. A living organism called yeast or leaven is at work within, giving the wine its special quality. New wine therefore is ‘lively’ and full of potential.

Jesus Christ is eternal life to perishing sinners. He said: “I am the way, the truth, and *the life*: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6). By His perfect obedience as Mediator Christ has merited salvation for sinners. The gospel is the promise of the Holy Spirit and saving grace. What a wonderful difference the Spirit of life makes to us! In the place of the wicked works of our flesh He produces the “new wine” of “love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance” (Gal.5:22,23).

New Bottles

Because of its lively character new wine was never stored in old bottles. The result would be obvious. The tired old skins would burst under the pressure and the contents would go to waste. *New* skins were needed. These were strong and flexible enough to contain the new wine.

It is easy for a religion of grace to decline into one of works, as in Israel by the time of Christ. God gave His law as a “schoolmaster” to lead sinners to Christ for justification by faith (Gal.3:24), but the Jews preferred their own righteousness to His (Rom.10:3,4). They were “old bottles” under an old covenant of symbolic sacrifices and ordinances which was ready to vanish away. They needed to look beyond the shadows to the substance. “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2Cor.5:17). Are we in Him? □

Sermon: *The Glorious and Mighty Lord* (Rev. Lachlan Mackenzie)

(A lecture on Psalm 110)

This Psalm, which was penned by the royal Psalmist, is a prophecy concerning the glorious Messiah who was to be King David’s Son and Lord. Whatever perverse interpretations the modern Jews give to the words, it is certain they cannot with any propriety be applied to any but the Messiah. David was filled with the Spirit of God when he wrote this Psalm. He was predecessor to the Messiah and he was a rich and powerful monarch. Now we know that parents and ancestors are superior to the descendants. There is a respect due from the children to parents and progenitors whether near or more remote. The Messiah, then, as David’s Son, if He was no more than man, should acknowledge David for His superior. But David in the Spirit calls Him Lord, and, if so, He must have a nature superior to David, and this proves the Divinity of the King Messiah. This Psalm speaks of the Kingdom, priesthood, and triumph of our Lord. I shall attempt to explain the words and conclude with practical observations by way of improvement.

Verse 1.—“*The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.*”

This is the address of the Father to the second Person of the glorious

trinity who was afterwards to assume the human nature. After finishing the great work of man's redemption, He rose from the dead, ascended into heaven, and now sitteth at the right hand of God. His human nature is highly exalted above all principality and power, and He now waits till all His enemies are made His footstool. And this takes place by degrees. All the enemies of God and of His Christ have been hitherto destroyed, and put to shame. Such as oppose the Gospel, whether as open enemies or as secret traitors, are seen to pay for it here often. Except they repent, they will become the footstool of Christ. If they become penitents they shall willingly bow at the footstool of His grace to receive His pardon. And if they perish in their rebellion they shall be crushed by the iron rod of His justice and lick the dust and fall before His power. Christ is now at the right hand of God. This phrase shows us the glory to which He is exalted, who was once in the lowest state of humiliation and suffering. From the height of His glory He looks down and smiles at the impotent attempts of His enemies. He sees that their destruction is near. The very means and weapons they employ against His interest and His cause or His people will come to nothing. Their schemes will fall with confusion upon their own heads. No weapon formed against His Church shall prosper, and every design formed against any of His people shall fall to the ground. The open enemies of Christ's Kingdom have been destroyed. Where are now the Assyrian, Babylonian, and Roman Empires? They are fallen like the baseless fabric of a vision. His first enemies have been destroyed. Ahithophel, Judas, and Simon Magus have come to their deserved end. What has been the fate of all the infidel tribe that wrote against Christianity? They fell into crimes suitable to their principles. They lived like brutes, died in despair, and now their memory rots. Others of them died in awful insensibility and were past conviction. They were given up by God to strong delusion. And as to the secret enemies of Christ under the Gospel, they professed to be His friends and to forward His Kingdom, but they proved themselves to be friends of Mammon. After heaping up the world by iniquity, when they came to the bed of death, they were objects of horror. Their ill-gotten gain was like a fire in their consciences, and that Saviour whom they sold for silver and gold, for lands and cattle, frowned upon them at the judgment seat. The silver which they gathered could not procure relief in the day of wrath, and the people of God whose company they avoided could not put any oil in their vessels when at the point of death. The terror of their souls is a prelude to what is to follow. They must yield to

the power of Christ though they had no relish for His Gospel.

