

# Grace & Truth

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

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

Vol. 3 No. 2

March-April 2010

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

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

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## Minister's Message: *Making Idols*

Various surveys tell us that Christianity is in decline in our nation. It seems that just about everywhere congregations are dwindling and church buildings are closing. The masses have lost their interest in the Bible and the gospel is an embarrassment to our government. When did you last hear a politician speak with boldness of his faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour?

Yet despite all this people have not given up worship. They are merely directing their devotion elsewhere – to their *idols*. It may appear extraordinary but it is even possible to attend church regularly and yet be guilty of idolatry. Such things may come as a shock to some. Let us therefore explain carefully what we mean.

When men cease to believe in the true God they do not then believe in *nothing*; rather they they believe in *anything*. They bow down before the false gods of their own choice. Man has done this since the fall, with images “made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things” (Rom.1:23). Men have “changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator” (v.25).

In our modern age, when we are too sophisticated or have too much of a conscience to prostrate ourselves before idols of wood, stone or metal, we make idols more suited to ourselves. They turn out to be as many and as varied as we are. What are they?

Idols are not confined to those objects which men fashion with their hands and look upon with their eyes: we also create idols in our *minds*. We may idolise a fellow human being, a branch of learning or entertainment, or even an emotion or sensation. Today's idols include sportsmen and film stars, science and music, drink and drugs. Time, attention and money are being lavished on these things.

In fact an idol is anything which has an improper place in our hearts and lives, taking the position that God demands and deserves. It may even be something as lawful and good as our work or family. God says, “Thou shalt worship no other god: for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God” (Exod.34:14).

In a way idolatry confirms Christian teaching about man. Our soul being made in the divine image we are restless and discontent without God. We find that we must worship *something*. Blinded by his sin man dwells in spiritual darkness, hiding from the knowledge of God which has been given to him and also perverting it. How we need the

Scriptures to lead us to an understanding of God and His saving grace! Truly they are “a light that shineth in a dark place” (2Pet.1:19).

In conversion God ‘shines’ in our hearts to give “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2Cor.4:6). Jesus is truly “the image of the invisible God” (Col.1:15), for He is God in our flesh. We should bow the knee to Christ alone, worshipping Him and seeking salvation through His great mercy. Let us be wise and “flee from idolatry” (1Cor.10:14)! □

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## **Helps to Devotion (Rev. James Smith)**

STRENGTH. *“I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ...that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man.”*(Ephesians 3:14,16)

**T**he posture employed in prayer is of small moment; yet kneeling seems the most appropriate in private devotion. The object addressed is Jehovah, as the Father of the Lord Jesus, who has already manifested such love to us as to give his Son to die in our stead, that we may be saved from wrath through him. He who gave his Son will surely give us anything. Paul wishes his Ephesians to be inwardly strong—strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. The Father’s loving heart gives every blessing. The Son’s precious blood removes every legal impediment out of the way, that the richest blessings may honourably come into our possession. The Holy Spirit works within us, new-creating us at first, and renewing us afterwards from day to day. Father of Jesus, and our Father, grant unto us, according to thy glorious riches, that we may be strengthened with all might by thy Spirit in the inner man. May we be strengthened to bear with patience whatever thou shalt see fit to lay upon us; may we be strengthened to do whatsoever thou shalt require of us; may we be strengthened by spiritual communications, that so we may put off the old man with his deeds, and put on the new man; mortify the flesh, with its passions and lusts; overcome the world, with its pleasures and cares; trample Satan under foot, and quench all his fiery darts; in one word, honour our God every moment, in body, soul, and spirit. Gracious Spirit, whenever we feel weak, discouraged, and cast down, lead us to Jesus for strength, courage, and comfort, that so we may honour our heavenly Father by the holiness and happiness of our lives. □

## **Parables of Jesus: 14. The Lost Sheep**

*(Please read Luke 15:3-7)*

**T**he theme of the shepherd and his sheep is a familiar and precious one in the Bible. Here we have a shepherd going after a particular sheep which is lost. It is a picture of Christ and the unsaved sinner.

### **Compassion**

In His preaching Jesus appeals to the hearts of His hearers, some of whom may well have been shepherds. “What would *you* do,” He says, “if *you* had a flock of sheep and one of them went missing? Would *you* not go after it? Of course you would!”

As a shepherd has compassion for his sheep so does Christ, “that great shepherd of the sheep” (Heb.13:20), for His. In eternity He was given a people to redeem. His love was set upon them. It is a powerful, saving love. Christ is the heavenly Bridegroom and the church is His bride. He yearns over His own while they are in this world of sin and does not rest until each one of them is brought safe into heaven.

### **Search**

A true shepherd *goes after* his lost sheep with purpose. He must find it and will not be content until he has.

Christ’s love is an *active* love. He does not simply wish us well and hope that we might turn to God. Sadly sinners are as senseless as sheep, “being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart” (Eph.4:18). We are utterly helpless and need God’s grace.

