

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 Fight of Faith*

The apostle Paul exhorted Timothy to “fight the good fight of faith” (1Tim.6:12). He was passing on his wisdom as a man of God who had fought a good fight himself over many years and was now finishing his course (2Tim.4:7). As a young gospel minister Timothy needed sound counsel, labouring as he did against much opposition.

Paul's words also have application to the people of God in general. The fight of which he speaks is one in which all believers are involved by virtue of being called to eternal life. We have an interest in this fight, if we know Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour and have enlisted in His service. Our passage from this world to the next is not an easy one: there are enemies we must face and obstacles we must encounter before we reach our home in heaven. We cannot afford to sit back or take our ease here. What is there to encourage us in the conflict?

We may say firstly that *the cause of Christ is the best cause of all*. The fight of faith is a good fight in a way which no other fight is. The Lord approves it, for He has made this known in His Word. The Scriptures reveal God's eternal purpose to glorify Himself by sending His only begotten Son to save helpless sinners. By suffering the wrath of God in their place, even unto death, Jesus has reconciled the guilty to God. We enjoy salvation by faith in this precious Redeemer and we endeavour to persuade others to turn from their sins and trust in Him too.

Christ's cause is unique in that it has eternal consequences. There are other 'good causes' in this world but their objects are temporal. They aim at relieving hunger, disease, poverty and so on. However nothing is more important than the welfare of men's *souls*. We need to remember this in the current climate. People are saying that biblical religion is at best an irrelevance and at worst a hindrance. They label Christians as troublemakers and extreme. Yet to promote the gospel is to do the greatest good for a bad world. Never let the devil persuade you otherwise.

Secondly we may say that *if we are for the cause of Christ then Christ will be for us*. All Christians are soldiers, clad with spiritual armour and bearing weapons which are mighty through God. All are to “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3). Some Christians are at the front of the battle, preaching and teaching the Word of God. Others serve elsewhere in the ranks, praying and witnessing for the Lord. Wherever the Lord sees a sincere faith and a godly life He will be present in power and will grant His help in time of trouble. “The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty” (Zeph.3:17).

Thirdly we may say that *the cause of Christ will prevail in the end*. At times things appear to go against it. Isaiah once lamented: “judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter” (Isa.59:14). But the Lord saw the situation – and He still does. We need Hezekiah’s confidence: “with us is the Lord our God to help us, and to fight our battles” (2Chron.32:8).

Our own church is faced with a testing situation. We may be tempted to doubt God’s faithfulness and to be fearful of the future but it is our duty and privilege to trust in the Lord like the Psalmist: “I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth all things for me” (Psa.57:2). □

Helps to Devotion (Rev. James Smith)

THE LOVE OF GOD. *“The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.”* (2 Thessalonians 3:5)

Is not this an inspired prayer to the Holy Spirit? It is the Spirit who is entreated to work, leading the minds of the Lord’s people into their Father’s love, and into the patient waiting for their beloved Saviour. As a divine person, one with the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit is an object of prayer; but according to the economy of the covenant, prayer is generally addressed *to* the Father, *through* the Son, *by* the teaching and help of the Holy Spirit. The love of God is infinite, and it is a subject full of sweet and spiritual comfort. The coming of Jesus is the great object of our hope; and considering the evils from which it will deliver us, and the blessings to which it will introduce us, it were no great wonder if we became impatient for it. O blessed Spirit, lead our souls into the love of God! May we believe it, realise our interest in it, and enjoy it as shed abroad in our hearts by thy most gracious agency. May we meditate on its eternity, infinity, and unchangeability, until we are filled with love to our God in return. Holy Comforter, fix our thoughts often on the glorious advent of Jesus. May we look for it, expect it, and daily prepare for it. May we think much of the grace that will then be brought unto us, and anticipate with delight the descent of our Lord in glory; remembering that “when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory.” O to share in all the glory of the first resurrection! and may we have a place appointed us at the marriage-supper of the Lamb. Lord Jesus, come quickly; and let us share thy triumphs, form part of thy train, and be for ever with thee! □

Parables of Jesus: 11. The Treasure Hid in a Field

(Please read Matthew 13:44)

Objects of great value are naturally fascinating to us. Their worth may be due to their great antiquity, rarity or other special quality. Many spend their lives collecting or hoarding such things. But what is the most precious possession we can have in this world? In this parable Christ teaches us about *real* treasure.

Routine

A man is working in a field, perhaps ploughing it with a yoke of oxen. This is his routine, labouring in the fields daily. Nothing much seems to change from day to day and year to year. His mind is sometimes on his work and sometimes elsewhere.

The experience of many within the church is like this. It is their habit to attend public worship yet the gospel bears no fruit in their lives. They do not “hunger and thirst after righteousness” (Matt.5:6). But they are in the right place, for in the ‘field’ of the Scriptures great spiritual treasure is to be found.

Discovery

One particular day the ploughshare strikes an object under the ground. Curious, the labourer stops and digs eagerly beneath the surface. Amazingly he has stumbled across buried treasure! It was not something he looked for or ever expected to find.