Verse 2.—*“The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Sion: rule Thou in the midst of thine enemies.”*

The sceptre is an emblem of royal authority and power. Now we know that the Gospel sounded from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth. It is the power of God unto salvation to all that believe. This is the blessed means by which He subdues all nations to the obedience of faith. The Gospel began at Jerusalem, and this is a proof that Jesus Christ is the glorious Person here spoken of. And He was to rule in the midst of His enemies. In fact, this has happened since the commencement of the Gospel. It shines less or more among most nations upon earth. It is surrounded by enemies, and He rules in the heart of them. Surrounding nations that do not believe have a heart-hatred to the Gospel. It opposes their lusts and their superstitions, and this makes them refuse to give it entertainment. The Gospel is an enemy to sin of every kind, otherwise it had been universally received. It is a comfortable doctrine and a benign scheme to recover lost sinners. But as it is an enemy to sin, Satan and the lusts of men oppose it with all their might. But Christ rules in the midst of His enemies, for He has a people in the midst of Pagans, idolaters and Mohammedans. And as to the nations that profess a nominal subjection to Christ, He rules also in the heart of His enemies. People that hear the Gospel are faulty, for they are as great enemies as His professed opponents. They hate the light because their deeds are evil. But He rules in the midst of them in the very heart of His enemies. In a certain sense Christ rules in the consciences of wicked men. Though the Gospel does not gain their love, the purity of the doctrine sometimes attracts their veneration and fear. They may have light in their heads though they have poison in their hearts. The Word which galls and troubles them keeps them from many sins till they harden themselves past feeling. Judas for a while was restrained by the Gospel from the sin of covetousness, but afterwards he showed himself in his proper colours. And there are some at first restrained from their lusts and sins by wholesome doctrine, who afterwards break out furiously and become almost incarnate devils. They return to their lusts, and are mad upon their idols. They break every hedge and restraint, and come at their object right or wrong. But Christ rules in the midst of His enemies in spite of them. Though their conscience galls them when they hear their sins and their picture drawn to the life, they do not amend. Their hearts are filled with

enmity, and they hear with perfect hatred. The covetous Pharisees heard Christ and derided Him, and afterwards contrived His death. But though sinners are not converted, they may be convinced in spite or themselves. The word of Christ is their perfect torment; it is a fire in their consciences, and will make them uneasy.

Verse 3.—*“Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.”*

In the foregoing verses we are told that His enemies must yield to His superior power, for He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords. But here we learn that he has a people over whom He rules. And the account or description we have of them is grand and glorious. They follow Him willingly; they were made willing in the day of His power, having got a sight of His glory, and therefore they follow Him. They are adorned with all the beauties of holiness, with all the armour necessary for the spiritual warfare. They are soldiers, and they do not stumble or go over to the camp of the enemy. They proceed in their course in battle array; they keep their ranks and handle their arms. And though they are beautiful they are terrible, like an army with banners. Wicked men and devils are afraid of good Christians. They are beautiful in the sight of God. The graces of the Spirit are the different pieces of armour by which the willing people are adorned. And they are a great multitude whom no man can number, even like the drops of dew from the womb of the morning. The light of the Gospel is like the morning in comparison of the night of the Mosaic dispensation. And it is night with every sinner till the morning light visits his soul and produces the softening dew that will refresh his soul and make him bring forth fruit unto God. As the fresh morning is the cause of the dew, in like manner every morning that shines upon his soul produces the dew. It renews their age like the eagle, and they bring forth fruit into age, and are like a green olive tree in the House of God. They are beautiful and fruitful, and whether the Christian is fourteen or four score, he is always in the beauty and vigour of youth. For Christ has the dew of youth, and is always ready to bestow it on His willing people who walk before Him continually in the beauties of holiness.