Christ came once to accomplish redemption for His people and now He comes by His Spirit in the gospel to *apply* that redemption to them. He finds His sheep on the treacherous mountains of sin and disobedience. Above them are the dark clouds of divine wrath, below them is the abyss of eternal punishment. Friend, are you unconverted and in danger of hell? Learn this. The one way to heaven is upon the strong shoulders of the Saviour, held firm by the hands of His grace.

### **Joy**

We can readily understand a shepherd’s excitement when after great effort he at last finds his lost sheep. It had seemed to be lost forever but now it is home and safe. His joy is unlimited and he must tell everyone.

When a sinner truly repents there is joy in heaven: a joy “in the presence of the angels of God” (v.10). When a sinner is saved the soul of Jesus, which once travailed under the awful burden of that sinner’s sin, is surely satisfied. The pleasure of the Lord is prospering in Christ’s mighty hand (Isa.53:10,11).

### **Penitent**

Do you know the love which this “good shepherd” (John 10:11) has for His sheep? It is a love which is revealed in the gospel, but it is a love which is only known in our hearts when we believe in Christ and turn from our sins. Do not be self-righteous and smug like the scribes and Pharisees. Jesus is willing to receive the truly *penitent* soul. □

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### **Sermon: *Jesus the Only Saviour* (Rev. James Begg)**

*(Taken from volume II of the Free Church Pulpit published in 1846. The brief introduction has been omitted and the application shortened. Begg was minister of Newington, Edinburgh.)*

*“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” – Acts 4:12*

**L**et us now consider the truth itself, *viz.*, that there is only one way to Heaven, and that Jesus is that way.

**I.** A difficulty arises in the minds of some men when such a doctrine is announced, as if it savoured of intolerance. They think it becomes them merely to rest satisfied with the general idea that Christianity is true and important, but do not habitually feel that it is the only Divine religion on earth, and that all other superstitions are the delusions of the god of this world. They do not live under the conviction that unless they are savingly united to Christ, they shall be bound together with the tares and cast into the eternal fire, and that there is no other mode of escape. And they call their own loose and careless views on this subject by the name of charity, and imagine them to be more consistent with the goodness of God than those which he himself has revealed. Now, whether they believe it or not, their views are not only false and unscriptural, they are precisely those of the ancient heathens. The idolaters would have allowed an image to be erected for Jesus in their temples as one amongst many idols. What they found fault with was the

universal demand of the first Christians that every idol should be destroyed, and that Jesus alone should be regarded as the object of worship and the author of salvation. But this is evidently the very spirit of Christianity. No blood can cleanse away sin but that which was shed on Calvary; no spirit can sanctify the depraved heart but the third person of the eternal Trinity; no power can open the gate of heaven but that of him who “hath the key of David, opening so that no man can shut, and shutting so that no man can open;” no power can overcome the “strong man armed,” who by nature has possession of our souls, “the spirit that now worketh in the hearts of the children of disobedience,” but the power of him who binds Satan in chains and bruise him under the feet of his people. In a word, it can only be from superficial views of the plan of redemption, and of what is implied in bringing men out of darkness into light, and from the power of Satan to God, that any man can imagine that there are more ways of salvation than one. If men would only meditate on the solemn truth, that most wonderful in the records of time as it shall be in the records of eternity, that “God spared not his only-begotten Son”—that Jehovah, in human form, walked this earth, spake with a human voice, and suffered and “died, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God,” they would see that it implies not merely infidelity, but something approaching to blasphemy, to imagine that the salvation of man can be secured in any other way. For if so, God would have spared his only-begotten Son. And hence you will find that the views to which I have been referring are only entertained by men who have no well-grounded conviction of the truths of the Word of God, and who wish to make a broad way and a wide gate into heaven, only that there may be the better prospect of their own admission, although they are resolved to continue in sin whilst grace abounds.

Nor, my friends, is there any ground for imagining that the doctrine of the text is at all inconsistent with just views of the benevolence of God. Such an idea proceeds from the most superficial views, and is the very reverse of just. Suppose a body of men cast ashore on a desert island—suppose them smitten with disease, and famishing for lack of bread—suppose nothing before them but the prospect of certain death, and that in such circumstances one solitary ship was descried making towards the island, and that on its arrival it was not only loaded with bread but carried an infallible physician, who offered not only to supply the wants and heal the diseases of the people but to carry them to a land where they should hunger no more, neither thirst any more, where none should say I am sick, and where there should be no more death—what would you think of the perishing men if they objected to take the bread and the medicine, and refused to go with this gracious benefactor, but preferred to starve and die on the barren island, because there was only one

ship by which to escape, only one physician, only one supply of bread,—because vessels had not been sent to all sides of the island, and bread of various kinds, and physicians of various qualities? Would you not think them insane and deeply ungrateful? Now this is the very case before us, only not nearly so strong. The whole race of Adam have been cast away on this distant world to perish and die. They have no spiritual food, and they are smitten with a disease which is rapidly hurrying them away to the second death. But lo! one vessel of hope comes from the bright shores of the eternal world; it bears a divine physician, the bread of life, and the balm of Gilead—an offer is made to every soul, not merely of a full supply of all their spiritual wants, a perfect cure of all their diseases, but of a safe passage to that land where “the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne leads and feeds his people by living fountains of waters, and God the Lord wipes away all tears from their eyes.” And what are we to think of such as object to this, solely on the ground that God has not sent many deliverers instead of one; and instead of hailing the glorious offer, and labouring to prevail upon every man to do the same, stand by callous and indifferent, and imagine that somehow or other they will escape, although death and famine are raging around, although the cold grasp of the destroyer is on them already, and although they neither enter the ship of safety that is lying in the harbour nor see another sail over the whole sweep of the horizon, nay, although they are assured by the Divine Saviour himself that this is the only opportunity they ever shall have of deliverance? Yet these are the very proceedings and reasonings of such as are not alive to the doctrine of the text.

