

Grace & Truth

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

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

Vol. 2 No. 6

November-December 2009

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Contents

Minister's Message: <i>God's Saving Power</i>	1
Helps to Devotion: <i>Joy and Peace</i>	2
Parables of Jesus: <i>12. The Pearl of Great Price</i>	3
Sermon: <i>The Intercession of Christ</i>	4
Christian Doctrines Explained: <i>12. Original Sin</i>	11
The Reformation in Scotland: <i>12. Popish Worship Abolished</i>	12
Precious Psalms: <i>12. Pure Words</i>	16
For Young People: <i>Plants of the Bible: 1. The Rose</i>	17
Gàidhlig: <i>Na cuir suarach smachdachadh an Tighearna</i>	19
Congregational News	20

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Minister's Message: God's Saving Power

We all tend to take pride in our abilities. Indeed man has accomplished some remarkable things through the centuries. But where do we get our abilities from? Do they not all come from God? And what do we have in comparison with Him? Think of God's great power. We see it in creation, for "He hath made the earth by his power" (Jer.10:12); God made everything out of nothing. We see it also in providence, for "He ruleth by his power for ever" (Psa.66:7); God reigns over the affairs of men and nations. Truly He is the Almighty.

The greatest display of God's power is to be seen in *redemption*. Think back to the Old Testament and the time of Israel's captivity in Egypt. When plagues struck the Egyptians in judgment this was "the finger of God" at work (Exod.8:19) but when the Israelites were finally brought out of the house of bondage it was by God's "hand" (Exod.15:6). In the salvation of the church God actually makes bare His holy "arm" (Isa.52:10). What is involved in this greatest of all His works?

Firstly there is *Christ*, who is "the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (1Cor.1:24). As the eternal Son of God our Lord Jesus Christ has divine power yet becoming man as the Mediator He was obedient unto death, being "crucified through weakness" (2Cor.13:4). However in this way He satisfied divine justice for His people and made an end of sin, destroying the devil's power. As a result Christ has "abolished death" for believers (2Tim.1:10). Our Saviour lives "after the power of an endless life" (Heb.7:16) and He has eternal life to give to the guilty and hell-deserving. Our need is to be joined to Christ!

Secondly there is the *gospel*, which is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom.1:16). The gospel is literally the "dynamite" of God: however it is not a destructive power but a constructive one. Through the preaching of God's word we hear Christ's voice. We come to know this precious Redeemer who mends broken hearts and rebuilds shattered lives. Jesus repairs the damage done by sin and restores men to God, never to fall again. Salvation is to be had by turning to the God who is rich in mercy. By the gospel our minds are enlightened in the knowledge of the truth and our wills are renewed, so that we freely choose Christ as our Lord and Saviour. He welcomes all. "God is mighty, and despiseth not any" (Job 36:5).

Thirdly there is *grace*, which is "the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe" (Eph.1:19). This is what makes the gospel powerful. We have no ability at all to save ourselves but by grace we who

are “dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph.2:1) are born again and enabled to repent and believe the gospel. United to the Saviour we enjoy a risen and ascended life, with glory to come! Our affections are set on things above and we look for the return of Christ in power and glory.

Do you know the power of God in the salvation of your soul? Have you passed from death to life spiritually? If you have then you will be worshipping and serving the Lord with gladness. If you have not then remember that this is the one thing that you cannot do without. □

Helps to Devotion (Rev. James Smith)

JOY AND PEACE. “*Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.*” (Romans 15:13)

Pray one for another, is an apostolic precept, and it is carried out by the penmen of the sacred writings. What they sought for others we may ask for ourselves. God, as our God in Christ, excites hope in our bosoms; and hope vents itself in prayer. We may hope not only for *good* things, but for *great* things; and there we *may*, we *should* ask for them. There is a fulness of joy for the Lord’s people, and peace that passeth all understanding. We may not only hope, but *abound in hope*; expecting more and more from God, through the Lord Jesus and by the power of the Holy Spirit. Gracious God, deliver us from gloom and grief; save us from doubt and despondency; and fill, O fill us, with joy,—pure, spiritual, holy joy! We would joy in God; we would rejoice in Christ Jesus; we would be at peace with God, and at peace with all mankind. O let the peace of God rule in our hearts, and keep us cool and calm in the day of battle and in the hour of temptation! Spirit of God, exert thy power within us, conquering our unhappy tempers, governing our unruly passions, cleansing our polluted consciences, and filling us with joy, and peace, and hope. O God of hope, help us to hope in thee, and give us daily encouragement to expect great and glorious blessings from thee! Grant us thy presence, in which is fulness of joy; and impart to us thy grace, which will make us peaceful and happy. O make us happy Christians, that we may recommend thy religion to all about us; and by the sweetness of our tempers, the cheerfulness of our spirits, and the earnestness of our testimony, win many souls to Christ! O to be holy, happy, and useful, in our day and generation! □

Parables of Jesus: 12. The Pearl of Great Price

(Please read Matthew 13:45,46)

This parable is very similar to the preceding one about the treasure hid in a field (v.44). Again Jesus is showing us how sinners are saved. Knowing Christ and the blessings He gives to our souls is like owning an object so valuable that nothing can compare with it. How is this?