Verse 4.—*“The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.”*

When the Psalmist describes the power and glory of Christ's Kingdom

he makes use of plain though prophetic language. But when he speaks of His Priesthood he borrows very strong language indeed. When the Son of God was incarnate He had a right to the Kingdom – to all power in heaven and earth. When the Man Christ Jesus was united as the second person of the ever blessed and glorious Trinity He had a right to all treasures of grace and glory by virtue of that union. And this truth we can naturally believe. If we believe the one we are prepared to believe the other. But the truths that are connected with the priesthood of Christ are not so easy of belief. And therefore the Psalmist introduces it with the oath of God. The priest was to offer sacrifice and to bless the people. Christ was to be a priest, not according to the order of Aaron, but of Melchizedek. Now, Melchizedek was greater than Abraham. Consequently he was greater than any priest of the time of Aaron. Melchizedek was a type of Christ. His descent is not reckoned, and he was without beginning of days or end of life. In this respect he was a type of the Priesthood of Christ. Now, the sacrifice our great High Priest offered was Himself. It was not easy to believe that such an innocent, such a glorious Person as the Son of God could suffer. But our case required it. Nothing but a spotless victim, an offering of infinite dignity, would answer our purpose. And he was to continue for ever. We do not read that Melchizedek had a predecessor or successor in his priesthood. Now, Christ's priesthood was of the order of Melchizedek. He was of the tribe of Judah and not of Levi. There was no priest before Him, and none succeeds Him. And this shows us what opinion to form of those who call themselves priests. The New Testament acknowledges no priest or high priest but Jesus Christ. His sacrifice was complete, and He ever liveth to make intercession for us. We may, therefore, trust our concerns in his hand, for He is able to save to the uttermost.

Verse 5.—*“The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath.”*

One of the names of our Redeemer is the Prince of Peace, and the Gospel makes peace between God and men and between one man and another. But we learn here the danger to which the enemies of the Gospel expose themselves. When people oppose the Gospel it rouses the wrath of God against them. His enemies, however powerful, cannot stand before Him. he strikes through kings in the day of His wrath. The Roman Empire opposed and persecuted the Gospel. God stirred up other nations against that power, and raised them up by His providence

to avenge His quarrel. And it happens so to this day, and will wherever the Gospel is opposed, slighted, or refused. And when kings will suffer, no doubt their people will suffer with them, for both have the guilt and will feel the punishment.

Verse 6.—*“He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill the places with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries.”*

One character of Messiah is that He will not judge after the sight of His eyes, nor reprove after the hearing of His ears. We have no other way of judging, and, therefore, may be often deceived and give wrong judgment. We do not know the clever tricks of an acute, deep, worldly man. He can turn himself into various shapes according to the people he has to deal with. When he meets the great he can flatter, cajole, and cringe to them. And if he finds it necessary he has a bribe at their service to blind their eyes. He can cast a mist upon the truth, and has an art peculiar to himself of making black appear white. And the worst or it is, he can get people of his own kind to support his pretensions. And as he cringes to the great he is very rude and insolent to the poor if they happen to oppose his villainous tricks. But though he can deceive and impose upon men, the Saviour will detect all his arts and expose him at last to the contempt he deserved. The schemes he lays in private will be heard on the housetops. We are told here not only that He will judge among the heathen, but that He will fill places with dead bodies. And this will happen in two views.

1. He will send temporal judgments, great or small, and thus bring to light the secret practices.

2. But, again, He will send spiritual judgments.

His word will pierce the consciences of sinners, and the arrows of conviction will fix in the hearts of the king's enemies. And thus they shall fall as dead bodies before the great Conqueror. He will likewise judge among the heathen by defeating the schemes of the wicked and making them fall upon their own heads. Thus He defeated the scheme of Ahithophel. And as a dead body has a nauseous scent and stench, the secret arts of the wicked when brought to light by the just providence of God will cause their memory to rot. And in this way He shall wound even the heads over many countries. He shall wound Satan by the preaching of His Gospel, and destroy sin of every kind. He shall wound

Antichrist. He shall wound all the enemies of His glory. He shall trample upon the greatest enemies, and, if so, surely meaner adversaries have great cause to tremble at the prospect of his day of vengeance.