But, again, to make this point more clear, let us suppose that men were already where all sinners who flee not will soon be, in the place of punishment,—let us suppose that the gates of perdition were finally shut upon them, and that in looking round upon that region of outer darkness not one ray of light could be seen,—let us suppose that, like the rich man in the gospel, they looked across the hopeless gulf which shall for ever separate the spirits of light from the heirs of condemnation, and saw no way of escape, and that, in answer to their cry of agony, one door of hope was opened, by which they might make an eternal escape—one messenger of peace was sent to intimate that for very short period they might still flee, by this one door of escape, from that tormenting flame,—do you think it would occur to them to object to this arrangement, on the ground that there were not more ways of escape than one opened up? Do you not see that they would be overpowered with joy that there was any way of escape at all? And yet the case is nearly as strong with a world lying under condemnation. The men are under sentence of a broken law; for there is none righteous, no not one; and cursed

is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law, to do them. They are as completely surrounded here with Jehovah's power, and as unable to escape, as they shall be in the place of woe; and if they repent not, and flee to Jesus, they are as sure to be cast into outer darkness as if they were already there. And if they were not blinded by Satan, they would see that, so far is it from being a mark of want of benevolence on the part of God that there are not many ways of salvation, it is a special mark of his wondrous love that there is one—one way of escape, one Redeemer, able to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by him, and who hath declared, that whosoever cometh he will in no wise cast out. This one way of escape is of such a kind as at once to teach us the difficulty of our deliverance, the impossibility of more plans of salvation than one, and the matchless and adorable love which condescended to regard us at all in our low and lost estate, whilst the angels that sinned were cast down to hell, and confined to chains under darkness to the judgment of the great day.

**II.** Having thus cleared away a natural objection of practical infidelity, let us now explain the precise import of the language of the text. The language is peculiar, although the general idea conveyed at once strikes the mind of every reader. We are said to be saved by the "*name*" of Christ, a word obviously used to signify Christ himself. This is a mode of expression sometimes used in Scripture; as, for example, "the *name* of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous run thereto and are safe," where by the name of the Lord is meant God himself. This mode of expression has been transferred to our own language. We speak of the "greatest names" of antiquity, and of men filling the world with the "terror of their names," when in both cases we mean not the *names* but the *persons*. And so we are saved by Christ himself, although in Scripture we are said to trust in his name. "In his *name* shall the Gentiles trust," i.e. in his merits, in his perfect righteousness, in his finished work and exalted intercession. "His *name* shall be called Jehovah our righteousness."

The form of expression also, in the first part of the verse, is peculiar. "Neither is there salvation *in* any other." The apostle does not represent Christ as giving salvation as a thing without himself, a thing disconnected from himself, but as a thing existing *IN* him, as a great treasure-house of spiritual blessings—in him as the head of his mystical body—in Christ, from whom all the members united to him by faith derive strength, nourishment, and salvation. There is here, therefore, not only a general but a special doctrine taught. The *general* doctrine is, that Christ is the only Redeemer as he was the only Creator; and that he, and he only, is able to create us again, in glory and perfection, as he was to make us at first. The *special* doctrine is,

that this fulness of mediatorial power is laid up in Christ as in the head of his church, and that it descends from him upon all his members, like the holy anointing oil from the head of Aaron, which flowed down to the skirts of his garments. The *general* truth is, that Christ alone hath removed the curse of the law and silenced the accuser of the brethren. He hath died, the just for the unjust, that he may bring us to God, and is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. The *special* truth is that it hath pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell, and that we become branches of the true vine, living stones in the spiritual building of which Christ is the chief corner-stone. In a word, this statement embodies not only the general truths of the Gospel, but a declaration of the special method by which the blessings of the Gospel are applied.

The blessings of the Gospel are laid up “*in Christ*” as the infallible Head of the Church. The blessings of the first covenant were laid up in Adam, but he sinned, fell, and squandered the inheritance of all his children. The second Adam can never fall, neither shall any pluck us or our hopes of salvation out of his hand. The inheritances of many children are entrusted to their parents who abuse the trust, lose the patrimony, and leave their children to beg; but in Christ our inheritance is safe, and therefore “he is able to save unto the uttermost.” We know not the blessings of which we stand in need, and in so far as we do know we are not in earnest to procure them. We are not only miserable but blind; but Christ knows our wants, and in him there is provision for them all. He is the great storehouse of spiritual blessings, and all the promises of God are in him, yea and amen; so that if any man lack blessings, temporal or spiritual, let him ask of him who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not.

