

Grace & Truth

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

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

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Minister's Message: *The Importance of Creation*

The subject of origins has become topical once again as people celebrate the bicentenary of the birth of Charles Darwin, the famous naturalist. The devil is aware of how vital this subject is to the progress of the gospel and so he seeks to confuse many through the teaching of evolution. Christians have an opportunity at the present time to witness to the world but do we have a clear view on origins ourselves? Do we believe in creation?

Creation is a foundation of our faith because so much rests upon it. Without it the concepts of sin and salvation have little meaning. If creation is not true then there is no Creator whose law is supreme and to whom we must give an account. It is no surprise to see the ungodly finding fault with a doctrine which magnifies the Lord; what is sad is that there are many in the church who think creation unimportant. In fact our beliefs concerning origins will have a major impact on our lives for time and eternity.

The Bible opens with this majestic statement: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen.1:1). Creation means that "things which are seen were not made of things which do appear" (Heb.11:3). Whatever is visible to us, whether to our naked eye or through a telescope or microscope, was made out of nothing and not from material already existing. In the beginning there was no universe, no planets, no earth, no rocks, no minerals, no molecules, no atoms – only God.

How was everything created? It was by the word of God. By a sovereign command, representing His effectual, invincible will, God brought all things into being. "For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast" (Psa.33:9). The Lord Jesus Christ, whose name is the Word, was central in the work of creation. "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:3).

When was everything created? It was over a period of six days. On the first day the earth was "without form, and void" (Gen.1:2) but by the sixth day God had produced the variety and complexity of landscapes and living things. He created the light, sky, seas, sun, moon and stars. Finally He made man, male and female and "in his own image" (Gen.1:27). In God's eyes it was all "very good" (Gen.1:31), there being no disease or death.

Why was everything created? It was for God's glory and praise. "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created" (Rev.4:11). It was also to our benefit, for "the earth hath he given to the children of men" (Psa.115:16). God fitted out this world as a dwelling place for man as one would fit out a house in order that it might be lived in.

Do we not see a marvellous order and beauty in our universe? A mighty intelligence is involved. Chance could not produce even a simple organism, however long it might be given. In fact there is no such thing as a 'simple' organism; the single cell is a vastly complex and intricate structure.

Despite every effort our origins can never be discovered by science. God has revealed the truth to us. We receive the doctrine of creation by faith in the same Scriptures which speak of the fall, the curse and the cross of Christ.

Do you believe that you are "fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psa.139:14)? Then bow down before your Maker, confess your sin to Him and trust in His dear Son as your precious and only Redeemer. □

Helps to Devotion (Rev. James Smith)

ALIVELY HOPE. "Blessed by the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." (1 Peter 1:3)

All the works of God praise him, but his saints they bless him. They receive his richest favours; they feel their deep obligation; they experience devout gratitude; and out of the fulness of a grateful heart they bless his name. His mercy is abundant,—it abounds more than our vileness, baseness, and horrid wickedness; and therefore of his mere mercy he hath begotten us again to a lively hope. Once we were without God, and without hope in the world; but our most merciful God, to honour his beloved Son, sent his Holy Spirit to create us anew, and fill us with a vigorous expectation of a glorious and unchangeable inheritance. Father of mercies, we bless thee and praise thy glorious name, that though we were once dead in sin, thou hast quickened us, brought us into union with Christ, and given us a good, lively, and animating hope. Blessed by thy glorious name for ever, and may the whole earth soon be filled with thy glory. Blessed be God for the resurrection of his Son, which assures us that our debts are paid, that the ransom-price paid for our release is accepted, and that we shall have everlasting life. Now, O Lord, fill us with lively gratitude; keep up in our minds daily a vivid remembrance of thy abundant mercy; and help us to rejoice in our union to thy Son, and in hope of the glory that is yet to be revealed. Blessed Saviour, we praise thee for thy life and death on our behalf; and desire to honour thee by our daily gratitude and prompt obedience to thy holy will. Blessed Spirit, we praise thee for our regeneration, and for the lively hope that animates, stimulates, and cheers us on toward our Father's house. □

Parables of Jesus: 8. *The Wheat and the Tares*

(Please read Matthew 13:24-30,36-43)

Here is another parable concerning the planting and growing of seed, and the harvest that follows. It is unusual because Jesus Himself explains the meaning of it to His disciples. The lessons are very simple.

The picture is of a farmer who sows his field with wheat. Unknown to him an enemy sows tares or weeds among the corn. When the crop begins to grow the weeds are seen. The labourers are tempted to pluck them up there and then – but the weeds look rather like the wheat! So they wait until harvest and then the separation between what is good and what is useless is easily made.

Field

The field in the parable represents the church in this world, made up of sinners gathered from the nations of mankind. The great Sower who owns and farms this field is the Lord Jesus Christ. He sows good seed when His Word is read or preached.

God's own children are those to whom the gospel comes not in word only but also "in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance" (1Thess.1:5). The Holy Spirit opens their hearts and reveals the truth to them. By faith they are united to Christ and changed inwardly. They have entered the kingdom of God.

Enemy

The great enemy of God's cause is the devil. He is also a busy sower. He plants 'moral' people among the righteous. He persuades the careless that they are born-again and the fruitless that they are real Christians. He is very happy when his 'converts' enter the ranks of the church on earth, looking like believers.