Interest

Here we find a man who is single-minded. He makes his living by buying and selling and his trade is in pearls. His great aim is to find pearls of quality. He has a trained eye, for he has studied his subject carefully. It consumes all his waking hours.

People are usually converted through reading their Bibles, listening to sound sermons and praying. God is “a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Heb.11:6). While God is sovereign, His promises of salvation are made to those who seriously look for Him (Jer.29:13). An unconverted man has no eye for Christ, for “there is no beauty that we should desire him” (Isa.53:2). We need to be taught by God Himself. Make sure it is the Christ of the Bible you are seeking. There are false pearls which cloud, become brittle and crumble into worthless dust. So Jesus warned, “there shall arise false Christs” (Matt.24:24).

Value

After long years the merchant man comes across a pearl which sets his heart racing. True, it does not *look* very special to most eyes. Its present owner seems happy enough to sell it. Unfashioned and unpolished, the great value of this pearl was hidden.

This illustrates Christ Himself. Chemically, pearl is a very ordinary substance – the same as chalk or lime. In His physical appearance Jesus was certainly unremarkable. To many He was just “the carpenter” (Mark 6:3), a humble man from a humble family. The brilliance of His deity was masked by the ordinariness of His humanity. Yet for those who have eyes to see there is no mistaking His true identity. His moral glory is seen in His words and actions; His divine glory is seen in His forgiving sin (Matt.9:2) and in His transfiguration (Matt.17:1,2). His atonement for sin makes Him of infinite value to guilty sinners.

Cost

To own this unique pearl the trader had to do something which his friends thought very foolish. He had to sell *everything* that he had! But it was in fact a great bargain. He never regretted making that decision.

Few truly grasp this when it comes to the gospel itself. A man must 'lose' his life for the sake of Christ. Levi the tax-collector understood this. When Jesus called him "he left all, rose up, and followed him" (Luke 5:27,28). The amazing thing is that the sincere believer is never really a loser, for he finds true meaning, purpose and contentment in his life. Do you see the real beauty of Jesus Christ? Are you seeking this great Pearl as your very own? □

Sermon: *The Intercession of Christ* (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 Inverness on November 13th 1865.)

"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." – Hebrews 7:25

The priesthood of Christ is the great theme of this epistle; the design being to commend to the Hebrews the sufficiency of Christ's priesthood, to prove that it superseded all preceding priesthood, and to assure them that He by Himself was able to save unto the uttermost.

He lays the foundation by a statement of the doctrine of Christ's Person; proving Him to be the eternal Son of God – very God on the throne of God. He states also the doctrine of His incarnation and describes His fitness, as God manifest in the flesh, for the work with which as High Priest He was charged.

He then, after warning of the danger of unbelief in Christ, proceeds to the subject of His priesthood, with a view to exhibit its superiority to that of Aaron:

1. Because He was a priest after the order of Melchisedek, who was both King and Priest, to whom Abraham, and in his loins the sons of Levi, paid tithes – of whose birth and death there is no account and who was therefore like the Son of God.

2. Because His priesthood was evidently intended to supersede that of

Aaron as an imperfect and temporary thing.

3. Because Christ's was an unchangeable priesthood. It rested on the power of an endless life.

4. Because He was made priest with an oath.

5. Because there was a succession of individuals in the office of the Aaronic priesthood; while Christ continueth ever.

From this, the text is a conclusion. "*Wherefore*" – this connects with what precedes the words which follow as a conclusion from premises. And the special ground of Christ's ability to save is pointed to by the word "*seeing*".

In addressing you from these I propose:

I. To consider the saving ability here ascribed to Christ.

II. The parties who share the benefit of its exercise.

III. The ground of Christ's ability so save.

IV. Application.

I. This ability is not the personal divine power of Christ. It is not ability resting on what He is as God, although without being God He could not have this ability.

This ability is not His personal fitness for His office as Saviour. It is not His ability to do what is required in order to His procuring salvation for sinners.

Nor is it His official power as Redeemer in general. All saving power is vested in Him as the one Redeemer. I must find all saving ability in Him. This He exercises in His three offices of Prophet, Priest and King. But this is His saving ability as the Great High Priest.

Nor is this the saving ability arising out of His priesthood as a whole. On the exercise of His office as High Priest two things are made to depend:

1. The procuring by price of redemption for His people. This was secured by His sacrifice of Himself.

2. The certainty of the application of that redemption.

This double end is answered by the priesthood of Christ. It is, as answering that end, the fundamental office. It is on the ground of His work as Priest He can execute His offices as Prophet and as King.