And these blessings are in no other. “Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering.” The merits of saints only exist in the imaginations of blinded idolaters; for every saint is by nature a child of wrath, even as others; and if the saints reach heaven themselves, it is only because they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. If we desire blessings we must go to the Master of the house direct, for none of the servants can supply our wants. We must become members of his family, nay of his body, and then all things shall become ours, whether things present or things to come, or life or death, all shall be ours, for we are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.

**III.** Let us now, in the *third* place, show the concurrence of Scripture in the truth of this text. The whole stream of revelation from the beginning points to Jesus and his finished work. The *law* which was given by Moses pointed

to that grace and truth which were to come by Jesus Christ. The prophets prophesied beforehand the coming and sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the glory that should follow; and to him bore all the prophets witness, that whosoever believeth on him should receive the remission of sin. The first dawn of prophetic light in Eden, amidst the wreck of a fallen world, pointed to Jesus. "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed: he shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel." Christ was the seed of the woman. On the cross Satan bruised his heel, and at that very time he bruised Satan's head—spoiled principalities and powers—making a show of them openly—triumphing over them in it. He is the seed of the patriarchs in whom all the families of the earth were to be blessed. I say of the *patriarchs*; for you will find that the promise which was first made to Abraham was repeated afterwards in nearly the same words to Isaac and Jacob,—“In thy seed shall all the families of earth be blessed,” a statement explained by Paul when he says, “He saith not seeds, as of many, but seed, as of one,” and that one Christ, who endured the curse of the law and wrought out an everlasting righteousness. Even already it has been fulfilled in the experience of myriads, “an exceeding great multitude which no man can number;” but it shall receive a more glorious and literal fulfilment when the Jews shall be brought in with the fulness of the Gentiles, when nations shall be born at once, and from the rising of the sun to where he goeth down the whole earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of God, as the waters cover the sea. He is the “Shiloh” foretold to Jacob, who was to come before the sceptre departed from Judah, and unto whom the gathering of the people was to be. He is the Messiah introduced by David when sacrifice and offering, and burnt-offering were declared to be unavailing, saying, Lo! I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me, to do thy will I delight, O God; yea, thy law is within my heart. He is the “Redeemer” of whom Job speaks, who should stand at the latter day upon the earth, and whom the patriarch was confident he would see with his eyes although worms destroyed his body. He is the “day’s man” of whom the same patriarch speaks, who should lay his hand on us both, i.e. the offending and the offended party, and so make peace. He is the “mighty one,” raised up from amongst the people—the “man of God’s right hand”—the Son of Man whom he made strong for himself. He is the “stone” which the builders rejected, but which was to become the head of the corner. He is the Saviour of Solomon, “set up from everlasting, from the beginning, ere even the earth was.” He is the “child” of Isaiah, whose name was to be called “wonderful, counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.” He is the “root of the stem of Jesse,” who shall stand for an ensign to the nations, whom the

Gentiles were to seek, and whose rest was to be glorious. He is the “king who was to reign in righteousness,” the “man who was to be a hiding-place from the tempest, and a covert from the storm; rivers of water in a dry place, and the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.” He is the servant of God who was to be given for a covenant to the people, and a light to the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, and to bring the prisoners and them that sit in darkness from the prison-house. He is the messenger of God, anointed to preach glad tidings to the meek, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that were bound; and therefore when he was on earth, and entered a Jewish synagogue, and read as the usual lesson of the day this beautiful passage, we are told that he gave the book back to the minister, and said, “This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears.” “And who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah, this that is glorious is his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength?” The Messiah himself will answer the question. “I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.” “Why art thou red in thine apparel and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat?” The Messiah will answer again. “I have trodden the winepress alone, and of the people there was none with me.” He is the “righteous branch” of Jeremiah that was to be raised up to David, in whose days Judah was to be saved and Israel to dwell safely, and whose name was to be called “Jehovah our righteousness.” He was the “Messiah” of Daniel, who was to be cut off, but not for himself, “the ruler of Israel,” to be born in Bethlehem Ephratah, the least among the princes of Judah. He is the “desire of all nations” spoken of by Haggai, who should suddenly come to the temple of God—“I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come.” He is the man whose name is “the branch” spoken of by Zechariah, who should build the temple of God and bear all the glory—the king who was to come lowly, and having salvation, riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass. The angels of heaven filled the air with melody at his birth, and announced that the great deliverer had at length arrived. The star of the east pointed the wise men to the manger of Bethlehem where the infant Saviour lay. The Spirit of God descended like a dove, and rested on his head, and a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him.” John, who baptized him, pointed him out to his disciples, saying, “Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world.” Old Simeon, when he took Jesus in his arms, said, “Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.” Philip said to Nathaniel, “We have found him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write.” Peter, James, and John saw the Messiah on Mount Tabor, arrayed in robes of light,

and “heard a voice from the excellent glory saying, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him.” And hence Peter in one of his epistles says, “We have not followed cunningly devised fables when we made known unto you the coming and sufferings of Christ, but we were eye-witnesses of his majesty when there came such a voice from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. And this voice we heard when we were with him in the holy mount.” The woman of Samaria said, “I know that Messias cometh; when he is come he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I who speak unto thee am he.” Jesus said to the man born blind, whom he had cured, “Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, who is he, Lord, that I may believe on him? Jesus saith, thou hast both seen him, and it is he who talketh with thee.” The evil spirits that he expelled, the deaf and dumb and blind that he cured, the dead whom he raised, the angels that ministered to him, the sun that was darkened at his death, the rocks that rent and the graves that were opened, all the prophets that spake before the Saviour came, and all the eye-witnesses that record the facts of his history, unite in assuring us that he is the only, the omnipotent, the all-sufficient Saviour.