Even under faithful preaching and proper discipline false disciples may appear in the church. Sometimes in her history the tares have appeared to outnumber the wheat. But even when the church is weed-filled it remains God's wheatfield. His servants should not lose heart. His promise is: "My word...shall not return unto me void" (Isa.55:11).

Judgment

At the end of time when the gospel has finished its work Christ will

send His holy angels to reap the harvest of the world. Their work is to bring the tares together to be destroyed and the wheat to be stored.

Who shall judge mankind? “We shall all stand before the judgment seat of *Christ*” (Rom.14:10). As God Jesus has a perfect memory of our deeds and perfect knowledge of our hearts. He cannot be deceived by any mask of religion that men may wear.

Destiny

At the harvest the tares are seen to be fit only for burning. The wheat though has value to the farmer; every grain is put safely into his barn.

A great division will soon be made among men. The unrepentant will be cast into hell for their sins. Hell is “a furnace of fire,” a place of pain and regret. Sincere believers though, trusting in Christ for righteousness, will be in heavenly glory. □

Sermon: *The Discouraged Counselling* (Rev. J.H. Evans)

(A sermon preached on November 14th 1843. Evans was pastor of John Street Chapel, Bedford Row, London, an independent congregation yet he had strong sympathies with the men of the Disruption and indeed made a collection for the Free Church of Scotland the following year.)

“And they journeyed from mount Hor by the way of the Red sea, to compass the land of Edom: and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way.”— Numbers 21:4

One can hardly look at any subject, that has a greater sweetness and more deep instruction in it, than the true Israel of old as typical of the true Israel of God. In their troubles, in their temptations, in their fears, in their wanderings, in the bread they ate, in the water they drank, in the meat that fed them, and in enemies that surrounded them, one sees that which unfolds our state and our condition at this present moment. And the truth is, that the spiritual Israel had the key of all this in their own hearts; for they lived above their dispensation. They felt themselves a tempted people, and they lived upon that that was the substance; they rose above the type, and they found the reality—CHRIST. They looked forward, and they found their rest in Him.

There are two points for our consideration in this passage before us. First of all, I would remark on some of those discouragements, that do oftentimes

assail the people of God in their way; and that will prepare us, secondly, for the consideration of their vast, their unutterable encouragements.

I. Now in introducing this subject, let no-one imagine one would desire to draw a gloomy picture of the religion of the Gospel. If the religion of the Gospel is not the basis of all happiness, where is happiness to be found? Where can we find it but in a life of faith, a life of hope, a life of prayer,—so far as we live on Christ? Even the very contest, the daily contest has a blessing in it; and every act of self-denial brings with it its own mercy. As I have oftentimes placed before you, oh! how it does rebuke the poor world to nothing, when one says, the very tears of a child of God have more of happiness, than all London—unregenerate London—knows or ever can know. To look up with a blessed hope of acceptance; to realise God as a Father; to repose in Him as our portion; in the deepest view of our sin and sinfulness, to see the complete blotting out of sin in the precious blood-shedding of the Son of God; with the deepest conviction that “our righteousnesses are as filthy rags,” to repose in the perfect righteousness of God in our nature;—if this be not happiness, where is happiness to be found?

Yet there are peculiar discouragements: circumstances that in themselves have a discouraging tendency. The very path is a strait one. It is a very narrow course, between licentiousness and liberty; between the holy liberty of a child and the abuse of that liberty. I do not say they come near; but I would say, through our depravity we find the way to be very narrow between them. Oh! it is a narrow path—to exalt the free grace of God, and to steer clear of the abuse of that grace; to exalt grace to the uttermost, and yet to lay the sinner under his own responsibility; to glory in election as the very establishing point of our salvation, and yet to say to the sinner, “O Israel, thou hast destroyed *thyself*;” to lift up the Saviour’s righteousness, and equally to exalt Jesus as our *sanctification*.

The very path of Truth is a narrow path. The least to the right, and we are beyond the mark; the least to the left, and we verge to error. And if it be so, that the path of truth is so narrow, what is it to walk in it?—to hold fast the truth, to exhibit all earnestness for the truth, and to contend for it in the meekness of truth: to be “not of the world,” and to “love not the world,” but yet to have pity upon the world: to show at once faithfulness and tenderness: to be upright, and yet gentle: to be courageous, and yet “turn the right cheek,” when smitten on the left: to “hold fast one’s integrity” (shall I give it you in few words?) amongst our friends, relatives, families. *There* is that which tries you and me.

Ah! it is a strait and a narrow path. It is not a light thing, to walk with

God. It is not a light thing, to *aim* at it. It is not a light thing, to place this before us as we rise in the morning—“Whether I eat or drink, or *whatsoever* I do, doing *all to the glory of God*.” It is not easy, to carry this as the ruling principle in the secret transactions of the day: in little things—talk not of great things—in *little* things as well as great things. I believe, we are most known in little things. My dear hearers, this very straitness of the path, this narrowness of the path, doth have in it something discouraging.