The pages of the Bible hide something priceless. It is Jesus Christ and salvation in Him. This treasure is hidden to us only because sin has made us blind. By God’s grace the eyes of some seem to be opened in an instant. They are converted quite suddenly and the change is obvious to themselves and others.

Rejoicing

On finding the treasure the workman is filled with a new joy. He has realised its great value and his desire is to possess it for himself.

To a troubled, burdened sinner Christ becomes everything. As God in our nature His obedient life, atoning death and victorious resurrection make Him the perfect Saviour for guilty men. He is “the chiefest among ten thousand” (Song 5:10) and the delight of every saved soul.

Investment

Although the man had found the treasure it was not yet certainly his. Carefully he reburied it and bought the field. Though this was a costly purchase (for it cost everything he had) yet it was well worth it.

Precious items may change hands for huge sums but salvation is had “without money and without price” (Isa.55:2) for we have nothing to buy it with. God requires us to turn from our sins and to receive Christ and His righteousness. When we know Him we say, “Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift” (2Cor.9:15). We are willing to sacrifice anything in our lives for the sake of God’s kingdom because of its infinite worth. We ‘dig up’ the treasures of salvation daily with the eyes of faith and the hands of prayer.

Friend, what is Jesus Christ and a full salvation worth to *you*? □

Sermon: Christ Forsaken (Rev. John Kennedy)

(Taken from Dr John Kennedy of Dingwall Sermon Notes 1859-1865, published by the James Begg Society in 2007. This sermon was preached in Dingwall Free Church on February 5th 1865.)

“And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” – Matthew 27:46

Jesus was now on the cross. He had been nailed to it by His hands and feet. The tree was lifted as He hung by the nails upon it, and thrust into the ground, and there an object of scorn to scoffing men. Jesus bore the pain and ignominy of the curse. The land was shrouded in darkness for three hours. The sun’s face was veiled in the hour of its creator’s agony. It was meet it should be so. An hour of darkness must it be that is the hour of Jehovah’s wrath. Darkness is a meet token of His awful frown. And this was the hour when its darkest deed was done by the power of hell and earth. It is fitting that the light should be withdrawn in this hour of the power of darkness. The ninth hour is come, and then comes a cry from the cross, a wail of agony such as was never heard on earth. “*Eli Eli, lama sabachthani*”.

It was not long since He who uttered this cry had said “ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me” (John 16:32). He spoke truly when He said so. It was truth too He uttered in that cry on the cross, though there

seems at first sight an inconsistency between them. We must, on account of the honour of His name who is true and faithful, enquire into the impact of this strange cry. I cannot shut my ear against it. I cannot turn away my eye from Him who speaks. I cannot but fix it on this hour which marks the crisis of His agony.

But I fear to draw nigh! The fire is burning, the green bush in the midst of which Jehovah dwells. Out of the midst of the fire a cry of agony arises to God. Most mysterious always must Emmanuel's communings with His Father be: but what can I comprehend of the intercourse of an hour in which an utterance like this is that in which the Son of God addresses the Father? Oh the deep mysteriousness of that dealing of which these words are to us the expression. But these words are written for our instruction. The Spirit, the promised teacher, searcheth all things, even the deep things of God. On His grace let us be dependent for light, faith and godly fear as we proceed.

I. The relation in which Christ stood to God even the Father.

II. The faith to which He gives expression.

III. The desertion of which He was conscious.

I. There was a threefold relation between Christ and God the Father:

1. He was His Son. How often does He call God His Father? How often did the words "My Father" come from His lips while He was on earth? And the Sonship which He claimed in relation to God was Sonship which He alone could claim. It was His Sonship as a divine Person eternally begotten of the Father, "I and my Father are one" (John 10:30). Thus claiming to be the Son and the equal of the Father at once. Nor was it unmeet that He should utter these words by His human lips, for that human nature subsisted in His divine Person and participated in the Sonship of that Person. Through His lips as the Son of man He might therefore truly and most fitly say "I and my Father are one."

2. He was Surety in relation to God as Judge. As the representative, the Kinsman-Surety of His people, He had to deal with God as Judge. God the Father representing and exercising the judicial authority of the Godhead must deal with Him as Surety according to His engagement for His guilty people. He was made sin, and He must be made a curse. The wrath of God against the sin imputed to Him must be poured out on Him. He must present in the interests of His law a stern demand for payment of the debt of obedience, and He must also demand from Him payment by blood for the debt due to justice because of sin. It is as Surety therefore He speaks regarding his sins (Psa. 40), regarding the waves and billows of God's wrath (Psa. 69). In the relation of Surety to His people on the one hand, and to the

Judge on the other. He obeyed and suffered. His work on earth as a Surety's work is therefore a righteousness which can go to their account for whom it was wrought out, and be a ground on which God as Judge can justify the ungodly.