This ability to save rests, according to the text, on the intercession of Christ as High Priest.

"*To save*". It may be said that salvation is something of which the persons of believers are the subjects; and that Christ's business as High Priest is with God, and that any priestly ability which Christ has cannot operate directly on His people as the subjects of salvation. True, but we are

to consider salvation as that of which they are the subjects, and if it is not the direct effect of Christ's ability as High Priest, it results from it and is secured by it.

We are to consider the salvation flowing from Christ's ability as intercessor, as comprehending all which Christ has undertaken to secure to them as their Redeemer. It embraces all that God purposed to communicate to His people. It includes not merely deliverance from wrath, sin, Satan, the world, death and the grave; but the possession of all that eternal good which is comprehended in the favour of God, the fatherly love of God, the joy of His communion and the honour of His service on the earth, and the perfect blessedness and unspeakable glory of the eternal fellowship and service of God in heaven.

And we are to consider this salvation not merely in the gross [*in a general way*], or in the grand result of its being perfected, but in its steps and stages in the history and consciousness of believers. For these go on *pari passu* [*with equal pace together*] with Christ's intercession. His saving ability tells on each stage of the process, on each step of the work, and suffices for each one of them all at each step of their course, at each crisis in their experience. For,

“*To the uttermost*” He is able to save. Not only throughout all generations of men, but to the end of each believer's course, and to the uttermost extremity to which they can come in their course.

1. To the uttermost of time.
2. To the end of the course of each one of them.
3. To the uttermost of God's purpose and promise.
4. To the uttermost extremity of each one of them all.

All this must be included in this uttermost. The first must involve all the others.

[1.] To the uttermost of guilt in backsliding. For, Oh, how far may they go astray! How guilty their departures from God, after what He has done for them and their vows to cleave to Him in faith and love. But He is able to save them to the uttermost; to secure the removal of their guilt, their return again to God and their preservation from the sin by which they were ensnared. E.g. David. Peter.

[2.] To the uttermost of want. They never can be so poor but He can save them. All traces gone of what they once had. No strength to repair for more, and no hope of being brought. E.g. A family reduced to such straits

in time of famine that there was nought left but the refuse of former food which had become nauseous. It spoilt their appetite instead of appeasing it. And their strength to move out of the empty house to the full storehouse gone. And a murderer at the window shouting that they would soon be his. This want felt when work is required. Spring work is required, and the strength for it is gone. And their hopes are dying out. They want food, and strength, and hope. Work is pressing and death is near. Others are feeding and they see them passing their door with bread in their hand, and health in their countenance, and strength in their body. But Christ is able to save to the uttermost of your wants.

[3]. To the uttermost of trial.

(1) From God. His chastisements are for the present grievous (12:11), but to the uttermost He can sympathise and save.

(2) From Satan. E.g. Peter. "Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not" (Luke 22:31,32).

(3) From the world. E.g. Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. He can:

(1) Preserve your life to the appointed time.

(2) Sustain you under the trial.

(3) Sanctify it to you. All these trials together. "*To the uttermost*".

[4]. To the uttermost of life. When all other help is vain, when you are leaving all on earth behind you. When you are on the verge of eternity. Even then and there the Lord can help. To that "*uttermost*" "*He is able to save*". Even though heart and flesh both fainted and failed.

II. All "*that come unto God by Him*".

This is a Spirit given view of faith, or of the worship of all true believers. "He that cometh" as a worshipper "to God must believe that He is...." (11:6). The true worship of God presupposes the true faith in God. We must therefore consider both the faith and the worship.

1. *Faith*.

[1.] The believer must to a greater or less extent be persuaded that there is no help for him but in God.

[2.] He is persuaded that he cannot have help from God apart from Jesus Christ. Apart from Christ he can know Him only as an object of terror and of enmity.

[3.] He is enlightened to know Christ as the way and the truth and the life. He knows Him as set apart by God to be the way. He cannot come by Him but as the Christ of God. He knows Him as God's gift to him in the gospel. He discerns somewhat of His suitableness to his own case as a sinner, and on the other to secure the interests of God's name and government.

[4.] He can come to God in confidence just:

(1) As he comes in on the ground of Christ's merits alone, leaving his acceptance depending entirely on Him.

(2) As he apprehends how God is glorified in the finished work.

(3) As he attains to receive as true God's testimony of His love.

(4) As he can hold in the hand of faith His own word of promise and plead it before God. Thus by Christ he believes in God, his faith and hope are now in God.

[5.] The more closely faith takes to do with Christ as High Priest, the surer is the soul of access with boldness to God.

2. *Worship*. This coming unto God in faith secures coming unto God in worship. All true worship is a coming unto God by Christ.

This is true of all spiritual worship. In all exercises of worship we draw near to God. But the true worshipper's soul comes to God by Christ. It is in Him he finds his right and strength to come. Thus of reading, singing, preaching as well as prayer.