And what was the uniform doctrine of the apostles? Other foundation can no man lay that that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. God is in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing to sinners their trespasses. In him alone we are chosen from before the foundation of the world; called in time, justified, adopted, sanctified, saved. It pleased the Father that only in him should all fulness dwell. Even as there is but one God, so there is only “one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” And there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversary.

Hence the song of heaven is full of Christ’s atonement. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his blood, be glory and dominion for ever. Hence the most wonderful and glorious object in heaven is the adorable Redeemer in the midst of the throne, “as a Lamb that had been slain.” Hence the “white robes” in which all the ransomed of the Lord, of every age, and nation, and kindred, and tongue, are arrayed, are robes which have been washed in the blood of the Lamb. Who are these that stand in white robes, and whence came they? These are they who came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. “And I beheld and heard around the throne a great company, and their numbers were ten thousand times ten thousand, even thousands of thousands, and they fell before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof; thou art worthy to receive glory, and

honour, and dominion, and power, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood.”

If a ladder were let down from heaven, and if an angel were sent to say, “Come up hither and I will shew thee the wonders of the sanctuary above;” when you gazed round that region of glory, the greatest wonder you would behold would be Jesus, bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, the Lamb of God, the great centre of worship and influence. If you were permitted to speak to the glorified inhabitants of that blessed place, and to ask them in what way they reached the realms of glory, they would all give the same answer. Adam, if in glory, went there through the second Adam, the Lord from heaven; Abel by faith in the coming sacrifice of the Messiah; Noah by means of the true ark of God; Abraham because he saw the day of Christ afar off and was glad; all the patriarchs because “they died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off they were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth;” all the apostles, because they “determined not to know anything but Jesus Christ, and him crucified;” and all the martyrs, because “they washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” Where are the self-righteous multitudes who despised the perfect righteousness of Christ and went about to establish a righteousness of their own—the crowds of worldly formalists, whom false churches impiously professed to send to heaven? They are not there. No one is there who will not rejoice to cast his crown at the Redeemer’s feet, and to join in the blessed anthem of eternity which will for ever fill the arches of heaven, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain.” For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ; and whosoever falleth on this stone shall be broken, but on whomsoever it shall fall it will grind him to powder.

If, therefore, there be any truth more clearly revealed in the Word of God than another, it is that of the text, “Neither is there salvation in any other.”

1. From this subject, therefore, we may infer the hopeless state of such as continue far from Christ, or trust for salvation out of him. “They that are far from him shall perish;” and one of the objects for which he shall come again is to punish such as “know not God and obey not the gospel.” Mark, the awful result is the very same whatever state you are in if you are not in Christ....

2. If these truths have been brought home with power to your souls, happy are ye. “Who is like unto thee, O Israel! a people saved of the Lord.” Be assured that he that hath begun a good work will carry it on until the day of Christ....

3. Press forward to higher attainments. You must hunger and thirst after righteousness; you must grow in grace and in knowledge; you must ask,

knock, use every effort, and, above all, call down by prayer that grace without which ye can do nothing, but with which ye can do all things. Watch over yourselves with a godly jealousy, and let it be your desire that ye may be *like* Christ here that ye may be *with* Christ hereafter...

....All fulness *dwells* in Christ. Mark the expression. It has been *in him* for ages. It is an unchangeable, inexhaustible supply of grace. The well of salvation is full, although many have drunk of it. The water of life is pure as ever though myriads have washed in it and become whiter than the snow. The riches of Christ are undiminished, although they have already enriched an exceeding great multitude which no man can number. Come in, therefore, O sinner! why standest thou without? It is for you the Master calleth. Flee to the stronghold thou prisoner of hope; even to-day, saith the Lord, will I render double unto you. Amen. □

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## **Christian Doctrines Explained: 14. The Covenant of Grace**

Q.20. *Did God leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery?*

A. God, having out of his mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer.

**W**e have seen what happened to mankind when our first parents fell. We entered into a condition which can only be described as one of sin and misery. Such was the totality of this fall that there is no way by which we poor sinners can recover ourselves. This was symbolised for Adam and Eve when they were driven out of paradise. At its entrance God placed angels and “a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life” (Gen.3:24). What now for man?

### **Election**

According to His justice God might have left all mankind to perish in their fallen state, for that is what our sins deserve. But the Bible reveals that God always had a purpose of mercy towards the human race. This found expression in *election*, or the choice of a fixed number of specific persons to everlasting salvation. Paul greets believers thus: “Knowing, brethren beloved, your *election of God*” (1Thess.1:4). This choice was made in eternity, not in time. To the same believers Paul later says: “God hath *from the beginning* chosen you to salvation” (2Thess.2:13).