This path runs through a desert. We may say indeed it does so literally, to thousands and tens of thousands around us, especially in these our days. All the discomforts of existence are theirs—none of its comforts; poverty, wretchedness, penury of bread, lack of clothing, no fire, no friends, hard usage, oppression—horrible oppression—I hesitate not to say it, hateful, loathsome oppression; and this, day by day, week by week, and month by month, and year by year. To them, indeed, it is literally a desert.

But it is so spiritually to every man that “knows the plague of his own heart.” There is no bread in it, no food in it, no rest in it, no home in it, no shelter in it, no quietness in it. To have quietness, we must rise above it, and live above it. Suppose a man under deep convictions of sin; suppose he is brought to know himself; suppose he is laid low in the dust before God; suppose the eternal Spirit has stripped him of all self-confidence, and brought him low before a heart-searching, rein-trying God: what can the world do for him? Suppose a person under deep bereavement, the husband losing his wife, the wife losing her husband, the father losing perhaps his only child, the child following a beloved parent to the grave: what can the world do for them? Suppose an honest man, yet through the dishonesty of others the ruin of many, it may be of thousands, or tens of thousands,—their hopeless ruin: what will the world do for him? Suppose a man in health, robust health, brought at once to sickness, disease, misery, agony: what can the world do for him? I will suppose a stronger case still—stronger to those who know what Christ is—a case of great mental darkness; a man that takes up his Bible, but he can find nothing in it to suit his soul; he bends the knee, but he can find no access to God; he hears the truth, but he can find no delight in the truth; he speaks to the saints of God, but he finds no echo to their words in his heart; all seems dark and dreary and desolate: what can the world do for him? Ah! he is passing through a desert, a mere desert. The world has not a thing to give him; it has no relief. I do not deny the sympathy of friends; I do not deny the soothing kindnesses of those who love me; they may mitigate—they cannot heal. The wound is too deep. It requires Omnipotence, it requires the very touch of the “Brother born for adversity,” to meet the case. Nothing short of it can meet the case; the world has no power.

Yea, beloved, and this very desert too is full of thorns. Oh! how much a man may feel the puncture of one false doctrine! He takes up a specious book; it is beautiful in style; there is a story in it—*that* takes thousands in the present day; and beneath the smooth, fair surface, there is some viper—some pestilent error, that may cleave to him, and he may have it for years, and years, and years. And all coming through a sanctified-looking man; nay, through a child of God it may be, for a child of God may hold error and pervert the truth;—if left to ourselves, what can we not do?

It is a world full of thorns. Oh! how often are we wounded by false brethren! How often, by some fair-talking professor! How often, by some specious hypocrite and varnished deceiver! What cannot wound us? We can wound *ourselves*. There is not a thing in life, but what may be a thorn to the flesh, and to our spirits too. We are passing through a desert and a thorny world.

There is something also to be considered, in the tediousness of our path. It is sometimes so very tedious: to go on fighting the same enemies, the world and the flesh and the devil. One looks at the believer, in a sense, just as a man struggling with the torrent—as one might look upon a man struggling near the summit of the Falls of Niagara; the moment he stops, the moment he sinks, he is plunged down the cataract. So is it with ourselves; the moment we cease to struggle, that moment we are carried down with the torrent. It is no little trial, to have to meet these constant enemies of ours, ceaseless in their malignity. They cease not for one moment. It is not by the day, it is not by the year; it is all our days, it is all our years.

I will acknowledge, that grace in the believer is a victorious principle; I will acknowledge, that the believer is a conqueror; but one is also constrained to acknowledge, that he is not *always* a conqueror; he is often worsted in the fight. And this very thing oftentimes makes the way exceedingly tedious and trying to him. To meet an enemy that has mastered me; to have to meet him again! For though finally a victor, and on the whole a victor, yet there is not a believer here, but has been mastered again and again by the enemies of his soul. Oh! it is no light matter, to go on in this way through the desert; it oftentimes seems tiresome to our souls.

And there is one thing, that seems to affect us still more: we have but few companions with us. There are but few in the way: “few there be that find it.” Enlarge your hearts as you will in love towards the whole family of God—take a large view, pray for a large heart, pray for width, pray for breadth, pray for largeness—yet beware of letting down the truth, and with that truth before you, you will be forced to acknowledge, “Few there be that find it.” If a clear

creed, if clear views of doctrine, if a little alteration of conduct, if addicting ourselves to our party—if this is Christianity, then we must change the text, and confess, *many* “there be that find it;” but if it be walking with God, living in Christ, aiming to please Him,—if it be those who “know the plague of their own hearts,” and feel sin to be their burden,—if this be the characteristic of the family of God, that the desire of their souls is to consecrate themselves to that God, who loved them and gave His Son to die for them,—then it still remains a solemn truth, “Few there be that find it.” Some that once walked with us, have dropped away; they walk with us no more. Some have *never* walked with us, though they walk with Christ; they have out-walked us, out-run us, out-talked us. Some rejoice so much, they seem but little affected by the inward plague—though they may yet have to endure it, and *will*, if they are the children of God; and some there are, that think so much of their plague, they never rejoice. We can have but little communion with them. And some have dropped away, gone away, left the way, because they have entered upon their holy home. Some—oh! it is touching—some that walked once with us in the house of God, and with whom “we took sweet counsel”—where are they? In *the world*. Awful thought; fearful thought! Oh! it is amongst the things, that make us feel our path to be a trying path; and oftentimes “our soul is much discouraged because of the way.”