Faith secures a true worship of God. For by faith it is that His glory in the face of Jesus is discerned. By faith his obligations to God are realised. From faith flow all the exercises of grace before God. Humiliation, repentance, zeal, reverence and godly fear.

All these, and no more, shall be saved unto the uttermost.

III. "*He ever liveth*". As High Priest He did not die. True, as a sacrifice for sin He died. True, He was High Priest who gave Himself a sacrifice. But as High Priest He died not. He had a life in the eternal Godhead which death could not approach. He lived as a divine Person when His death was being accomplished on the cross. He was acting as Priest even then.

Through that death He entered *on an eternal life*. He could have passed into it only through death. His death was death for sin, for sinners. As their Surety He died. He could not as their Head live for evermore for them unless He had first died for them. He won a right to live for ever for them by dying for them. As their Head He lives, as He as their Head was dead.

This life is for evermore. This life He as High Priest exercises in making intercession.

He hath entered on this life to make intercession with His own blood. This blood is the ground on which He pleads. He asks what He hath purchased and merited by His blood. He presents it as that by which the name of God was glorified and His will done. And on this ground He pleads as a High Priest upon His throne the blessings of His purchase for His people.

His intercession is minute and unremitting. He knows that He meets in His pleading all His people's wants, and that, as for Peter, He pleads for individuals and for particular cases. He ever liveth to make intercession. His life is in order to this. As continuous as the living is, therefore the pleading.

How He maketh intercession we know not, beyond that He pleads His own blood and presents, on the ground of it, His will before God. He pleads from a throne.

But it may be asked, "What necessity is there for His intercession, and why is it mentioned to account for His ability to save to the uttermost?"

1. We are not to suppose that the intercession is in supplement of His sacrifice. The purchase of redemption was complete by the sacrifice. The intercession is to be connected entirely with the application of redemption.

2. We are not to think that the necessity of it arises from any unwillingness on the part of God to bestow the blessing of Christ's purchase.

3. We are not to think that it is in order to intercept the judicial wrath from those who were already justified. The imputed blood secures this.

Mark that the intercession bears on the application of redemption. Jehovah hath arranged that all the blessings of salvation should be bestowed not only in the right, but on the intercession of Christ. This is most becoming the majesty of God. Here is God's way of securing the due honouring of His majesty in dealing with men through the Mediator. Even He makes intercession. And nought shall ever be communicated unto them but according to His intercession.

We need not wonder therefore though Christ's ability to save is based upon His intercession. Christ must first prevail with God ere ever I can get anything I need. All according to the divine arrangement depends on Christ's intercession.

1. The Fatherly forgiveness of their backsliding.
2. Their being kept from falling away finally.

3. Their preservation from the designs of Satan.
4. Their sanctification.
5. Their glorification (John 17).

The intercession of Christ is a sufficient basis for His ability to save. For:

1. He presents blood of infinite value. "I have glorified Thee...." (John 17:4). God looks on this with infinite delight. What, on this ground, can be refused to Him?

2. He is in the Son's place upon the throne. This is a demonstration of the Father's delight in His work. He does not plead as Son, but He who pleads is with the Father.

3. He ever liveth to make intercession. This is His business. He is omniscient. He hath the power of an endless life. He hath divine love and human sympathy.

APPLICATION

1. This passage demands self-examination. Am I of those who come unto God through Christ? Do I stop at an ideal Christ, or do I conceive of God so that I do not feel my need of Christ as High Priest? Are my views of Christ such as produce irreverence of God?

2. How far behind we all are in giving a due place to Christ's intercession. This arises from our want of realising God. We fall before an idea not before the divine majesty. How prone we are to think of the intercession so as to disparage the sacrifice. And how often have we felt as if Christ had to wrest salvation from the unwilling hand of God! No wonder though we are so far off from God, and make so little of our dealings with Him. We depend on our own prayers more than on the intercession of Christ. One lesson made the thief on the cross wiser than us.

3. How blessed are all who have an interest in Christ. They shall all be saved unto the uttermost.

4. Wouldest thou come with boldness to the throne of grace? Think more of Christ. You are guilty, mean, distressed and helpless and witless. Here is hope for thee. In the Person, blood, sympathy and intercession of Christ.

5. Wouldest thou have Christ as thy High Priest? He has been anointed to transact with God for sinners. Come with the sin, the Priest has the sacrifice.

6. How miserable are all who come not unto God by Him. Far off. Children of wrath, lepers, pity, of Satan.... □

Christian Doctrines Explained: 12. Original Sin

Q.14. *What is sin?*

A. Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of the law of God.

Q.15. *What was the sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created?*

A. The sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created, was their eating the forbidden fruit.

Q.16. *Did all mankind fall in Adam's first transgression?*

A. The covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself, but for his posterity; all mankind, descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him in his first transgression.