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## Grace

When we elect someone, such as a politician, to a position we look for good qualities. Unless we see something to attract us in the person we will reject him. How different with God! His choice of His people was absolutely sovereign and free. It had to be, because it was the choice of sinners with nothing to commend them. His mere good pleasure was the determining factor. God chose “foolish things...weak things...base things...things which are not” (1Cor.1:27,28). He chose Paul, the chief of sinners (1Tim.1:15). Because it was a *gracious* choice this could be so. None can complain about God’s election because none has merit and all have demerit. God is displaying “the riches of his glory on *the vessels of mercy*” (Rom.9:23).

## Covenant

The arrangement God devised for bringing His own out of their plight was the covenant of grace. In the order of *time* the covenant of works made between God and Adam as the representative of all mankind, came first, but in the order of *purpose* the covenant of grace between God and Jesus Christ, as the representative of the elect, was first. This is certainly “a better covenant” (Heb.8:6) for sinners because it is “a covenant of peace” (Ezek.36:26) – peace with God. Christ is its surety or legal guarantor so this covenant cannot fail.

## Salvation

When Adam fell he and we in him forfeited life with God and became worthy of everlasting death. Divine election appoints men not simply to gospel privileges but to a full salvation or eternal life. Jesus said to His disciples: “Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom” (Luke 12:32). There is no salvation by our own works; it is always the free gift of God’s amazing grace. □

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## **The Reformation in Scotland: 14. *Division in the Ranks***

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

**T**his act, suspending the commission of the Queen-regent, was proclaimed in all the chief towns throughout the kingdom, and intimated formally to the Regent herself, summoning her at the same time to dismiss the French troops from Leith, and yield the town. To

this declaration and summons, an answer, charging the Protestants with rebellion, and uttering a bold defiance of their power, was returned; and hostilities immediately began. But the success of the Protestant lords and their army was not equal to their hopes and the goodness of their cause. There arose, in fact, a division among them, of a kind to which such enterprises as they were engaged in must always be exposed. The very essence of the contest was of a strictly religious character, and had been begun by men whose sole object it was to rescue the pure and undefiled Christianity of the Bible from the gross corruptions of Popery. But many had now joined the early reformers from a variety of motives, apart from those of religion; and even those in whom religious motives predominated still retained so great an admixture of selfish and worldly policy, as to embarrass extremely the conduct of those with whom they professed to act. A double policy must always be an unsafe one. And, perhaps, there is nothing which has ever done more evil to man than the debasing intermixture of worldly motives in matters of a purely religious and sacred character. But on this subject we shall not further dwell at present, as it will repeatedly meet us hereafter, and in circumstances fitted to display its nature and hearing more clearly.

The accession of the Hamiltons and their adherents appeared to strengthen the Protestants very much; yet the divisions which almost immediately sprung up proved more detrimental to their cause than their increase of members was beneficial. And as the Duke of Chatelherault, being the man of greatest rank among them, was placed nominally at their head, his timid and vacillating character diffused its contagion among them, and rendered their councils undecided and their conduct irresolute. They failed in some encounters with the French; and fresh supplies arriving at Leith, they became so discouraged as to abandon the siege, and retreat to Stirling, in a state of great dejection. There were also deficient in money to pay and support their forces, many of whom were of a mercenary character, regarding little on which side they fought, provided they obtained pay, and were occasionally gratified with pillage. Upon the retreat of the Lords of the Congregation, the French issued from Leith, took possession of Edinburgh, with the exception of the castle, which Lord Erskine continued to hold in a kind of armed neutrality, advanced to Stirling, pillaging the country as they went, and crossed into Fifeshire, skirting the coast, and continuing their ravages as they proceeded towards St Andrews. □

## Precious Psalms: 14. The Folly of Follies

*“The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good.”* (Psalm 14:1)

**S**omeone who lacks wisdom or common sense is often termed a fool. No-one likes to be called a fool. But here are certain people who are called fools by *God*. That should surely make us all think and even tremble. Who are these fools?

### **Attitude**

A fool spiritually-speaking is one who denies that God exists. Such a person is known as an *atheist*. This is his attitude: he denies God *in his heart*. There are really two sorts of atheist. There is the *open* or ‘theoretical’ atheist. Although his conscience tells him that there is a God he is determined to oppose this truth and he produces arguments against it. He is a liar. Then there is the *secret* or ‘practical’ atheist. He worships God with his lips but his lifestyle suggests that he has no real love for God. He is a hypocrite.

### **Character**

The revealing thing to note is that disbelief in God is not the result of impartial thought or advanced learning as many would like to think. It stems from *sin*. Behind the attitude of mind the atheist adopts is a distinct personal character: corrupt, wicked, prone to do evil and unable to do good. This is where the fall has left us all. Only the restraining hand of God prevents everyone from following the atheist in his folly.