II. But observe now, secondly, what are those vast encouragements, that ought to cheer, and comfort, and enlarge the heart of a child of God.

What are the reasons, that do so much discourage him? Why, one among many is this: he looks at his way, more than he looks to God. He looks at the trials of his way, more than he looks to the God who has appointed them. For every trial, every crook, every thorn, every briar, every enemy that we meet with, is ordained of God for our soul’s good. Oh! if you allow but one thing to the contingency of chance, you may as well acknowledge the whole to be the effect of contingency. My dear brother, to repose in a wisdom that can never be deceived, to repose in a power that nothing can oppose, to repose in a tenderness that nothing can weaken, to repose in a faithfulness that never can be violated, to repose in a love that never can be shaken—this is confidence indeed. This was David’s consolation; see how he reasoned. They thought of stoning him; and how did he act? Observe, (1Sam.30:6) “David was greatly distressed, for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved; but David encouraged himself in the Lord his God.” Still more striking is the case of Jehoshaphat; observe, it is said, (2Chron.17:6) “His heart was lift up in the ways of the Lord;” in the margin—“he was encouraged.” So encouraged, that he was lifted up above all

circumstances, lifted up above all that was in himself, lifted up above his fears. He was “high and lifted up;” never more truly abased, and yet never so truly lifted up. Oh! my dear hearers, it is a soul’s acquaintance with God, that lifts him up above his troubles. “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee.” “Acquaint thyself with God, and be at peace.” Oh! that great secret—turning off from our path, looking off our path, looking away from our own way, and looking to Jesus, resting in Him, reposing in Him!

But there are other reasons, that often discourage the believer in his way. He looks more to his way, than he looks to Jesus, who has travelled the same way. Oh! if there be one thing that ought to cheer our souls more than another, surely it is this: every trial, every sorrow, every care, every grief of my heart, my blessed Lord has known before me. His feet have left a sweet perfume in this very way. He has trod it before me. He the great Forerunner, He the prevailing Advocate, He the blessed Mediator, my “Brother born for adversity,” my Brother who “sticketh closer than a brother”—He is gone before me in this path; cheering, comforting my soul in the hallowed remembrance of Him.

There is a truth, that would cheer us exceedingly, if we well considered it: that if we talk with any who have walked in this way, if we ask all that have ever trod it, whether there was one soul that ever repented of it, they will all declare—This is the way, the right way, the only way, “the way of pleasantness, the path of peace.”

But there is a point, on which I would desire to lay some stress in the consideration of this interesting subject—interesting to me because one feels one’s own soul so prone to be “discouraged because of the way:” it is the retracing of one’s own mercies *in* the way. We are but insignificant creatures, we acknowledge; we hardly know how little we are, we hardly know how poor and feeble we are; and yet perhaps, next to this Book, *the history of our life* would be the most important history we could ever read. What has it been, but the exhibition of thousands of pardons from the heart of God? What has it been but the development of mercies, countless as the sand upon the sea shore? How it has exhibited His comfortings, His restorings, restoring times out of number! the consolations He has poured in, in the hour of distress and sorrow! the anticipations He has given us of glory! Oh! it ought to cheer and animate our souls, in all the paths in which we are travelling.

And besides this, and more than this,—how soon it will end in glory! The pathway leads us to our home. What is it, cheers the weary traveller? It is the happy home before him. What is it, cheers the soldier, worn out with

fatigues, and wasted with disease? Returning home; this is that, that animates him, lifts him up, cheers him, dries his tears, quiets his complainings. Oh! to have the bright prospect of a glorious eternity clear before us! Be assured, there would be less of discouragement, and more of holy confidence, if that were our portion day by day, and hour by hour.

And now, my hear hearers, are you and I *in* the way? Have we been brought, through God's wondrous grace, into the way? Have we had our feet turned out of the broad road, into this strait and narrow way? Oh! I would say, then admire and adore the distinguishing grace of God to you-ward. Look into the world; think of the millions, that have never heard of Christ; think of the millions that have heard of Him and despise Him; think of the millions in this our favoured land, that know no more of Christ than the heathen; think of the hundreds of thousands of London only, who are as great "strangers to the covenant of promise," as if there were no such covenant; think of the hundreds upon hundreds, that come and hear sermons week after week, and have never "tasted that the Lord is gracious," and never yet mourned for sin. And then ask, How came it to pass, and how comes it to pass, that *you* can say, your happiest moments are with God, your rest is in Jesus, your confidence beneath His cross? How comes it to pass, that *you* can say, 'Still is my back turned upon the world, and my face is Zionwards?' How comes it to pass, that *you* can say to this present moment, "Kept by the power of God?"—and with so many wanderings too, so many mistakes, so many errors, so much going out of the way! Oh! admire and adore the distinguishing grace of God to you-ward, my brother.