Verse 7.—*“He shall drink of the brook in the way: therefore shall he lift up the head.”*

The general run of commentators are of opinion that by drinking of the brook in the way is meant His sufferings unto death. And, indeed, the Apostle informs us that His exaltation to the right hand of God is the reward of His sufferings. Others, however, think that this phrase signifies that fulness of grace by which the human nature of Christ was constantly supplied. There can be no harm in combining the two opinions, as they are both evidently founded on truth. The human nature of Christ was not left alone to finish the astonishing work of Redemption. It was constantly supplied from the fulness of God which dwelt, and will dwell, in Him bodily for ever. It was the Divine nature that gave infinite dignity to the sufferings of Christ, and it is the Divine nature this day that puts efficacy in His intercession as our Mediator. He is carrying on the war and the interest of His Church and people daily. His prevailing intercession supports His people, and either converts or restrains His enemies. He is still going forth as a mighty Conqueror, and still drinks of the brook of uncreated strength. And this He will continue to do till all His enemies are conquered. And though our Lord is gloriously exalted, He will be still more gloriously exalted when the Kingdom is delivered up to the Father, and God shall be all in all.

Having thus endeavoured to explain the words, I shall make some practical inferences.

1. If Christ waiteth till all His enemies are made His footstool, his people ought to do the same; Christ and His people have the same enemies. Consequently, His people's enemies will be made their footstool. Enemies in their pride and wantonness of their hearts may threaten. They may read their fate in Isaiah 22:18,19. He that meddles with the people of God toucheth the apple of His eye. A thief who stole the cow of a good man when engaged in prayer, a little before his death, regretted this more than all his sins. And I ask you, do you think that God is blind to the injuries done to His people when the wicked take

advantage of the very time they serve God? Let them wait with patience, for God will support their righteous cause.

2. As His people are made willing in a day of His power, we ought to examine ourselves. Such as are made willing forsake all their sins, and are gradually renewed after the Divine image. They have pleasure in the duties of religion, and live in the habitual preparation for the joys of Heaven. They are generally kept to their duty, not by the scourge of the law, but by the genuine spirit of the Gospel. Those who perform no duty but what they must, or who are hot upon solemn occasions, show that they are hypocrites or slaves, not sons.

3. Lastly, is Christ a Priest and intercessor? We should put our cause in His hands. Have we done so? Do we trust our souls to Him, and can we live at all adventures? If we trust our souls and all that we possess to Him we shall take care that we possess nothing by iniquity. He is not the Minister of Sin. He saves His people from sin, and it is for this purpose they employ Him. And as sure as he drank of the brook and lifted up the Head, all His true followers and willing people will do the same. God bless you.—AMEN. □

Christian Doctrines Explained: 4. God

Q.4. *What is God?*

A. God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.

The first great branch of the Bible's teaching concerns God. What should we believe about Him?

God Is

We are to believe that God *is*. 'Atheists' who deny the existence of God are fools (Psa.14:1). 'Agnostics' who believe that God *may* exist are wrong. The universe tells of its designer and maker (Psa.19:1,2). Sadly many say they believe in God but live otherwise. "They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him" (Tit.1:16). The first lesson is: "he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb.11:6).

God Is a Spirit

God exists as a Spirit, invisible. When Scripture speaks of His eyes, ears, mouth or hands it is using figures, telling us truths about God that we could not otherwise understand. God cannot be known by the ordinary senses. He can only be known by faith. In this way Moses saw the invisible God (Heb.11:27).

God Is a Perfect Spirit

God is a perfect Spirit and quite unlike man in certain ways. He is *infinite*. He has no limits. He fills every space and is present in every place. “Do not I fill heaven and earth?” (Jer.23:24). He is *eternal*. Unlike animals or men God has neither beginning nor end; “from everlasting to everlasting thou art God” (Psa.90:2). He is *unchangeable*. The world and man change with time; God says, “I change not” (Mal.3:6).

God Is a Perfect Spirit in Every Way

There are other divine perfections which have a reflection in man:

His *being*. God revealed to Moses His special name: “I AM THAT I AM” (Exod.3:14). He exists by Himself, independent of everything; we are dependent on Him for everything.

His *wisdom*. Some men are clever, few are wise. We make mistakes, change our ideas, even forget our thoughts. God’s wisdom is His knowing all things at once and directing them to the best ends.

His *power*. There are things we wish to do but cannot. God is able to do all He desires. He said “Is any thing too hard for the Lord?” when He promised Abraham and Sarah a son in their old age (Gen.18:14).

His *holiness*. “God is light, and in him is no darkness at all” (1John 1:5). He is so pure that He “cannot be tempted with evil” (Jam.1:13). We are all sinners and ‘ungodly’.

His *justice*. God is righteous, upright in His character and actions. He will always punish sin and reward good. He has given us just laws which teach us His ways.