### **Verdict**

Though the atheist may be praised now God has declared his verdict upon him and will deliver it again at the judgment day: *fool!* The word used describes a withered fruit – a thing with a wasted potential. In eternity the atheist will admit that the creation declared God’s glory (Psa.19:1). He will regret that he never obeyed God (Mark 9:44). And he will have to look forward to an endless experience of the existence of God in His *wrath* (Rev.14:10). He will now believe in God – but too late! Oh, be wise! Do not share his folly. □

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

*(These articles were first published in “The Explorer”, our denomination’s youth magazine)*

### **3. *The Wheat – Death***

*“Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit ” (John 12:24)*

We have looked at the lily and noted how it resembles Jesus in his humiliation in this world. Now we must consider a solemn aspect of the lowliness of Christ. Paul describes what happened: “And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Philippians 2:8). In our text Jesus speaks of his death and compares it to the sowing of a grain of wheat.

Wheat is really a type of grass. Wild forms of wheat have been cultivated for thousands of years and more recently they have been bred to make larger grains which are more easily separated from the ‘chaff’ in threshing. After that the grain is milled to remove the husks so that flour can be made. China, India and the U.S.A. grow the most wheat.

The occasion when Jesus is speaking is Passover time in Jerusalem. Thousands are thronging the city, including Gentiles who have gathered to worship. These people have a desire which they make known to Philip, one of the disciples: “Sir, we would see Jesus” (v.21). Philip tells Andrew and together they go to the Lord and explain that there are people who want to meet Him.

The reply Jesus gives is like one of his parables. He uses a figure understood everywhere to teach a lesson of value to everyone. The growing of wheat or something similar like maize or rice is very common. Wheat produces flour to make bread, a very important food.

Firstly we see that the death of Christ was *essential*. The soil may be ploughed but unless seed is sown there can be no harvest. So the life of Christ was 'sown' to save the church. Apart from the Saviour’s death there could be no salvation for sinners. We are saved by Christ’s obedience to God’s law in our place. Jesus lay down His sinless life in sacrificial death to make atonement for sin.

God could not both save his people *and* spare His only begotten Son from the cross. So lovingly he “delivered him up for us all” (Rom.8:32). The Bible foretold this. When Jesus met with the eleven in Jerusalem after his resurrection he said to them, “Thus it is written, and thus it behoved

Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day” (Luke 24:46). From the same Scriptures Paul reasoned with the Jews at Thessalonica that Christ “must needs have suffered” (Acts 17:3). If we are to get to heaven, it will be because we see that Jesus died in our place.

Secondly we see that the death of Christ was *powerful*. Something amazing takes place when a seed is sown in the ground. Care is taken to prepare the soil. Weeds and stones are removed. The seed is buried out of sight. We may imagine it decaying and perishing. But after winter, the season of death, comes spring, the season of life. Suddenly and wonderfully there is a ‘resurrection’ from the dead as green shoots are seen everywhere! After summer, the season of growth, there is autumn, the season of harvest. Then all the preparation and effort is rewarded. The crop appears and is gathered in.

Without his atoning death Jesus would “abide alone”; there would be no sinners with him in glory! Such is the power of Christ’s death that many are brought to salvation who were never perhaps thought likely to be saved. You may have sown seed on some occasion and neglected to mark the plot of ground where you placed it. You may even have forgotten about it entirely. To your surprise, after some months living shoots have appeared above the earth where you did not expect them! The gospel of Christ, preached in the world, has saved its Manassehs, its Legions and its Sauls.

Finally we see that the death of Christ was *fruitful*. One grain of wheat sown in the ground may produce a hundred at the harvest. In the same way Calvary was a triumph. It secured the salvation of the church. Now to many Christ’s suffering and dying seem to be a failure. Isaiah described how many people think of the Saviour: “we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted” (Isa.53:4). Yet though at times a “little flock” in this world God’s redeemed will one day be seen as “a great multitude, which no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues” standing before the throne in heaven (Rev.7:9). They are there because they have “washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” (v.14).

Before he illustrated his death Jesus said, “The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified” (v.23). His death was the lowest point of his humiliation but it was the highest point of his obedience to the will of his Father. Jesus was to go from the cross of shame to the throne of glory as his reward. From there he now gathers, rules and defends his church. Soon he shall come again for his own.

Have you seen that as a sinner the cross of Christ meets all your need? We have life only by his death. Remember, dear friend, that the Lord Jesus Christ is the one who will oversee the great harvest at the end of

the world: “Whose fan is in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire” (Matt.3:12). Seek him now as your Saviour! □

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**Gàidhlig: Uime sin, mo bhràithre gràdhach, bithibh-se daingean... – 1 Cor. 15:58 (Seonaidh Mac’ill Eathainn)**

**N**uair a leugheas sinn an earrann seo tha sinn air bhur toirt a’ dh’ionnsaigh an fhiosrachaidh a tha gach Crìosdaidh ri cuir feum air oir tha an t-Abstol a toirt earail dhuinn agus a cuir ìmpidh oirnn mu thimcheall an latha mhòr air am bheil sinn mar chreidmich ri feitheamh air. Tha sinn gu sonraichte a’ labhairt mu dheighinn na h-Aiseirigh agus tha seo a’ comhlionadh an dòchais a tha gach Crìosdaidh a’ giùlan bho chuir iad èolas air an Tighearna mar Shlànuighear. Bhiodh e freagarrach gum biodh ‘ur ‘n aire air a’ tharraing gu nì a tha cho prìseil dhuinn agus gum faiceamaid uair eile làmh an Tighearna ann am beartas a’ Fhreasdail air a’ nochdadh dhuinn mar chlann. ‘S e ‘ur dòchas aig an àm seo gum bitheamaid a’salltainn taingeachd cridhe agus irioslachd inntinn nuair tha Gràdh Dhè air fhoillseachadh dhuinn as ùr agus sin tre Fhocal.