There is one thing, that I would desire to lay upon your heart; and that is—be abased that you have been so often discouraging your soul in the way. There are some sins, I quite feel persuaded, we think far too little of. If there be gross departures from God in temper, if there be gross departures from God in want of uprightness, if there be gross departures from God in anything, the blessed Spirit lays us low before God; but I believe there are sins we often pass over, make excuses for, and are but little humbled on account of, that are as heinous in His sight. And one is this: that we are so prone to be discouraged in the ways of God. What! with all the covenant of grace in our behalf,—what! with a covenant Father for our portion, an interceding Saviour for our all, an indwelling Spirit for our sustainer,—what! with all the promises of God in our behalf, is it a light thing, is it a little sin, that we so discourage ourselves in the ways of our God?

You that are parents, ye little think what a sermon ye read your children, when they see you discouraged in the ways of God. Children are more

accurate reasoners, than you oftentimes think them to be. If a child sees a parent in trouble cast down, in difficulties disheartened, making the most of sorrows, passing through the world but little lifted up in God on account of His promising mercies, what is the conclusion that child will draw? 'It is easy for my father to say there is a God to go to, it is easy for my mother to say there is a God that promises to uphold, but the conduct answers not to it, the conduct belies it; how can that be true, that is not found to be a reality, when it is wanted?' Oh! ye little know how it weakens your testimony, when ye show your heart discouraged in the ways of your God!

And see what are the blessed effects of showing a strong confidence in the Lord. What weight does it give, what importance does it attach, when the spirit seems under the anointing of the Spirit of adoption, and when quietness, patience, holy confidence in God, is the motto of our day, and carried out in our life! Oh! we little know the strength of that principle, when it animates the heart, and shows itself in the conduct.

Be assured of this, my dear hearers, that there is no cause for a child of God to be "discouraged because of the way." This is his motto—"Strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." See what the apostle Paul felt. "This one thing I do; forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Did *he* look at his way? He pressed forward. Did *he* look at his difficulties? He leaned upon Christ. Was *he* overcome by the straitness of his path? He leaned the more entirely upon his Beloved. He looked off himself to Jesus, found his strength in Jesus, went forward, went upward, and "pressed toward the mark." And what was the confidence that he had? "I can do all things, through Christ which strengtheneth me." Oh! blessed, happy path!

My dear hearers, are any of you, at this present moment, cast down by reason of the way? We are but few in number; yet it may be, we have such trials and such difficulties in our path, that we may say to all the assembled saints upon earth, and all the saints in heaven, 'Ye cannot relieve me.' Who *can*? A covenant God can; a faithful Jesus can; a comforting Spirit can; a covenant "ordered in all things and sure," can. "The promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come"—this is enough. May you and I find it to be enough, day by day, and hour by hour!

The Lord condescend to give us His blessing—His own blessing—a Father's blessing; doing better for us than we can ask or think, and cheering our souls with the bright prospect, the glorious hope before us, so soon to be realised in the hearts of all that know and love the Lord, in an eternity of glory, purity, holiness, and happiness. □

Christian Doctrines Explained: 8. Man in the State of Innocence

Q.10. *How did God create man?*

A. God created man male and female, after his own image, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, with dominion over the creatures.

Man was God's final and supreme creation, appearing on the sixth day of the creation week. The other creatures were simply commanded into being but God consulted before making man (Gen.1:26). Adam's body was formed from the dust and then his soul was breathed into him by God (Gen.2:7). Eve was created from a rib taken from Adam's side (Gen.2:21,22). Adam signifies 'earth' and Eve 'life'. Why is man special?

Image

Man has a likeness to God: "in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (Gen.1:27). Both sexes were made to bear God's image and reflect His glory. As God is a spirit so man's resemblance to God is not seen in his body but in his soul. There are three aspects to this image: knowledge, righteousness and holiness.

Knowledge

Man had *knowledge in his mind*. In particular Adam at creation understood God's nature, attributes and law. He knew his own duty perfectly. He had no need of a Bible to teach him these things. He knew the Creator personally and enjoyed His presence. He also understood the world, for "whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof" (Gen.2:19). When a man is converted he is said to be "renewed in knowledge" (Col.3:10) – the knowledge Adam had.

Righteousness

Man had *righteousness in his will*. The Bible says: "God hath made man upright" (Ecc.7:29). Adam had a bias or inclination towards the things that are pleasing in God's sight; he also had an ability to perform them. As God's servant he was fully obedient to the divine will. His conscience informed him accurately of what was right and wrong.

Holiness

Man had *holiness in his heart*. His affections were set upon what is holy,

pure and good. His chief love was for the Lord. As God's friend he cleaved to Him and his delight was in Him. He desired nothing that was impure. In paradise Adam was happy and knew nothing of grief, shame or regret. A Christian is "created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph.4:24) as Adam was.

Dominion

As God's image-bearer man was God's deputy in the world. The earth, which is God's footstool, was man's throne. God said, "Have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth" (Gen.1:28). Before the fall the creatures were subject to man's authority but since his disobedience to God they have become disobedient to him and even a terror to him.