His *goodness*. Jesus said, “there is none good but one, that is, God” (Matt.19:17). His nature is goodness. He is wholly good and the source of any good found in man.

His *truth*. Some things God cannot do. “It is impossible for God to lie” (Heb.6:18). There are no falsehoods with Him, only faithfulness. He is true to Himself and His Word.

Do we know this great God? □

The Reformation in Scotland: 4. Cardinal Beaton

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

Upon the death of James Beaton, in the year 1539, the Cardinal succeeded him in the archbishopric of St Andrews, and very speedily gave proof of his determination to employ still sharper measures for the extermination of the reformers and their tenets. He called together all his adherents of the clerical body, together with a considerable number of the nobility, to St Andrews; and there, presiding in state, proceeded to declare the dangers to which the Church was exposed from the prevalence of heresy, which, he said, found too much countenance even at court, and the necessity of instituting still more rigorous measures for the suppression of heresy. He then named Sir John Borthwick as infected with heretical opinions, and cited him to appear and answer to the charge. But Borthwick, having been aware of his danger, had fled to England; and not appearing when summoned, was condemned in absence, and burnt in effigy, in May 1540, both at St Andrews and Edinburgh. The king was at that time thought to be favourably disposed towards the reformers, influenced probably, by his friendship for Sir David Lindsay, whose poetical genius attracted the admiration of the youthful monarch, himself possessing a taste and somewhat of a talent for poetry. But matters of grave political importance and civil dissensions intervened, turning aside the king's favour, and directing the active energies of the Cardinal into another channel.

Allusion has been already made to the wish of Henry VIII. to form an alliance with James V., by offering to him his daughter in marriage. Against this the Cardinal and the whole clergy of the kingdom remonstrated in the strongest terms. They were afraid the influence and example of Henry might induce James to favour the Reformation, in which case their power and wealth must inevitably perish. They pointed out to James the danger of his being imprisoned, as his ancestor James I. had been, should he venture into England; and they offered to provide him funds for the support of an army, should war arise in consequence of his refusing to hold an interview with Henry. The reader of Scottish history must be well aware that the reign of James V. was one continued contest between the king and the nobility. His first great conflict was with the house of Douglas, which he succeeded in overthrowing, after a protracted and dubious struggle. Pursuing what had been the policy of the race of

Stuart, especially since the time of James I., the king strove to reduce the power of the great feudal barons; and this induced him to yield more readily to the persuasions of the clergy than he might otherwise have done, and also to promote unworthy favourites to those stations of dignity and power which the nobility were accustomed to regard as their birthright. But though the intrigues of the clergy might sway the councils of the king, they could do him little service in the field. The wars with England produced but a series of disgraceful defeats, the nobles allowing themselves to be routed and taken prisoners by mere handfuls of their antagonists. These disastrous events broke the heart of the unhappy monarch, who died at Falkland on the 14th day of December 1542, leaving the shattered sovereignty to his infant daughter, the ill-fated Mary, who was born seven days before his death.

Both Knox and Spotswood assert that Cardinal Beaton suborned a priest, called Henry Balfour, to forge a document purporting to be the will of the king, in which the Cardinal, and the Earls of Huntly, Argyle, and Murray, were appointed governors of the kingdom during the minority of the infant queen. But this daring attempt was defeated in a meeting of the chief nobility at Edinburgh; and James Hamilton, earl of Arran, next heir to the crown, was appointed regent and governor of the kingdom.

The defeat of the Cardinal, and the appointment of Arran to the regency, were productive of great advantage to the cause of the Reformation. After the king's death, there was found a list, which had been furnished to him by the Cardinal, containing the names of some hundreds of persons of various ranks, and possessed of property and wealth, whom they denounced as heretics, and by whose forfeited riches the coffers of the king might, according to their suggestion, be easily replenished. The knowledge of this nefarious scheme tended not a little to bring odium on the Cardinal and his party, and to strengthen the cause of their opponents. The Regent Arran had also been for some time favourable to the Reformation, to which the lamented death of his relative the martyr Patrick Hamilton, may easily be thought to have greatly contributed. In a parliament held the same year, 1542, an act was passed, declaring it lawful for all to read the Scriptures in their native language. Against the passing of this act the Cardinal and the bishops strove with all the energy of fury and despair, but strove in vain. The effect was instantaneous and great. Copies of the sacred volume, which had been most carefully concealed, and perused with secrecy and in fear, were now to be seen, as Knox says, lying on every gentleman's table, and the New Testament, especially, borne about in almost every person's hands. For a time the Regent gave direct encouragement to the Reformation, and

employed as his own chaplains Thomas Guillaume or Williams, and John Rough, both zealous and faithful preachers of the reformed doctrines. And, as if for the purpose of settling the Reformation upon a firm and extensive basis, a treaty was concluded with Henry VIII. for a contract of marriage between his son Edward and the infant Queen of Scotland.