3. He was Servant in relation to God as sovereign. In the exercise of His sovereignty, Jehovah purposed the salvation of His chosen people of the race of Adam. He continued the plan of fulfilling that purpose. The scheme is a divine one. It is God's therefore to provide for the execution of it. He who is to be charged with this cannot be apart from Himself. He can only owe to Himself in fulfilling His purposes. But He is also to be the representative of the people who are to be saved. He is to be a mediator between God and men. This is He who meets these conditions. He is Himself God, and yet He is mediator. He assumes a position not properly divine. He takes a place of subjection, and yet He is Himself divine. He is God, does a work for God. He is in the flesh the Father's servant. He hath received commandment from the Father. He is under the law of mediatorship doing the will of Him who sent Him. How often does Christ refer to the relationship to God while He was on the earth. It is in reference to it He said, "The Father is greater than I".

The whole mediation of Christ is in subordination to God's government as properly divine. "The head of Christ is God" (1 Cor. 11:3) in all His mediatorial work. True, He was in the form of a servant when on the earth as He is not now and never shall be. He is now in the form of a King. He has on His mediatorial throne all the blessedness and glory proper to the divine Person who is seated thereon. But it is a delegated power He hath as mediator, "All power is given unto me" (Matt. 28:18). "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him" (Phil. 2:9). And when the end cometh He shall deliver up the kingdom to the Father, that God may be all in all. He shall not then lay aside human nature, for after having delivered up the kingdom we read of Him as the Lord leading His people in heaven to living fountains of water.

In considering Christ and His work on earth, this threefold relation between Him and the Father must be kept in view. Without this we must misunderstand much of what is said by Him and regarding Him. There is much said of Him in one of these relations that cannot be affirmed of Him in any other. And there is perfect consistency throughout. How seemingly opposed are the two statements. "I and my Father are one" and "my Father is greater than I", and yet how consistent when we think of Christ uttering the one as Son and the other as Servant.

It is as the Servant of the Father He utters the exclamation in the text. It cannot be as Son. There is an infinite impossibility against it being so. It

cannot be as Surety for as Surety a visitation of wrath was all He had to expect. As such He had no claim upon God. As such the presence of God in the fire of His wrath was what He had to experience. Of the removal of that presence He would not thus have spoken. *Therefore* it is as the Father's servant we are here to think of Him as He exclaims, "*Eli Eli lama sabachthani*".

II. "*My God, My God*"

1. These words imply a sense of dependence upon God. The name here given to the Most High is that which conveys the idea of strength. This cry indicates that Jesus realised Him as His strength and felt His dependence on Him as such.

He did not import into His position as the Father's servant His personal independence as Jehovah the Son. He assumed a mediatorial position. He became the servant of the Father. The work was given Him to do in the name of the Godhead by the Father. At Jehovah's expense must that work be done. True, the Son is Himself God. But as Mediator He must do all in dependence on the Godhead, He must receive from the Father as the representative of the Godhead. How carefully thus is the honour of the Godhead preserved in connection with the mediation of Christ!

2. These words imply the exercise of faith in God the Father according to the promise given to Him in the Covenant. Then was the work given Him to do, and the promise of divine help in order to the accomplishment of it. It is in the faith of that promise He said, "The Lord God will help me, therefore shall I not be confounded" (Isa. 50:7). How wonderful the exercise of this faith! It is only in human nature that this exercise was possible. For:

[1.] It was only in human nature that He could have a feeling of dependence. How infinitely wonderful that the divine Person could in human nature feel dependent! But that nature was finite. In itself and by itself it was infinitely weak for the work of Christ. He realised and felt this. True, He was conscious of divine resources in Himself, but as the Father's servant, He in human nature must be dependent on the Father as the representative of the Godhead.

[2.] He in that nature on earth was out of the vision and enjoyment of what was proper to Him as the Son of God. He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. There was thus even to Him an opportunity of living a life of faith in God according to the promise.

But who can conceive of this exercise of faith aright? What a view must He have had of God. How perfect His apprehension of the Godhead

according to the promise! The authority and truth of the Father as pledging the Godhead to His support, of the fulness of the Godhead as dwelling in Himself, and of the overshadowing power of God the Holy Ghost by whom the divine resources were communicated to Him in human nature.

This was needed in view of the great work and awful sufferings before Him. Oh who can conceive of what was disclosed in His work and death to the mind of Jesus? In view of it, what could sustain Him but such a faith's view and hold of God?

But He was sustained (Isa. 50:7-9). He contemplates God and His promised help. "The Lord God will help me". He could therefore say, "I know that I shall not be confounded". He could anticipate His justification by God in the acceptance of His work. He saw all His foes as desperately weak. "They shall all wax old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up".

3. These words indicate His perfect love to, and delight in, God. They must give expression to such feelings. The cry is twice repeated; I cannot but think the holiest ever uttered on earth. Oh who can conceive of His love to God, His delight in God. "But thou art holy". Oh how He clave to God. Oh how was all His joy dependent on communion with God! What a response of love and delight must there have been in that holy soul to every view which He had of God. But this ground is too holy to tread upon!

III. When Christ speaks of forsaking, He speaks of a *reality*. And He speaks not merely of what was a reality in His own experience, but what was a reality in the actual dealing of God with Him. It must have been so. His people sometimes speak only regarding their experience when they misjudge the mind and dealings of the Lord. But it would be blasphemous to ascribe aught like this to Christ. He not only felt as if, but He was truly, forsaken, whatever the mode of that desertion.