An 'original' is the first or the beginning of something. While we cannot explain the origin of sin itself the Bible tells us much about Adam and Eve's first sin and why it involved not only themselves but the whole human race.

Command

The place our first parents enjoyed in paradise depended upon their obedience to God. In addition to His law written in their hearts God gave them a specific command concerning one of the trees in the garden. "Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt *not* eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen.2:17). This tree was not itself evil, for God made everything good. It simply served as a test for man, to try his relationship to God. We read how Satan in subtlety persuaded first Eve then Adam to disobey God.

It might be thought that this was a minor sin, but truly it was a *grievous* sin. Adam and Eve here broke all of the ten commandments. They made themselves a new god; they corrupted the way of worship; they profaned God's holy name; they did not keep the Sabbath; they dishonoured their Father in heaven; they murdered their souls; they were embarrassed at their nakedness; they stole what they had no right to; they lied against God and they coveted what was forbidden to them. "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (Jam.2:10).

Representative

Scripture shows that Adam's sin affected not only himself but also his

descendants: “By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” (Rom.5:12). This could only be because Adam was the head and representative of mankind in the covenant of works. Before his fall he acted not merely for himself but as a ‘public person’. We see this principle in operation today. A father may make a choice on behalf of a whole family; a prime minister or president may take a decision which has consequences for a whole nation. They are acting *for* others.

Descendants

Who was represented by Adam? All of us! As the root of mankind he was the most fitting choice. We were all reckoned to be in him when he sinned and fell from his innocent state. This was perfectly fair. Would we not all have done what Adam did if we had been in his place?

There is one descendant of Adam who did not sin in him and fall with him. The Lord Jesus Christ did not come into the world by ordinary generation but by an extraordinary generation in the womb of the virgin Mary through the power of the Holy Spirit (Matt.1:18). So He was “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners” (Heb.7:26). He was not represented by Adam, because He was Himself to be the representative for a new and blessed humanity. □

The Reformation in Scotland: 12. Popish Worship Abolished

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

A very short time was sufficient to prove how much reason the Protestants had to distrust the most solemn promises of the Queen-regent. No sooner had she obtained complete possession of the town of Perth than she began to violate her engagement, treating the inhabitants with the greatest violence, changing their magistrates forcibly, and substituting creatures of her own, exacting oppressive fines from some, and conniving at the murder of others who had been friendly to the reformers, and, upon her departure, leaving a garrison in the town, contrary to the express stipulations of the treaty. Argyle and Lord James Stewart remonstrated strongly against such conduct, and were answered, “That she was not bound to keep promises made to heretics; and that she would make

little conscience to take from all that sect their lives and inheritance, if she might do it with so honest an excuse." These noblemen feeling their own honour implicated, forsook her, and went to the Congregation, resolving never again to place any confidence in her promises.

The Lords of the Congregation now resolved to temporise and negotiate no longer, but to take immediate steps for abolishing the idolatrous and superstitious rites of Popery, and setting up the reformed worship in all places to which their authority or influence extended. And as Lord James Stewart was prior of St Andrews, and had now cordially and entirely joined with the reformers, he gave an authoritative invitation to John Knox, to meet him in that city on a certain day, and to preach publicly in the Abbey Church. Knox, who had been preaching in several places along the east coast of Fife, hastened to comply with this invitation, and on the 9th of June arrive at St Andrews. The Archbishop, hearing of this design to storm Popery in its stronghold, hastily collected an armed force, and having at their head hurried to St Andrews, sent information to Knox, that if he appeared in the pulpit, he would give orders to fire upon him.

The juncture was one of an extremely critical nature. The Lords of the Congregation were but slenderly accompanied; the disposition of the townsmen was in a great measure uncertain; and the Queen-regent had advanced to Falkland, about twelve miles distant, at the head of a considerable army, consisting chiefly of the French troops, who were thoroughly devoted to her interests, and as thoroughly hostile to the Reformation. Argyle and Lord James Stewart were alarmed at the dangerous aspect of affairs, and yet reluctant to abandon their intention. They felt that to be baffled at the very outset of their great enterprise would be a severe if not a fatal discouragement; and yet they were unwilling to put the life of Knox, as well as their own lives, in such imminent peril. In this perplexity they sent for Knox himself, to have his own judgment in this emergency. That judgment was one becoming him "who never feared the face of man." Reminding them that he had been first called to preach the gospel in that very town,—reft from it by the tyranny of France, at the procurement of the bishops,—that now the opportunity was presented to him, for which he had longed, and prayed, and hoped,—he entreated them not to hinder him from once more preaching in St Andrews. "As for the fear of danger that may come to me, let no man be solicitous; for my life is in the custody of Him whose glory I seek. I desire the hand and weapon of no man to defend me. I only crave audience; which, if it be denied here unto me at this time, I must seek further where I may have it."