So far all seemed prosperous; but a great reverse was at hand. The Regent, though a plausible, was a weak and fickle man, liable at all times to be wrought upon and biassed by those of greater decision and energy of character. With this, his constitutional failing, the wily Cardinal was well acquainted; and, to avail himself of it, invited from France, John Hamilton, abbot of Paisley, the Regent's own illegitimate brother, and David Panter, afterwards bishop of Ross, two able and designing men, by whose influence he hoped to accomplish his design. Too well did they succeed in their subtle enterprise. In a short time the Regent's mind became so much alienated from the reformers, that his chaplains were under the necessity of withdrawing from court to save their lives; Williams retiring to England, and Rough to Kyle. Sir David Lindsay, Kirkaldy of Grange, and other gentlemen who favoured the reforming party, were also obliged to retire; and the Regent became completely the tool of the Cardinal and the popish faction. He accordingly broke off the agreement with England, abjured the reformed religion, and entered heartily into the great master-scheme of the Cardinal, to give the young queen in marriage to the Dauphin of France.

Cardinal Beaton having thus recovered his ascendancy in the government of the kingdom, renewed his efforts to suppress the Reformation, by means of the most merciless and exterminating persecution. He began his barbarous career at Perth, where five men and one woman were brought before him, accused of heresy. They were tried, condemned, and sentence of death passed upon them,—the men to be hanged, the woman to be drowned. The case of the poor woman, named Helen Stark, deserves to be more particularly recorded. She was the wife of the above-mentioned men, and had recently given birth to a child. During the anguish of her travail, she had been urged by her female assistant to pray to the Virgin Mary, and had answered that she would only pray to God, in the name of Jesus Christ. For this she was accused of heresy, and condemned to die. On the day of execution she earnestly requested that she might die along with her husband. Her pathetic appeal was harshly refused; but she accompanied him to the fatal spot, bearing her infant in her arms, and exhorting her husband to patience and constancy in the cause of Christ. He was murdered before her eyes; and as soon as life had left his quivering frame, she was dragged to a pool of

water close at hand, with her babe still clinging to her bosom. When she had withdrawn her precious infant from its last enjoyment of nature's resting-place and nature's nourishment, and consigned it to the charge of a pitying neighbour, and to the care of Him who is the orphan's stay, she felt that for her the bitterness of death was past, and, being cast into the whelming waters, died without a struggle, full of the steady fortitude and the heavenly comfort of a Christian martyr.

Not satisfied with these victims, the Cardinal pursued his bloody circuit through Angus and Mearns, inflicting upon some fines, upon others imprisonment, and persecuting others to the death, taking with him the feeble Regent, that he might have the appearance of his sanction to the perpetration of these cruel deeds. □

Precious Psalms: 4. The Face of God

“There be many that say, Who will shew us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.” (Psalm 4:6)

In a day when so many despair of a better future it is good to know where to go and what to do that we might obtain lasting blessings. This the psalmist knew. All around him were poor souls who had lost their faith in politicians and priests to improve their lot in life. David however looked upward. He sought the face of God.

Revealing

The countenance or face of a person is very important. It helps to give a man his individual identity, for no two faces are exactly alike. It is also very revealing about a person's feelings, moods and attitudes. Often it is unnecessary that someone speaks to us in words: we know what is on his mind and in his heart by the expression on his face.

In the Bible the face or countenance of God indicates the *attitude* which He takes to men. His face is either toward men (Psa.119:135) or set against them (Psa.34:16). We may enjoy His favour or His wrath.

Insincere

Politicians are often ‘all smiles’ – especially if they are looking for our support. They promise peace and safety and many other things they cannot deliver. Churchmen too may be insincere, preaching a ‘gospel’ of social and economic change as though we could restore paradise here.