This question *cannot* imply that there was any change in the mind of the Father towards Him as His Son. In this respect change is impossible from eternity to eternity. As there could be no damnation, so there would be no increase of the Father's love to Him as His Son. True, it is said by Christ, "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life" (John 10:17), but this does not imply that He procured a place in the Father's love by His death, nor that His devotion to the Father's service was the only reason why the Father loved Him; but that the Father would give expression to His love to Him as His servant in rewarding Him for the work which He finished in His death.

This does *not* refer to Christ's experience as Surety of the wrath of God as Judge. It was not now His experience of this began. He regarded all that

came upon Him in the way of reproach, shame and pain, as an expression of God's wrath. The curse is the judicial expression of God's wrath. He knew that all His humiliation and sufferings were the result of the curse for sin being transferred to Him. He encountered too a direct expression of that wrath. "All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me" (Psa. 42:7), He saith. But what He experienced in this hour of darkness was something distinct from this.

Neither was there anything in God's dealings with Him inconsistent with the truth of the promise of upholding strength. In perfect keeping with the perfect keeping of that promise was God's dealing with Him in this solemn hour.

Yet there was a withdrawal of the Father's presence from His soul. Hitherto in His work the Father was with Him as He was not with Him now. He was with Him not only secretly upholding Him but giving Him an assurance of His delight in Him and in His work. In expressed love and delight, He was hitherto with Him. His soul felt this nearness and presence of His God. The light of the Father's face hitherto rested on His soul.

We may not be able to understand how this consisted with the Father's blessing of Him as the Surety. We cannot conceive how the same Person could be at one and the same time the object of His delight and the object of His wrath. As some help out of this perplexity, let us consider how it was entirely on account of imputed sin that Christ had to endure the wrath and curse of God; and that in order becomingly to visit Him with His wrath, He must continue to shine on the individual as His Servant. And further let us consider how He sometimes deals with His children in giving them bitter cups to drink while at the same time He shines upon their souls with the light of His face. There is something however altogether unique in Christ's experience, for the fire of God's wrath was drying up His heart, while the light of God's favour shone on Him as His servant.

But at this ninth hour this light was withdrawn. Christ was forsaken. His soul felt the departure of God as to His comforting presence. From His human nature was withdrawn the expressed favour and felt help of God. Oh, who can conceive of this! I cannot look in on this ungratuitous withdrawal! I cannot look on that forsaken soul. I can but tremble and stand in awe as I hear the cry of agony! I can but wonder at being admitted to the inspired word of that cry!

How great the *darkness* which then settled down on the soul of Jesus. Now it was indeed that the light, the only light which shone upon His soul, was withdrawn.

How *lonely* did His soul then feel. Hell and earth were in league against

Him. His few friends among men forsook Him. He was enduring the outpoured wrath of God, and now the Father withdraws the light of His presence. His God forsakes Him. Then did He feel alone indeed!

How great the *agony* of that hour. Who can conceive of the pain to that holy soul involved in His being thus forsaken? His pain was perfect pain, for His purity was perfect purity.

It may be asked, Was the suffering of this hour *voluntary* on the part of Christ? Verily it must have been. He was willing to deny Himself for a season to the sustaining enjoyment of the light of God's face. This could not have come upon Him against His will. Never did He aught more willingly. Think of the resources of Godhead in His own Person. Could there have been a withdrawal of God's comforting presence but according to an exercise of His own sovereign will?

It may also be asked, Was the suffering of this hour *atoning* suffering? If it was as the Father's servant Christ was forsaken, how could His sufferings be atoning for what He endured as Surety alone could be so? True, it was as the Father's servant that He both enjoyed and lost the light of the Father's face. But let us not forget that the same Person was both Servant and Surety. What He endured in all the hours of His life on earth He endured in order to make atonement for sin. If there was a peculiarity about the sufferings of this hour, it was in order to meet the peculiarity of the sin for which He was then specially atoning.

And there is an *adaptation* between the *peculiarity of the sin* and the *peculiarity of the atoning suffering*. He was then atoning for the sin by which His children provoke the withdrawal of the light of God's face from their souls. They did so while children. But their sin is sin indeed. It must be atoned for ere it can be forgiven. It is most fitly atoned for by such sufferings as we have been considering. From Christ as the Father's servant, while He was acting the part of Surety, the light of the Father's face is withdrawn. He forsakes Him as to His comforting presence. His suffering at that hour atoned for the sins of God's children by which they provoke the hiding of His face. Their sin is committed in a state in which they are entitled to and have enjoyed the favour of God. This fitly atoned for by Christ suffering in His position as Surety because of the removal from Him of what He was entitled to and enjoying as the Father's servant.

And does He ask "*why*" He was forsaken? Yes, but not because He was proffering a complaint against God. Oh no! Never was His meekness more perfect than now.

Was it because He *knew not* why? Oh no! The end of all His sufferings was perfectly known to Him.

This “*why*” is the cry of *conscious holiness*. There was in Him no reason why He should be forsaken.

This “*why*” marks the *climax* of His sufferings. There was no “*why*” till now.