The dauntless courage of the great reformer communicated itself to the lords. Like him, they ceased to think of danger, when the call was that of sacred duty; and next day, the 16th of June, Knox appeared in the pulpit, and preached to a numerous audience, including the Archbishop, many of the inferior clergy, and the scowling bands of armed retainers prepared for the assassination of the fearless preacher. But the hand of God was with him, restraining the fury of the adversary, and moulding anew the melted hearts of the people. The subject of his discourse was, our Saviour's ejecting the profane traffickers from the temple of Jerusalem; which he applied to the duty incumbent on all Christians, according to their different stations, to remove the corruptions of the Papacy, and purify the Church. On the three following days he preached in the same place, and on similar subjects; and such was the effect of his doctrine, that the magistracy and the inhabitants agreed to set up the reformed worship in the town; and immediately stripped the church of images and pictures, and demolished the monasteries.

The Archbishop of St Andrews hastened to the Queen-regent with this dire information. Being apprised, at the same time, that the lords at St Andrews were accompanied by a small retinue, she resolved to surprise them before their friends could come to their support, and gave orders to prepare to march on Cupar. But the Protestants in the adjacent counties being aware of the danger of their friends, hastened to their aid with such celerity [speed], and in such numbers, that they were able to anticipate the Queen's movements, and take up a position confronting her army on Cupar-moor. The resolute aspect of the Protestant army again appalled the Queen; and dreading a disastrous defeat, should she risk a battle, she proposed a suspension of hostilities. The Protestant lords had now received too many proofs of her duplicity to be again circumvented by mere promises. They, therefore, stipulated that the French troops should be removed out of Fifeshire; and that commissioners should, within ten days, be sent to St Andrews, for the purpose of settling all differences between her and the Congregation. The troops were removed; but no commissioners were sent. The Lords of the Congregation determined, therefore, to adopt more decisive measures, and to redress by their own efforts those grievances which they could not get otherwise remedied.

Mustering once more their strength, they advanced to Perth, and expelled the garrison left there by the Queen. Thence by a rapid movement they proceeded to Stirling, seized upon it, and continuing their march, took possession of Edinburgh itself; the Queen-regent, as they approached, retiring with her forces to Dunbar. In the mean time the

dread of the direct and immediate vengeance of the popish clergy being removed, the rest of the kingdom quickly followed the example of Perth and St Andrews, in abolishing the popish worship; and in the course of a few weeks, “at Crail, at Cupar, at Lindors, at Stirling, at Linlithgow, at Edinburgh, and at Glasgow, the houses of the monks were overthrown, and all the instruments of idolatry destroyed.”

On their arrival at Edinburgh, the Lords of the Congregation sent deputies to Dunbar, to assure the Queen that they had no intention of throwing off their allegiance, and to induce her to accede to reasonable terms of accommodation. One preliminary point was agreed upon,—that the sentence of outlawry against the ministers should be rescinded, and that they should be allowed to preach publicly to those who chose to hear them. Knox was chosen by the people of Edinburgh to be their minister, on the 7th of July, and immediately began his labours among them. But the wiles of the Queen were not yet exhausted. She prolonged the negotiations till she learned that the greater part of the Protestant forces had returned to their homes, and then advanced suddenly with her army to Edinburgh. Leith having declared for the Regent, and the castle of Edinburgh being under the command of Lord Erskine, who was unfavourable to the Protestants, they felt that they could not defend the town, and agreed to evacuate it, on condition that the inhabitants should be left at liberty to use that form of worship which they should prefer. The lords then retired to Stirling, taking with them John Knox, and leaving Willock in his place, who continued to preach in St Giles’s Church, after the arrival of the Regent.

The King of France dying about this time, was succeeded by Mary’s husband, and thus the crowns of France and Scotland seemed to be united, and the deep scheme of the princes of Lorraine on the point of being realised. Letters were sent by the new king and queen to Lord James Stewart, for the purpose of detaching him, if possible, from the Protestant party; but he remained firm to his faith and covenant engagement. At the same time an additional supply of money and troops were sent from France to the Queen-regent, to enable her to crush and exterminate the Reformation in Scotland. The hopes of the Regent began to revive; and she commenced fortifying Leith, both as a commanding strength in an important position, and a port through which she might readily at all times receive supplies from France into the very heart of the country. But though these matters were favourable to the Queen-regent, there were others of a counterbalancing character. The Earl of Arran, son to the former regent, the Duke of Chatelherault, returned at this time from France, having

narrowly escaped imprisonment on account of having expressed himself favourable to the Protestant doctrines. After having held an interview with the Protestant lords at Stirling, this young nobleman went to Hamilton to his father, and succeeded in prevailing on him to quit the party of the Queen-regent, and join the Lords of the Congregation. □

Precious Psalms: 12. Pure Words

“The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O Lord, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.” (Psalm 12:6,7)

Have you ever thought that all your hopes are bound up with your Bible? If it is wrong at any point then *you* may be wrong too, deluded, deceived and destined to perish at the last. We need to be sure that God’s Word can be safely depended upon. Thankfully we are left in no doubt at all as to its reliability.