This was man in the state of innocence, before sin entered. A great change then occurred which ruined God's image in man and brought misery to the world. Jeremiah's words might describe it: "How is the gold become dim! how is the most fine gold changed!" (Lam.4:1). □

The Reformation in Scotland: 8. *The Movement Grows*

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

From Calder House Knox went to Ayrshire, accompanied by Campbell of Kincancleugh, and traversed that district, preaching wherever he had an opportunity, to increasing, attentive, and deeply impressed audiences. The Earl of Glencairn, who alone had opposed the martyrdom of Adam Wallace, gave the full weight of his countenance and support to the teaching of Knox. Continuing his reforming progress, Knox again visited Calder, the district of Angus and Mearns, and finally returned to Edinburgh.

By this time the priesthood were thoroughly roused out of their vain security; and, determining to stem the tide ere it should reach its flood, they summoned Knox to appear in the Blackfriars Church at Edinburgh, on the 15th of May 1556. Knox at once determined to comply with this summons, and confront his opponents; and with that intention came to Edinburgh a little before the day appointed, accompanied by Erskine of Dun, and several other gentlemen. But the clergy were not prepared to deal summarily with this dauntless antagonist. They were not sure how

far the Queen-regent would support them, and they deserted the diet, and allowed Knox to keep the field unchallenged. He, on his part, did not let slip the opportunity: he preached openly in Edinburgh, deepening the impression formerly made, and increasing the alarm and confusion of his enemies. Some of the nobility, who were equally impressed and astonished with the convincing power of his fervid eloquence, persuaded him to write to the Queen-regent, hoping that, if she could be prevailed upon to hear him, she too might be converted to the reformed faith. But after glancing carelessly over his letter, she handed it to the Archbishop of Glasgow, saying, in a tone of mockery, "Please you, my Lord, to read a pasquil [a lampoon or satire]." So vanished the hope of her reformation.

While John Knox was thus strenuously engaged in promoting the Reformation in his native country, letters came from his former flock at Geneva, earnestly pressing him to return to his charge among them. After revisiting those parts of Scotland where he had previously preached, and spending a few days at Castle Campbell with the aged Earl of Argyle, he departed for Geneva in July 1556. He was no sooner gone than the clergy renewed their summons; and upon his failing to appear, he was condemned of heresy, and burned in effigy at the market-cross of Edinburgh,—an achievement sufficiently showing the fangless malice of his enemies.

Although John Knox had left Scotland, the reformed doctrines continued to be preached in different parts of the country. John Douglas, a Carmelite friar, renouncing the errors of Popery, became chaplain to the aged Earl of Argyle; and when the Archbishop of St Andrews endeavoured to persuade the earl to dismiss his suspected chaplain, he positively refused, and continued to protect him till his own decease. Willock, about the same time, arrived from the Continent; and Paul Methven began to preach the Protestant doctrines in Dundee, as did others in Angus and Mearns.

The clergy perceiving that their own power was now insufficient for the suppression of what they termed heresy, prevailed on the Queen-regent to summon the preachers before the council of state, and there to have them accused of stirring up sedition among the people,—a device to which persecutors have very often since resorted, for the purpose of at once accomplishing the object, and escaping the odium of persecution. But this device was, in this instance, completely frustrated. When the preachers came to Edinburgh, such numbers of their friends came along with them, that it was judged dangerous to proceed to extremities. A proclamation was, however, issued, ordering all who had come to the

town without having been commanded, to repair immediately to the borders, and there remain fifteen days under the banner of the lieutenant-general. The Protestant gentlemen, penetrating easily into the object of this proclamation, assembled together, and, instead of obeying it, proceeded to court, and forced themselves with little ceremony into the presence of the Queen, then sitting in council with the bishops. Chalmers of Gadgirth, a bold and zealous man, spoke in the name of all:—"Madam, we know that this proclamation is a device of the bishops, and of that bastard (the primate of St Andrews) that stands beside you. We avow to God, that ere we yield, we will make a day of it. These idle drones oppress us and our tenants; they trouble our preachers, and would murder them and us. Shall we suffer this any longer? No, madam, it shall not be!" And therewith every man put on his steel bonnet. The Queen-regent had recourse to fair words, disavowed the proclamation, and discharged the citation of the preachers. Thus that storm blew past.

A few days after this there was a ludicrous tumult of the people, at a procession in honour of St Giles; when the image was thrown scornfully to the ground, drawn through the mire of the streets, its head beaten off, the body thrown into the North Loch, and then dragged out and burned. These events so discouraged the Queen and the clergy, that they thought it expedient to abandon their persecuting schemes, and to endeavour to procure an accession of strength before they should again provoke the courage of the Protestant gentry and the tumults of the people. This accession of strength they expected to obtain by procuring an act of the Scottish parliament to confer the crown-matrimonial of Scotland on Francis the Dauphin, and husband of Mary; by which scheme there would be so close a union between France and Scotland, the king of the one country being also the king of the other, that French power would give the popish clergy paramount influence in Scotland, and enable them to extirpate the Reformation by force.