This question remained then unanswered.

APPLICATION

1. Seek to apprehend the threefold relation between Jesus and God which we endeavoured to describe. Keep it in view in studying the life and work and doctrine of Christ on earth. But always remember that it is the same Person who is Son, Servant and Surety; and mark the bearing of all He was on the great end of the work He finished. If it was a Surety’s work, then the unjust may look to it. If as the Father’s servant He wrought it, then be assured that the Father is disposed to be merciful to you in Christ; and if He who was Servant and Surety, was also the Son, then infinitely meritorious is His blood.

2. This passage is fraught with instruction to the children of God:

[1.] It *rebukes* them. How guilty is your *light esteem* of communion with God. How precious was this to Christ! How much it cost Him to secure it to you! He eclipsed, that the light might shine on you! How bitter ought your backsliding to be to you. Oh think of the dishonour done to God, of the loss to you, of the agony to Christ.

[2.] It offers gracious *encouragement*. You are here shown how your sin can be forgiven. Do you feel that the Lord is as a stranger? Are darkness and decay on your soul? Is the Lord’s face hidden? Have you other tokens of His anger besides His silence? Are your lusts prevailing? Is your lot troubled? Oh seek to ask the question of the text. You should find the answer to the text. Here in Christ is atonement. Here in Christ is sympathy. “Who is among you that feareth the Lord?” (Isa. 50:10).

3. There is an awful warning here to careless unbelievers. Oh, dear fellow sinners, ye are at your ease. Ye are keeping far off from the cross. Ye care nothing about communion with God. Ye make light of His awful anger. The agony of the Son of God moves you not. The cry of this Great One from the midst of the billows of God’s wrath falls on insensate hearts when it reaches you! Oh, dear friends, bethink you of what you are doing. You care not for the refuge of the Christ. You still provoke the wrath of God. But either Jesus shall be your deliverer, or Ezekiel 5:13: “Thus shall mine anger be accomplished, and I will cause my fury to rest upon them, and I will be comforted: and they shall know that I the Lord have spoken it in my zeal, when I have accomplished my fury in them.” □

Christian Doctrines Explained: 11. The Fall

Q.13. *Did our first parents continue in the estate wherein they were created?*

A. Our first parents, being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the estate wherein they were created, by sinning against God.

We have seen that after God made man He entered into a covenant of works with him. Adam was promised life on giving full obedience to God's will. But did Adam obey his Maker? How did he use his will?

Freedom

Our will is our faculty of choosing or refusing. It is important to understand that Adam and Eve as created had a freedom of will that we as sinners do not have. Their will was naturally inclined to what is good and pleasing to God, although they had the ability to change. *Our* will is naturally inclined to what is evil and hateful to God; moreover we have no ability of ourselves to change this.

That God placed the first man and woman, made in His own image, under a rule which they were required to keep and threatened to punish any failure, tells us two things. Firstly, that they had the power within themselves to obey it and, secondly, that there was the possibility that they might *disobey* it.

Rebellion

The message of the Bible is that Adam and Eve did *not* continue as they were in their original, innocent state. At a certain point in time they defied the will of God. They were tempted by Satan but they were not forced from outside of themselves: it was their own free choice. The creature rebelled against the Creator. What a solemn thing! The significant word which the Bible so often uses to describe this is *sin*. Man's sin resulted immediately in man's *fall*. This was the descent of the human race from the high state of righteousness to the low state of wickedness. "God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions" (Ecc.7:29).

Omission

If sin brought about such a tragic change in mankind, and if we desire to be delivered from it, then we surely need to know exactly what sin is. The measure of sin is never what we think, or what the majority think, but what the *law of God* says. Whatever God commands we are bound to

do. The law for all man-kind is the *moral law*, summarised for us in the ten commandments.

God's law teaches us that there are sins of *omission*. We sometimes speak of our "shortcomings". Sin is to "miss the mark" by not reaching God's standard of obedience. Many things that we should do we have left undone or done imperfectly.

Commission

There are also sins of *commission*. We speak of our "transgressions". Sin is to "exceed the bounds" by going beyond the limits set by God's law. "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law; for sin is the transgression of the law" (1John 3:4). Many things that we should not do we have in fact done.

Nothing can be a sin but what God has forbidden directly or indirectly in His law. But we should know that *every* sin, being a challenge to God's authority and very character, is serious in His sight. fulfilled in him and in those he represented. He must perform *perfect obedience* to the will of God. The moral law was already written in his heart. In addition God gave him a special command not to eat of the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil" (Gen.2:17). Adam's obedience was to be perfect in its principle – love to God; in its extent – thoughts and words as well as deeds; in its degree – every action; and in its duration – always and forever. □

The Reformation in Scotland: 11. The Tumult in Perth

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

Nothing can more strikingly prove the importance of this timely arrival of the great Scottish reformer, than the consternation it excited in the hearts of his antagonists. The day for the trial of the preachers was close at hand, and their enemies were busily engaged in completing their treacherous plots against the lives of those devoted men. For several days the provincial council of the clergy had been sitting in the monastery of the Greyfriars; and on the morning of the 3rd of May, they had again met and resumed their deliberations. While they were thus engaged, on a sudden one of the fraternity entered the monastery, and rushed into the presence of the council, breathless with haste, and pale with terror, exclaiming in broken words—"John Knox! John Knox is come! he is come! he slept last night in

Edinburgh!" The council was panic-struck. In dumb dismay they contemplated the ruin of all the plans which they had given their gold and stained their souls with guilt to fabricate. At once stunned and terrified, they ceased to deliberate, broke up the council, and dispersed in great haste and confusion.