Pure

David was convinced that the law he sought to obey, the prophecies of the coming Christ in whom he hoped, and the songs of praise he himself penned, were “pure words” from God. They were not mixed up with the words of men, tainted with error or compromised in any way. They had proceeded out of the mouth of the Lord. To indicate their purity he compares them to silver ore which is smelted in a clay furnace. The pure metal flows forth, the dross is left behind. So by divine inspiration whatever was of man only was kept out of the Scriptures.

Perfect

To emphasise the purity of the Scriptures we are told that they are like silver refined seven times over, until no impurities can possibly remain. Seven is the number of completeness or perfection in the Bible. The more we make use of the Scriptures the more we will prove to ourselves their utter trustworthiness. God’s solid promises will sustain our hope during every affliction.

Preserved

We have an important promise here. An inspired revelation is of little use unless it is also a *preserved* revelation; we need to know that our Bible is

the Bible God gave. The psalmist was sure that the God of providence would keep *every one* of His precious words, from his own day until the close of time, for they are all needed by us. Let us seek to live as Christ lived, not “by bread alone, but by *every* word of God” (Luke 4:4). □

For Young People: *Plants of the Bible*

(Like the previous series on Animals of the Bible these articles were first published in “The Explorer”, our denomination’s youth magazine)

1. *The Rose – Glory*

“I am the rose of Sharon” (Song of Solomon 2:1)

In this series we look at some of the plants which are mentioned in the Bible. Like the birds we have previously considered these plants can teach us valuable spiritual lessons. We find with the plants of the Bible that many of them are associated with Christ and in some way or other point us to him. It is as though they are saying with Paul, “Consider Christ Jesus” (Heb.3:1).

Our first plant is found in the Song of Solomon. This book is a love song in which a bridegroom and bride express their affection for each other. It has a deeper meaning though. Elsewhere in the Bible God’s people are told, “as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee” (Isa.62:5). Each one of us has sinned against God and we all deserve to be punished but in love God has chosen sinners and given them to his Son that he might save them. Jesus is the bridegroom from heaven and believers are his bride.

Here Christ is speaking to his church. His aim is to excite her admiration for him and draw out her love. To do this he describes himself in a way which will highly commend him to her. Christ identifies himself with a plant which is esteemed by men wherever it is found; he compares himself to a bloom which is given by men to the one they specially love: the rose.

The original rose is a flowering shrub, sometimes trailing and sometimes climbing over other plants. There are over one hundred species. The stems include small thorns and the leaves usually have a rough edge. The flowers generally have five petals which are white or pink and occasionally yellow or red. Thousands of varieties have been bred from wild roses to produce bigger blooms in a great range of colours.

People have wondered what sort of plant the rose of Sharon was. Sharon is a fertile plain lying between the mountains west of the River Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea. David's herds were once fed there (1Chron.27:29). What we know as the rose is found growing wild in parts of the Middle East and doubtless it was growing in Palestine too. One character in the New Testament suggests this. Do you remember the name of the young girl who recognised Peter's voice when he knocked at Mary's door? It was Rhoda, a 'rose' (Acts 12:13). What do we learn from the rose?

The rose is *excellent*. It is the chief of flowers, valued for its elegant shape and pleasing to the eye in every way. So Jesus is truly wonderful to behold. He is excellent firstly in the sight of God. In eternity as the only begotten Son Jesus was "by him, as one brought up with him...daily his delight, rejoicing always before him" (Prov.8:30). When Jesus began his work on earth God said of him, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt.3:17). Before he died Jesus spoke of the glory which his Father had given him (John 17:24).

Jesus is also excellent in the eyes of his believing people. To the unconverted he is "as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground" (Isa.53:2) but to those who are born again he is "a plant of renown" (Ezek.34:29). Christ's fame and honour is so very great because uniquely among those who have walked this earth he is both free from all unrighteousness and full of grace and truth.

The rose is *fragrant*. Its flowers have a strong, sweet scent and the petals are used in perfume. Likewise the glorious grace which is in Christ Jesus attracts the sinner with the promise of forgiveness and peace with God. Praise God, Christ is not a rose shut up in a walled garden but a rose found out in the open field: all are invited to him to receive salvation from him! But are you one of those who sadly, when Jesus is offered to you in the gospel, still say, "there is no beauty that we should desire him" (Isa.53:2)?

The rose is *abundant*. In the flowering season it has a mass of blooms as its branches spread forth. So Jesus has many blessings to give to a needy world. Isaiah speaks of a day when "the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose." He continues: "It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God" (Isa.35:1,2).

Since our precious Saviour appeared in this world his church has flourished and sinners from many nations have been brought into it. And yet what has been seen so far is just the budding of the rose. In the Bible we are told that one day through the preaching of the gospel of Christ

“the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea” (Hab.2:14).