The blessings we need though are not so much health and wealth but forgiveness of sins, a new heart and eternal life.

Favour

To enjoy the favour of God we must be in Christ. In our unconverted state we experience the 'frown' of the Almighty, His displeasure at our sin. Repenting and believing in Jesus we know the 'smile' of God's face as He is reconciled to us. Our lives are blessed as we avoid sin and "walk in the light" of God's countenance (Psa.89:15). In all our need we should call upon the Lord, for "in his favour is life" (Psa.30:5). □

For Young People: *Birds of the Bible*

4. The Vulture – Bird of Faith

"There is a path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture's eye hath not seen" (Job 28:7)

I am sure you are aware of the great variety of character among our human race. There are physical differences and there are also many differences of temperament and behaviour. We tend to find some people appealing to us while others may make us turn away.

Have you noticed the same in the animal kingdom? God has given to each species a unique character by which we can identify it and from which we can learn. After God had made everything he took all the creatures of the land and air and "brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them" (Gen.2:19). Adam observed each creature carefully and gave it a suitable name.

This bird is certainly not known for its attractiveness! The vulture is a byword for greed and cruelty and much about it repels us. Vultures have a strange, even ugly, appearance with their heads and necks almost bare of feathers. As birds of prey their bills are usually sharp and strong. They possess a good sense of smell for finding their food. And their food may be anything from insects and eggs to carrion and even human corpses, such as those who have died in battle and could not be buried. No wonder this bird is disliked!

Living in mountainous or open country the vulture has another feature which enables it to locate its prey. It has a remarkable *sight*. It can look over great distances and see what other birds cannot see. And yet as Job tells us there are some things which even the vulture is unable to see. In this the vulture teaches us about *faith*.

We should know that real faith is not often found in man. We like to depend upon ourselves and we are so proud of our knowledge, wisdom and strength. Today we even think that we can live without God at all. After all, we can answer most of the questions about life and death and science will soon show us the way to a perfect world! This is the sad state of sinful man.

Faith is the gift of God to his people. It is a special sort of sight which enables us to know God. Faith is *spiritual sight*. God cannot be seen with the naked eye but he can certainly be known. Sin has made us spiritually blind but by faith we are able to see again. Even blind men in the Bible had faith in the Lord (Matt.9:27-30). By faith we look into those things which are beyond our ordinary senses.

True faith believes whatever God says. Have you read of Noah? God warned him of the great flood which would destroy the wicked world of his day. Noah must build an ark to save his family and take with him pairs of every bird and animal. So Noah began building the ark. There were no rising waters to be seen. There were no dark storm clouds in the sky. In fact there had not ever been so much as a drop of rain upon the earth up to this time! While he worked on the ark, year after year, others mocked. But Noah, being a godly man, believed the word of the Lord. By faith he could see what would surely come later in his own lifetime.

Moses was also a man of faith. He grew up in Egypt with all its treasures and pleasures but he was determined to live for eternity. You see, he was looking to the Lord Jesus Christ. From a great distance, centuries before it happened, he saw the coming of the Saviour into the world. He was fearless of men and he followed the Lord until his dying day. This is the Bible's testimony to Moses: "he endured, as seeing him who is invisible" (Heb.11:27).

We must look into the Scriptures if we are to see clearly. Without them we remain blind but in them we see many wonderful things. We see the glory

of a God who is so holy and pure while we are so very sinful. We learn of his love for sinners like ourselves. We discover his mercy and grace in the promises of the gospel. By faith I see Jesus Christ dying for my sins at Calvary! I rest upon him and his sacrifice. This is the path to God and the only way to everlasting happiness.

A believer must also learn by his experience. The ways of God may be hidden from us. Sometimes, like even the vulture with its keen sight, we just cannot see the path we should take but we look to the God of providence who can always be trusted. This is to “walk by faith, not by sight” (2Cor.5:7). Job in all his troubles and sorrows kept his eye upon the Lord. Despite his grievous losses he was sure that there was a good purpose in it all. “He knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold” (Job 23:12).