Amessenger was instantly sent to the Queen-regent with the unwelcome information; and within a few days Knox was proclaimed an outlaw and a rebel, in virtue of the sentence formerly pronounced against him by the clergy. He stayed but one day in Edinburgh; and being resolved to cast himself at once into the heart of the conflict, and to share the dangers of his brethren, he hurried to Dundee, and joined those who were preparing to proceed to the trial at Stirling. With them he hastened to Perth, where the main adherents of the Reformation were by this time assembled, waiting the result of the negotiations between the Queen-regent and Erskine of Dun, of which mention has been already made.

The Queen, as already stated, had promised to Erskine that the trial of the preachers should be postponed; but when the day of trial came, they were summoned, and, not appearing, they were outlawed, and all persons were prohibited, "under pain of rebellion, to assist, comfort, receive, or maintain them in any sort." At the same time, the gentlemen who had given security for their appearance were fined. Indignant at this act of gross deceit and injury, and apprehensive of personal danger, Erskine contrived to escape from Stirling unobserved, and hastened to Perth with the intelligence of what had taken place. An event immediately followed the return of Erskine to Perth, which has often been grievously misrepresented, to the prejudice of the reformers, very unjustly, by the favourers of Prelacy; and as Dr M'Crie has given a very full account of it in his *Life of Knox*, we extract the passage.

"It happened that, on the same day on which the news came of the Queen's treacherous conduct at Stirling, Knox, who remained at Perth, preached a sermon, in which he exposed the idolatry of the mass and of image-worship. The audience had quietly dismissed, and a few idle persons only loitered in the church, when an imprudent priest, wishing to try the disposition of the people, or to show his contempt of the doctrine which had just been delivered, uncovered a rich altar-piece, decorated with images, and prepared to celebrate mass. A boy, having uttered some expressions of disapprobation, was struck by the priest. He retaliated by throwing a stone at the aggressor, which, falling on the altar-piece, broke one of the images. This operated as a signal upon the people present, who had sympathised with the boy; and in course of a few minutes, the altar, images, and all the ornaments of the church, were torn down and trampled under foot. The noise

soon collected a mob, which, finding no employment in the church, flew, by a sudden and irresistible impulse, upon the monasteries; and although the magistrates of the town and the preachers assembled as soon as they heard of the riot, yet neither the persuasions of the one, nor the authority of the other, could restrain the fury of the people, until the houses of the gray and black friars, with the costly edifice of the Carthusians monks, were laid in ruins. None of the gentlemen or the sober part of the congregation were concerned in this unpremeditated tumult: it was wholly confined to the lowest of the inhabitants, or, as Knox designs them, 'the rascal multitude.' If this disorderly conduct must be traced to a remote cause, we can impute it only to the wanton and dishonourable perfidy of the Queen-regent.

In fact, nothing could be more favourable to the designs of the Regent than this riot. By her recent conduct she had forfeited the confidence of the Protestants, and even exposed herself in the eyes of the sober and moderate of her own party. This occurrence afforded her an opportunity of turning the public indignation from herself, and directing it against the Protestants. She did not fail to improve it with her usual address. She magnified the accidental tumult into a dangerous and designed rebellion. Having called the nobility to Stirling, she, in her interviews with them, insisted upon such topics as were best calculated to persuade the parties into which they were divided. In conversing with the Catholics, she dwelt upon the sacrilegious overthrow of those venerable structures which their ancestors had dedicated to the service of God. To the Protestants who had not joined their brethren at Perth, she complained of the destruction of the charter-house, which was a royal foundation; and, protesting that she had no intention of offering violence to their consciences, promised to protect them, provided they would assist her in punishing those who had been guilty of this violation of public order. Having inflamed the minds of both parties, she collected an army from the adjacent countries, and advanced to Perth, threatening to lay waste the town with fire and sword, and to inflict the most exemplary vengeance on all who had been instrumental in producing the riot."

Aconsiderable body of French troops strengthened the Queen's army, and increased the danger of the Protestants, who were also weakened by the retreat of many of their own party, confiding in the previous pacific declarations of the Queen. But messengers had been sent by the reformers from Perth, requesting their friends to come to their defence with all possible expedition; and so readily were those entreaties responded to, that before the Queen's army had reached Perth, the reformers were enabled to assume an attitude of self-defence sufficiently imposing to cause the Queen to propose overtures of accommodation. The promptitude of the Earl of Glencairn, on

this emergency, deserves particular mention. In an almost incredibly short space of time, he assembled about two thousand five hundred men, and marched from Ayrshire to Perth, bringing this large reinforcement to his brethren there, while they were treating with the Queen-regent.