But while the Queen-regent and the prelates were concocting this deep scheme, the Scottish Protestants became anxious for the return of Knox from Geneva. A letter was accordingly sent to him in March 1557, signed by the Earl of Glencairn, and Lords Erskine, Lord, and James Stewart, inviting him in their own name, and in that of their brethren, to return to Scotland, where he would find them all ready to receive him, and to jeopard their lives and fortunes in the cause of true religion. Having consulted Calvin and his other friends at Geneva, and been by them advised to comply with the request, Knox prepared to take, what he expected to be, a final farewell of Geneva, and then proceeded on his

journey through France to Dieppe. When he arrived at Dieppe, he received letters from Scotland of a tenor so discouraging as to cause him to delay his farther journey till he should receive additional information as to the real state of matters in his native country. While at Dieppe he wrote a letter to the nobility by whom he had been invited, upbraiding them sharply for their timidity and fickleness of purpose. Being unwilling to abandon the enterprise, he continued to reside at Dieppe for several months, expecting a more favourable answer from Scotland; and employing his time in writing some very long and able letters of a public character, in particular, one against the erroneous tenets of the Anabaptists, and another to the Scottish nobility on their duties in general, and on the question of resistance to supreme rulers. Not receiving such answers, and so directly, as he wished, he returned again to Geneva in the beginning of the year 1558. □

Precious Psalms: 8. *What is man?*

“What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?” (Psalm 8:4)

Our day is one of great knowledge and yet also great ignorance. Never has the universe and everything in it been so probed and studied by men – and never has it been so misunderstood! Tragically man does not even know *himself*, what he really is and what he is for.

Wonder

When David asks the question, What is man? he is not in any doubt about man’s origin or purpose. He knows that God made man and gave him lordship over all the earth (vv.5,6). Rather the note of *wonder* is in his words. When he considers the universe he is struck by how vast and beautiful it is; man seems so tiny and insignificant in relation to it all! Yet the Creator does not neglect mankind – quite the opposite. The God who made the heaven and the earth has appointed man a unique place in His plans and He remembers him in all his varied needs.

Mortal

This wonder is even greater as David is not speaking of man as created, in his original strength and purity, but in his *fallen* state. He uses a word for ‘man’ which indicates his frailty and mortality. And he describes him

literally as the “son of Adam.” We are sinful sons of a sinful father, guilty and hell-deserving. By Adam’s fall we lost divine blessing, yet in His goodness God has not cast us off. Oh, the great condescension of the Almighty, in dealing with sinners!

Second Man

There is another wonder here. Jesus Christ is also the Son of man. To save His people He became “a worm, and no man” (Psa.22:6). He shared our infirmities and was crucified. “He was despised, and we esteemed him not” (Isa.53:3). Yet His obedience in suffering for the sins of others was pleasing to a righteous God. The first man Adam fell to temptation but the second man Christ conquered sin and is now crowned with glory and honour as Lord of all. His humiliation was our *salvation*. □

For Young People: *Birds of the Bible*

8. The Hawk – Bird of Faith

“Doth the hawk fly by thy wisdom, and stretch her wings toward the south?” (Job 39:26)

It is a sad fact that some clever people wish to deny that this world is God’s world. They do not believe that God made everything in the beginning and sustains everything in the present. Instead they want us to believe that there is a natural explanation for the universe and all its parts. Yet to open our eyes each morning and to gaze upon the great variety of skies, landscapes and living things is to know otherwise. There is such breathtaking beauty and such obvious design. We live in a world of wonders!

One such wonder is the migration of birds. You may know something about this. Some species of bird are present in the same place all year round but there are other species which spend one season of the year in one part of the world and the rest of the year in another part. Some birds come to Britain in the warm summer months and then return south to escape the cold winter. Can you think of any?

Perhaps you and your family have been on holiday recently. It meant a journey by car, train or plane. Usually you spend your holiday in this country but perhaps occasionally you go to another country. Some people travel to lands thousands of miles away for their holidays. Careful

planning is required for such a journey and we will need a map if we are going to a new land.

The wonder of migrating birds is that every year they fly thousands of miles across land and sea in all weathers to arrive at the same point from which they came months before! And with the young birds which are born and reared in the spring and summer the flight is even more remarkable. They fly away to a country from which their parents came but which they have never seen! And they go to exactly the right place!

Here God is speaking to Job about this very thing. He is showing him the difference between man's power and God's power. Taking the hawk as an example he says to Job, Is it through *your* teaching, or by *man's* instruction, that this bird knows the time to take flight, and the direction to go to find a warmer climate? No! It is by an instinct which I have put into her. It is really something beyond our understanding.

Hawks and falcons are small birds of prey. They include common species like the kestrel, often seen hovering by roadsides and even in towns as it seeks its food, and rare species like the peregrine, which swoops spectacularly on its unsuspecting victim from a great height. Certain hawks and falcons arrive here in April, breed, and then leave in September to winter in Africa.

Such creatures are clearly guided by an intelligence which is not their own, by a wisdom which is not of this world. They can teach us, for as lost sinners we also need God's wisdom. There are three lessons to learn from the hawk and its flight.

The hawk flies *surely*. She heads towards the south, the direction she must go for her good. As sinners you and I need to return to God – but how? It is the Holy Scriptures which are able to make us “wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (2Tim.3:15). If we follow the instructions of men we shall go astray. This is what happens in those religions which reject or neglect the Bible. People listen to what popes and priests and others say but “the world by wisdom knew not God” (1Cor.1:21). Those who follow men alone will be far from God and in danger.