Tha an t-Abstol a’cuir fa ‘ur comhair trì puingean a tha feumail dhuinn mar Chrìosdaidhean agus tha e labhairt rinn ann an briathrancho coibhneil. Tha sinn air bhur meas mar “bhràithrean gràdhach.” Ma tha sinne air bhur meas mar sin nach biodh e iomchuidh gum bitheamaid a’ giùlan toradh an Spioraid na ‘ur caithe-beatha laitheil agus gum bitheamaid air bhur ‘n aithneachadh a reir a Chuspair air am bheil sinn a deanamh fianuis. Tha cheud puing a’deanamh sin soilleir dhuinn nuair a tha e ag radh rinn, “bithibh-se daingean.” Feumaidh sinn a bhi daignichte anns an Ti anns a bheil ‘ur dòchas agus ‘ur muinghinn. Cha’n fhaod e bhi air a’chaochladh; “oir annsan tha ‘ur bith agus ‘ur beatha.”

Anns an darna aite chi sinn gu bheil againn ri bhi neo-ghluasadach. Tha sinn ri sinn fhein a cho-cheangal ri focal na firinn agus a bhi air ‘r stiuireadh le srian an t-Soisgeul. Cha bhiodh e freagarrach gum bitheamaid a’deanamh ‘ur toil fhein mar a’chunnaic sinn ann an aite eile ‘s an Fhirinn far an “do rinn gach duine an ni sin a bha ceart ‘n a shùilibh fhein.” (Breitheamhan 21.25). Feumaidh sinne a’ chumail na’r cuimhne gu bheil Rìgh againne tha faicinn gach ni a tha sinn ris. ‘Se bhi seasmhach ‘san Fhirinn a’ sheasas aig a cheann-thall.

Anns an treas puing tha an t-Abstol ag innseadh dhuinn gu bheil e mar dhleasdanas oirnn a bhi sìor-mheudachadh ann an obair an Tighearna.

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Tha seo aig a Chrìosdaidh ri dheanamh mar fhiannuis air taobh an Tighearna, chum is gum faic an saoghal mun cuairt, Cuspair ar dòchais agus bhur gràidh. Nach bu truagh an fhianuis mur a bitheamaid a' cuir an ceill ordugh ar Dia. Seall mar a' chuir an salmaidh briathran an t-sailm ann an snas cho sonraichte [Salm 16.8]:

Do chuir mi romham, anns gach cùis,  
An Tighearna mòr a ghnàth;  
Chionn air mo dheas làimh gu bheil e,  
Cha ghluaisear mi gu bràth.

Gun robh sinne uile a'coimhead air adhart a'dh'ionnsaigh an latha sin le dànachd ant-salmaidh agus 'ur greim air gealladh na firinn. □

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## **Congregational News**

### **Birth**

We were pleased to learn of the safe arrival on 26th February of Ruairidh Alasdair, another son for Mr & Mrs Norrie MacRitchie of "The Meadows," 18 Knockintorran. May the Lord bless the family.

### **Communion**

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

Thursday 8th April: 12.00noon; 7.30pm

Friday 9th April: 12.00noon; 7.30pm

Saturday 10th April: 12.00noon; 6.00pm (prayer meeting)

Sabbath 11th April: 11.00am (prayer meeting);

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

Monday 12th April: 12.00noon

Further details will be intimated in due course.

### **Fellowships**

Our monthly fellowships this year are on the theme 'Our Bible and How we Got it'. On March 21st we will consider Inspiration. On 11th April we will have with us one of the ministers visiting for the Communion, D.V.

### **Commission of Assembly**

The Commission met on 2nd March to consider the way forward after the court case regarding the church property in Broadford. No decision was reached and the Commission is due to meet again on 20th April, D.V. □

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

*Minister:* Rev. David M. Blunt

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

Tel. 01876 510305

Email: davidblunt@fccontinuing.org

*Session Clerk:* Mr. John Maclean

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

Tel. 01876 510351

Email: seonaidhmaclean@yahoo.co.uk

*Clerk to Deacons' Court:* Rev. David M. Blunt

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

Tel. 01876 510305

Email: davidblunt@fccontinuing.org

*Congregational Treasurer:* Mr. Lachlan M. MacLeod

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

Tel. 01876 500297

Email: MacLeodLM@aol.com

*Services:*

Sabbath: 12.00noon; 6.00pm

Wednesday: 7.30pm

Communions: 2nd Sabbath in April and September

All services are held in the church at Bayhead.

*Website:* [www.northuistandgrimsayfcc.org.uk](http://www.northuistandgrimsayfcc.org.uk)

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

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