The Queen employed the Earl of Argyle and Lord James Stewart to treat with the Lords of the Congregation at Perth; and an agreement was entered into, in which it was stipulated, that the town should be left to the Queen; that none of the inhabitants should be called in question for what had taken place; that the French should not enter the town; and that, when the Queen retired, there should be no garrison left in it. To these terms the reformers agreed; at the same time stating, that they did not expect the Queen to keep faith with them any longer than till she obtained the power to break it with safety to herself; and Argyle and Stewart declaring that if she should violate the treaty, they would leave her, and openly take part with their brethren, to whom they considered themselves bound by the most sacred ties. Before quitting Perth, the Lords of the Congregation framed and subscribed another bond, pledging them to mutual support and defence in the cause of religion, or any cause dependent thereupon, by whatsoever pretext it might be coloured and concealed. This has been generally called THE SECOND COVENANT. It was subscribed in the name of the whole Congregation, by the Earls of Argyle and Glencairn, Lord James Stewart, the Lords Boyd and Ochiltree, and Matthew Campbell of Terringland, on the 31st of May 1559. □

Precious Psalms: 11. A Firm Foundation

“If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?” (Psalm 11:3)

When Saul was on the throne David was forced to flee for his life. The nation was in disorder. Truth, justice, mercy and other pillars of both church and state were crumbling. We are in a very unstable period ourselves, a time when “all the foundations of the earth are out of course” (Psa.82:5). These times are dangerous for God’s people, but we are not left without comfort.

History

In history many civilisations have destroyed themselves through violence and corruption. Wicked rulers have perverted their people and provoked God to remove their regimes. Many churches too have destroyed themselves through unbelief and immorality, firstly of the clergy and then of the

laity. Where are the seven churches of Asia today? They refused to hear what “the Spirit saith unto the churches” (Rev.2:7) and so they ruined their own foundations.

Security

It is impossible though that the *ultimate* foundations of religion should be destroyed. Christ said concerning His church: “The gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matt.16:18). The devil shall never defeat her. She will continue to plunder his kingdom and gain souls. Scripture says of the Christian: “The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his” (2Tim.2:19). We are secure in Christ. In *Him* we have a firm foundation.

Restoration

In evil days the godly may feel helpless. What can we do? Sinful times must be *praying* times. “The Lord is in his holy temple, the Lord’s throne is in heaven” (v.4). God’s throne is unshakeable; He may be sought for a deliverance. Sinful times should be *preaching* times too. “For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven” (Psa.119:89). The Bible is not shaken; its message needs proclaiming now. This alone will restore our nation and set church and state upon their proper foundations once again. □

For Young People: *Birds of the Bible*

11. The Stork – Bird of Judgment

“The stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times...but my people know not the judgment of the Lord” (Jeremiah 8:7)

We have now come to the last in our series on 'Birds of the Bible'. And the message we have this time is really the last great message of the Bible. It is this. Jesus Christ is coming again! In the final chapter of the Bible Jesus speaks from heaven and says, “Surely I come quickly” (Rev.22:20). The same Saviour who at his first coming was “despised and rejected of men” will one day soon return with great power and glory. This day has been fixed from all eternity.

God has appointed every event in his creation. He governs all that he has made. We have already mentioned the migration of birds as a remarkable example of this. The stork, as we learn from our text, is a migrating bird. It

seems to know just when it must fly away to Africa to escape the severe weather of winter, and when it must return again to begin breeding in the spring. It happens like clockwork each year! The White Stork, a large, heron-like bird with a long red bill, once bred in Britain and still visits countries like Germany and the Netherlands. The stork is a bird which always keeps its appointments.

Do you know that there are two great appointments which we must all keep too? We do not know exactly when they will be, but we shall keep them nonetheless. We shall not miss them or be late for them, as we sometimes can be. What are these appointments?

The first appointment is *death*. The Bible says, "It is appointed unto men once to die" (Heb.9:27). Like the stork flying away for the winter, when we die our soul will fly away from its home within our body and go to God. Death is God's payment to us for our sin. Adam was warned by God that he would die when he ate the forbidden fruit (Gen.2:17). When he sinned his soul died immediately, meaning that he no longer knew God. His body died many years later when his soul departed this world.

The second appointment is *judgment*. "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment". Like the stork returning to its nest, at the resurrection our soul will return to our body, and we shall then be judged by God. Though God takes note of our sins from day to day a final judgment is also promised to us.

The Lord Jesus Christ is to return to this world as the Judge of all the earth. He will sit upon a great white throne. We will stand before his judgment seat and give account of ourselves to God (Rom.14:10,12). Every one of our thoughts, words and deeds has been recorded by him. Jesus will "judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth" (Psa.96:13). He will pass sentence upon every man, woman, boy and girl. Our eternal destiny will be either heaven or hell.

The great thing about the judgment day is that we already know what the verdict will be! God has told us in the Bible that our destiny then depends on what we do with his dear Son now. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16). Dear friend, the most important thing I can ever tell you is that you are a sinner and that you must repent of all your sins and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ who died at Calvary to save the perishing!