With that promise to encourage us let us pray as David prayed for the blossoming of the rose of Sharon, for an outpouring of grace which will bring blessing to ourselves, to our families and to all the world! “And blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen, and Amen” (Psa.72:19). □

Gàidhlig: Na cuir suarach smachdachadh an Tighearna – Eabhruidheach 12:5,6 (Seonaidh Mac’ill Eathainn)

Co againne is urrainn a’ radh nach d’fhuair iad smachdachadh, gu ìre choireiginn, bho ‘ur pàrantan an uair nach bitheadh a deanadh mar bu choir dhuinn? Is docha nach biodh sinn ro thoilichte as deidh dhuinn smachdachadh fhaighinn agus gum bitheadh de’n bharrail nach ro e co-fhreagradh ris na rinn sinn. Nach h-iomadh uair a shaòil sinn nach b’ann le gràdh sam bi a’ fhuair sinn ‘ur smachdachadh agus gur ann ‘n uair a’ dh’fhàs sinn suas a’ choimheadamaid air ais agus a’ thuigeamaid gliocas na làimh a’ smachdaich sinn. Chì sinn an uair sin beartas a ghliocais agus an t-adhbhar air a shon. Nach iomadh uair a tha sinn taingeil airson an stiuradh agus a’ chomhairle a fhuair sinn agus a chum sinn, gu ìre, air slighe reusanta.

Tha sinn a’ togail anns a cheann-teagaisg gum bheil an Tighearna mar an ceudna a’ toirt rabhadh dha chlànn fhein gun a bhi cuir ann an suarachas na amannan anns am bi iad air an smachdachadh agus air an cronachadh an uair a bhios feum aca air. Tha e ag radh nach fheum sinn fannachadh ‘n uair a thachras seo. Tha e mar gum biodh E ag radh gur ann a bu choir dhuinn a’ mheas mar neart. Tha an Tighearna a’ faicinn gach ni a bhios sinn ris, eodhon gach smuain, agus air an adhbhar sin nach biodh e iomchuidh gun toireadh e smachdachadh oirnn. Tha E ag radh, “an ti a’s ionmhuinn leis smachdaichidh e.” Is e gràdh tha aig bunait an smachdachaidh seo. Chan e mhain sin ach tha an gràdh seo eadar-dhealaichte seach an gràdh a bha aig ‘ur n’athair talmhaidh. Tha an gràdh seo a’ toirt a steach an t-ullachadh airson naomhachadh chum na beatha maireannaich. Nach math gu bheil sùil an Athair oirnn agus gu bheil E glanadh gach peacadh bhuain chum is gum bi sin ullaichte airson an latha anns an iarr E dhachaigh sinn.

Ma thug sinn urram do ‘ur pàrantan airson an smachdachadh a’ fhuair sinn bhuapa-san nach mò gu mòr a bu choir dhuinn gach urram

agus ùmhlachd a' thoirt do 'ur n'athair neamhaidh agus cuimhne chumail air gliocas na làimhe a' thug dhuinn a' bhuidh an dòchas airson an t-siorruidheachd a tha air thoiseach oirnn. Gu ro sinn air an adhbhar sin a' lùbadh 'ur glùin fa chomhair 'ur Dia agus ga fhaicinn-sa mar chuspsair 'ur dochais agus 'ur dachaigh bhuan. □

Congregational News

Services

God willing our Harvest Thanksgiving service will be held on Wednesday 25th November at 7.30pm. A Day of Humiliation and Prayer is to be held throughout the church on Saturday 5th December and there will be a service that day at 11.00am.

Congregational Fellowships

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 are continuing in the manse. At the remaining two meetings on November 15th and December 13th we intend to consider the Jehovah's Witnesses and Seventh-day Adventists respectively. The meetings are held after the Sabbath evening service as intimated and are open to all who are interested.

Psalmody Class

Plans are being made for a weekly Psalmody Class to run in Paible School over the winter months. The meetings, which will last for an hour, will be held on Thursdays beginning at 7.30pm, the first to take place on 26th November, D.V. The main aim is to encourage the learning of some of the less familiar tunes. More information will be given in due course.

Commission of Assembly

The Commission of Assembly which met on October 6th and 7th did not reach a conclusion in its consideration of the outcome of the recent court case concerning the church property in Broadford. It is likely that the Commission will be meeting again within the next few months. Please continue to pray for the ministers and elders that the Lord will give grace to enable them to do what is right in His sight. "The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble; the name of the God of Jacob defend thee; Send thee help from the sanctuary, and strengthen thee out of Zion" (Psa.20:1,2). □

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Services:

Sabbath: 12.00noon; 6.00pm

Wednesday: 7.30pm

Communions: 2nd Sabbath in April and September

All services are held in the church at Bayhead.

Website: www.northuistandgrimsayfcc.org.uk

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

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