Have you this saving vision? Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ? □

Gàidhlig: Seadh, chì thu clann do chloinne, agus sìth air Israel (Seonaidh Mac ‘ill Eathainn)

Tha sinn air tighinn gu àm laithean saora an t-samhraidh far a bheil ur clan gu bhi timicheall oirnn airson na seachdainnean a tha air thoiseach oirnn. Nach math gur ann mar seo a tha. Tha sgoiltean, colaisdean agus oil-thaighean air dùnadh re uine agus àm air thoirt do ar cloinn uallach faoghlam a leigeadh dhiubh airson greiseag, co dhiu. Tha mi ag radh ‘airson greiseag’ oir tha e fìor nach eil faoghlam air neo ionnsachadh ri stad aig àm sam bith nar beatha. Tha gach latha a tabhairt fiosrachadh ùr do gach aon againn, co dhiu òg neo sean agus air an dòigh sin, tha ionnsachadh a’ dol air adhart.

Tha e fìor dhuinn cuideachd nar beatha spioradail. Tha cuimhne agam air sgeulachd bheag a’ chuala mi o chionn bhliadhnaichean air ais agus teaghlach air tighinn dhachaigh airson laithean saora an t-shamhraidh. Thàinig La na Sàbaid agus àm na h-eaglaise agus thuirt am mathair ri cuid chloinne, ‘bheil sibh a’faighinn deiseil airson a dhol dhan eaglais?’ Thainig an freagairt ‘O Mhamaidh, tha sinne air laithean saora’. ‘O s’docha gu bheil’ arsa Mathair, ‘Ach cuimhnicheadh sibhse gu-ta, chan eil Dia air laithean saora. Marsin theid sinn uile dhan eisdeachd’. Deagh chomhairle da riribh. Tha e fìor gu bheil fiosrachadh cudromach aig Dia dhuinne gach là ach se a cheisd, am bheil sinne a’ toirt fainear an teachdaireachd a tha na chois?

Nuair a chuireas sinn cunnartan agus buairaidhean an t-saoghal seo na ar' follais bu chòr gum bitheamaid a' faicinn mar an ceudna an cunnart anns a bheil ar clann agus gu sonraichte air mhodh spioradal. An saoghal cho tarraingeach agus ga slugadh suas! Se cheisd dhomhsa agus dhutsa, a bheil sinn gan cuimhneachadh gach Là aig Cathair-Gràis, far am bi sinn ag iarraidh gum bi dian agus stiureadh an Tighearna oirre? Seall an eiseampleir a thug Iob dhuinn mu thimicheall a theaghlachs an aig àm na cuirme “Agus dh'èirich e moch sa mhadainn, agus dh'ìobair e iobairt-loisgte a reir an aireamh uile: oir thuirte Iob theagamh gun do pheacaich mo mhic, agus gun do mhallach iad Dia nan cridhe”. Mar seo rinn Iob gach là. (Iob 4:5). Chì sinn cuideachd briathran anns na Gnath-Fhocail 4:1&2 “Cluinnibh, a chlann, teagasg athar, agus thugaibh an aire chum, gun faigh sibh eolas air tuigse oir tha mi toirt dhuibh deagh theagaisg; na treigibhse mo reachd”.

Gun robh impidh air a chuir oirnn mu thimicheall coir spioradail ar cloinne agus gun greimichamaid air gealladh an fhocail mar a chì sinn gu soillear ann an Leabhar na Salm 128:6 far a bheil beannachdan an Tighearna air a chuir far comhair.

O, gun robh cuideachadh an Tighearna air siubhal gach aon againn gu bhi deanamh mar a rin Iob. Gun robh e gar cumail gun a bhith cuir ann an suarachas aitheantan bhur n'Àthar Neamaidh. Chan eil ar beatha air thalamh ach glè ghoirid ach tha siorraidhachd mhòr fhada robh gach aon. Gun deaneamaid ur dleasdanas airson ar clan agus air sgàth Chrìosd. □

Congregational News

Fellowships

Monthly fellowships are held in the manse after the evening service on the second Sabbath of each month beginning at 8.00pm. The subject for the year is 'The Worship of God'. In July we hope to look at Prayer and in August at Preaching. For further details and information on our congregation visit our website: www.northuistandgrimsayfcc.org.uk

Prayer

We thank God for His kindness to those in the congregation who have spent time in hospital in recent months and who appear to be recovering well. Please continue to remember them at a throne of grace and indeed all known to us who are in need in any way. “Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King, and my God: for unto thee will I pray.” (Psa.5:2). □

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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

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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