How can we understand what the Bible teaches? Jesus told his disciples of the Holy Spirit whom he would send. He said, “he will guide you into all truth” (John 16:13). If we pray to God for help then we shall have it. Christ also gives us faithful ministers who tell us what the Bible teaches. With God's help they preach the gospel to you “with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven” (1Pet.1:12).

The hawk flies *swiftly*. She stretches her wings and makes good progress. She is fleeing from the cold and darkness of the approaching

winter. If we are truly wise then we will turn our back upon sin and flee from the wrath to come. We will live as “strangers and pilgrims” in this world as we run the race of life. Why waste your time on foolish things and passing things when you will soon be in eternity? “Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise in thy latter end” (Prov.19:20).

The hawk flies *safely*. She stays on course and gets home at last. Her flight requires strength and perseverance and this God gives her. It is the same with the believer. Jesus said, “he that endureth to the end shall be saved” (Matt.10:22). Some people seem full of faith and zeal for God but later go back. We ourselves may have doubts and fears but if we seek the Lord’s help in our troubles we shall be safe. God will bring each one of His people to the haven of heaven they desire to see (Psa.107:30). Be wise then, and fly by faith to God for salvation!” □

**Gàidhlig: Is beannaichte an dream a tha ‘fulang
geur-leanmhuinn airson na còrach – Mata 5:10
(Seonaidh Mac’ill Eathainn)**

Tha gach aon againn a’ fhuair sealbh air gràs an Tighearna na ‘r beatha gu math èolach air na briathran seo agus nach biodh e reusanta mar Chrìosdaidhean gum bitheamaid a’ coinneachadh ri geur-leanmhuinn gu ìre choireigin bho latha gu latha. Tha na briathran ag innse glè shoilleir dhuinn gu bheil e na bheannachd dhuinn ma tha sinn a’ fulang airson ceartas Chrìosd agus airson na firinn. Tha è na adhbhar misnich dhuinn a bhi faicinn an dòchas a tha an cois na briathran cuideachd. Nach eil seo cho fìor ma ghluaiseas sinn gu dìleas anns an t-slighe agus sinn a’ tabhairt ùmhlachd do Dhia. Tha e na stiùir agus na sholus don Chrìosdaidh ma chumas e na briathran seo na dhlùth shealladh.

Dh’aindeoin’s an ìre a ‘thilgeas dàoine gach ana-cheartas agus ana-chainnt an taobh a tha sinn, fàodaidh sinn a bhi faighinn togail bho’n na briathran gach uair a’ leugheas sinn iad. Tha an 12mh earrann ag innse dhuinn gu fàod sinn gairdeachas a dheanaibh agus a bhi subhach, oir is mòr bhur duais air nèamh. Nach bu chòr dhuinn an tuilleadh strì a dheanaibh gu bhi seasaibh nas daingean airson an t-Soisgeul agus airson adhbhar ar Tighearna Ìosa Crìosd. Tha sinn a’ faicinn anns an latha anns am bheil sinn bèo nach eil spèis air a’ thoirt do dh’ adhbhar an Tighearna ach le aireamh gle bheag. Mar sin nach biodh e na nì ìonmholtan nam biodh a’ shluagh fhèin a seasamh a mach

an tuilleadh agus an tuilleadh agus gum biodh fianais air a' dheanaibh dhàsan agus sin chum a' chliù. Mar a mol a' chlann fhein co nì.

'S docha gu bheil thu fhèin an diugh mar Chrìosdaidh agus thu fulang air sgàth Chrìosd agus thu giulan eallach tròm. Dh'fhàodadh gu bheil thu mothachail air saruchadh na do bheatha a tha ga do tharraing sìos. Cuimhnich thusa Chrìosdaidh gu bheil a bhuaidh ann an Crìosd agus gu bheil leatsa Rìoghachd nèamh. Bha an Salmaidh ag radh, "mar tha na beanntan mu thimchioll Ierusalem, mar sin tha'n Tighearna mu thimchioll a shluaigh, o'n àm so agus gu bràth" (125.2). Cùm Crìosd na'd shealladh agus grèimich air dochas A gheallaidh. □

Congregational News

Communion

The services at our Communion will be as follows (D.V):-

Thursday 9th April: 12.00noon; 7.30pm

Friday 10th April: 12.00noon; 7.30pm

Saturday 11th April: 12.00noon; 6.00pm (prayer meeting)

Sabbath 12th April: 11.00am (prayer meeting);

12.00noon (the Lord's supper); 6.30pm

Monday 13th April: 12.00noon

Further details will be intimated in due course.

Fellowships

Our monthly fellowships this year are on the theme of 'Truth and Error'. We are comparing the teachings of the major world religions and some of the cults with the teachings of the Bible. The meetings are held in the manse after the Sabbath evening service as intimated and are open to all who are interested. The meeting on March 15th will look at Islam, a growing presence in our land and a threat to our Christian character as a nation. On 12th April we hope to have a fellowship with the ministers visiting for the Communion. For more information visit our website: www.northuistandgrimsayfcc.org.uk

Induction

At a meeting of the Presbytery of Skye & Lochcarron on 3rd March the Rev. Graeme Craig, minister of Lochalsh & Glenshiel accepted a call from the Stornoway Congregation. It is expected that the induction will take place on 1st April. Full details will be given nearer the time, D.V. □

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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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