Sadly many do not take note of God's warnings. They do not heed the punishments which the Lord sends upon the wicked in this life. They do not listen to God's Word, which is the only standard of right and wrong and which tells us to "flee from the wrath to come" (Matt.3:7). And especially

they do not turn to Jesus Christ seeking God's pardon for their sins. This is true even of many who attend church. God complains of them, "my people know not the judgment of the Lord".

There is an interesting thing about the stork. It is known as the "pious bird", because of its great affection and tenderness. The parent birds care for their young when they are growing up, and the young birds care for their parents when they are aged. This is how we should live, and how we *will* live, if God's grace has entered our lives. When we know the lovingkindness of the Lord, forgiving us all our sins, then we will show kindness to others.

Jesus said, "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy" (Matt.5:7). The judgment day is a day of mercy for the believer. It is not what we deserve. We truly deserve to go to hell for our sins. Yet on that day Jesus will say these wonderful words to his people; "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt.25:34).

The stork knows her appointed times – but do you know yours? Be wise and think on these things. Do not neglect God's so great salvation. Pray with all your heart that God would make you ready for the great judgment day! □

Gàidhlig: Na dean uail a thaobh an là màireach – Gnath-fhacail 27:1 (Seonaidh Mac'ill Eathainn)

Nach tric a'chuala sinn bho ur sinnsearaidh nacheil an là màireach air a 'ghealladh dhuinn. Aig amannan eile bha e cho cumannta na seann daoine bhi ag radh rinn, "ma ghleidheas an Cruthaidhear sinn 's gu faic sinn an latha màireach." Bha na briathran seo air an cleachdadh nan còmhradh làthail agus cha bhiodh e ceadaichde dhuit a 'chaochladh a' radh gun a 'bhi air do ceartachadh. Bha speis air a' thoirt do rùn a 'Chruthaidhear anns a chòmhradh choitchionn agus bha sluagh an àite nas cùramaiche nan imeachd spioradail seach mar a tha e an diugh. Faodaidh sinn a 'thuigsinn bho bhriathran a 'cheann-teagaisg gu bheil na Sgriobtuirean ga'r stiùradh air an aon ràmh agus nacheil atharrachadh air focal an Tighearna bho'n uair ud chun an àm seo.

Tha an Fhìrinn a' labhairt ri gach aon againn an diugh nach urrainn dhuinne a'bharrachd bhi coimhead air an là màireach mar gum biodh coir agus sealbh againn air. Tha Focal Dhè ag innseadh dhuinn gu foilleasach gur ann an Dia a 'mhainn a tha "ur bith agus ur beatha agus ur n'uile chomasan gluasad." Chaneil fios aig duine sam bith co latha neo an uair a 'ghairmear sinn a' dh'ionnsaigh ar dachaigh bhuan agus nach tric a' chì sinn sin air a'

dhearbhadh dhuinn a measg ‘ur co-chreutairean. Tha an t-òg agus an sean air an gairm air falbh nuair as lugha dùil ris. Is e an cheisd dhuitsa agus dhòmhsa an diugh; am bheil sinn a ‘gabhail ri focal Dhè a tha ‘g innseadh dhuinn cho taisbeanach gur ann Aige-san tha uile choir air an nì sin?

Tha an rabhadh air a’thoirt dhuinn anns a cheann-teagaisg chum is gum faic sinn an amaideas tha annainn mur a ‘bheil sinn a toirt an aite sin do’n Tighearna. “S ann aige-san tha fios air ‘ur crìoch agus air ‘ur beatha. Gum beannaichean È sinn le gliocas gu bhi toirt fainear ‘ur suidheachadh. □

Congregational News

Communion

The services at our Communion (10th-14th September) are as follows (D.V):-

Thu:	12.00noon (Rev. Graeme Craig); 7.30pm (Rev. John Keddie)
Fri:	12.00noon (Rev. Graeme Craig); 7.30pm (Rev. John Keddie)
Sat:	12.00noon (Rev. Graeme Craig); 6.00pm (prayer meeting)
Sabbath:	11.00am (prayer meeting); 12.00noon (the Lord’s supper) (Rev. Graeme Craig); 6.30pm (Rev. Graeme Craig)
Mon:	11.00am (Rev. Graeme Craig)

Please pray for the Lord’s blessing upon these services.

Congregational Fellowships

On September 13th we hope to have a fellowship with one of the ministers visiting for the Communion. In October we hope to continue our fellowships on the theme of ‘Truth and Error’ in which we are comparing the teachings of the major world religions and cults with the teachings of the Bible. At the meeting on October 18th we intend to consider Mormonism. The meetings are held in the manse after the Sabbath evening service as intimated and are open to all who are interested. For more information visit our website: www.northuistandgrimsayfcc.org.uk

Commission of Assembly

On October 6th the Commission of Assembly is due to meet in Inverness. The Commission will be dealing with the outcome of the recent court case concerning the church property in Broadford. Please pray for the ministers and elders, that the Lord will show us the proper way ahead and give us strength to follow it. “I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye” (Psa.32:8). □

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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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