

# Free Church **Witness**



**MARCH 2017 ISSUE**

## The Pleasant Land



# CONTENTS



## Editor

Rev William Macleod

B.Sc. Th.M

25 Branklyn Crescent

Academy Park

Glasgow

G31 1GJ

Tel 0141 959 0292

[williammacleod@fccontinuing.org](mailto:williammacleod@fccontinuing.org)

## Page

<b>The Pleasant Land.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Meditating on His Love.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Remittances January 2017.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Obituary - Alastair Gillies.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Obituary - Lachlan MacDougall.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Ripening for Glory.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>R.C.Sproul's Second Conversion.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>News Desk.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Books.....</b>	<b>18</b>

## Cover: Inverness Castle

## Subscription Details

Subscription rates (including postage) for a year's issues of the two magazines mailed to one address are:

UK £ 27.50

Europe (Airmail) £ 30.00

Overseas (Airmail) £ 35.00

The congregational rate is £ 24.00.

We would like to encourage churches to make bulk orders. The *Explorer* may be ordered separately for Sabbath Schools.

Cheques/Postal Orders should be made payable to: "Free Church of Scotland (Continuing)".

Subscriptions and orders should be sent to:

Mrs Isobel McQueer

The Manse, Tordarroch, Farr, Inverness IV2 6XF

e-mail: [isobel@mcqueer.com](mailto:isobel@mcqueer.com)

Tel: 01808 521474

## Witness on Tape

The Free Church Witness magazine is available on two tapes which can be ordered at no cost.

Please order your tapes from:

Mr Murdo Campbell

19 Loganswell Road

Glasgow G46 8AY

## FCC Audio Ministry

Sermons by ministers of the Free Church (Continuing) are available on CD and a catalogue listing the sermons may be obtained. The cost of each CD (inc. postage) is £ 1.00. Cheques/postal orders should be made payable to "Free Church (Continuing) Tape Ministry". Please order your catalogue and CDs from:

Mr Bill McQueer

The Manse, Tordarroch, Farr,

Inverness IV2 6XF

e-mail: [bill@mcqueer.com](mailto:bill@mcqueer.com)

## Psalmody CDs

Available from Rev. Andrew R. Allan

Tel: 0141 328 1707 [psalmody@fccontinuing.org](mailto:psalmody@fccontinuing.org)

[www.sing-the-psalms.webs.com](http://www.sing-the-psalms.webs.com)

## Church Website at:

[www.freechurchcontinuing.org](http://www.freechurchcontinuing.org)



Twitter: [twitter.com/fccscot](https://twitter.com/fccscot)



Facebook: [www.facebook.com/fccscot](https://www.facebook.com/fccscot)

## Gifts and Donations

All donations and gifts for the Church should be sent to the Financial Administrator:

Mrs. Muriel Smith

FCC Manse

Loch Mor

Struan

Isle of Skye IV56 8FB

from whom further information

may be obtained.

Cheques should be made payable to:

"Free Church of Scotland (Continuing)".

The Church is a recognised Scottish

Charity (No.030976).

## General Treasurer

Mr Murray MacKay

27 Morison Avenue

Stornoway

Isle of Lewis HS1 2HQ

e-mail: [generaltreasurer@fccontinuing.org](mailto:generaltreasurer@fccontinuing.org)

Mob No: 07793 535227

## Published By

Free Church of Scotland (Continuing)

25 Branklyn Crescent

Academy Park

Glasgow

G13 1GJ

## COMMUNIONS

### March:

19 Knightswood

26 Inverness, Assynt,

Scalpay

### April:

2 Ayr, Bracadale, Dores

9 North Uist

23 Atlanta, Ardelve,

Knock & Point

## Picture Editor:

Rev. Andrew R. Allan

## Design, Layout & Print:

DM Design & Print

25 Loch Lann Road

Inverness IV2 7HB

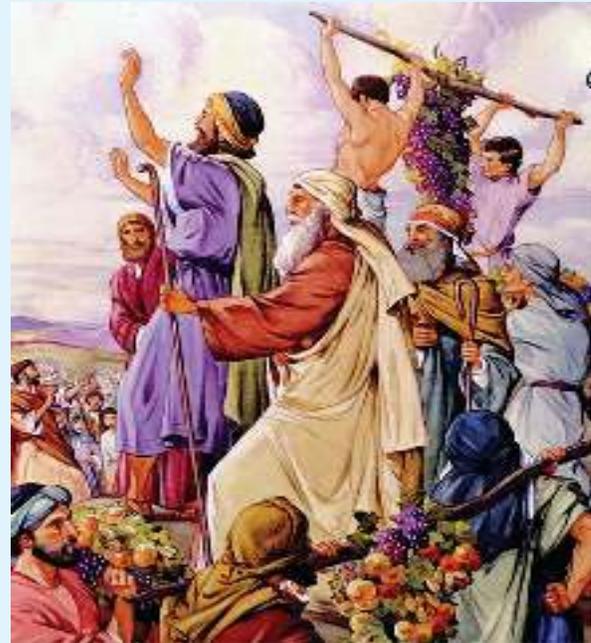
## The Pleasant Land

The Christian life can be described as the pleasant land (Ps.106:24). In the past we lived in the darkness of the land of Egypt and in the misery of the house of bondage, but God has delivered us and brought us to a land flowing with milk and honey. The Israelites sent out spies to view the country and to bring back some of its fruits. At Eshcol they cut down one amazing bunch of grapes which was so large it had to be carried by two men on a pole. The figs and pomegranates were a further demonstration of the riches and fruitfulness of Canaan. However the Israelites 'despised the pleasant land, they believed not his word' (Psalm 106:24). They had romantic thoughts of Egypt and spoke of appointing a captain to lead them back.

What relevance could this possibly have for us in Britain thousands of years later? Sadly, we too have a great tendency to unbelief, to grumble and complain. The difficulties and problems of the Christian life can at times be overwhelming. We focus so much on the enemies that we are blind to the joys of the kingdom. God has done wonderful things for us and we are mightily blessed as His people. It's great to be a Christian! It's worth our while focussing on this pleasant land to encourage us in the face of temporary trials.

### 1.) Land of Peace

Many people around us are under God's wrath and curse. All of us were at one time in the same state. We were sinners and God is angry with sinners every day (Ps.7:11). At one time we were 'dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others' (Eph.2:1-3). But we have now entered a new land, reconciled to God by the blood of Christ who is our peace (Eph.2:13-14). What a wonderful blessing it is to have forgiveness for all



Grapes and Fruit of Caanan

our sins and to know, 'There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus' (Rom.8:1). How much the people of Syria would love peace! How much more terrifying it is to have God as our enemy, than ISIS!

### 2.) Land of Fatherly Care

The Scriptures describe Canaan as a land flowing with milk and honey. When we become Christians we enter such a land. God's providence surrounds us in a special way. The psalmist expresses it well: 'O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him. O fear the Lord, ye his saints: for there is no want to them that fear him. The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing' (Ps.34:8-10). The Lord Jesus expresses the same in the Sermon on the Mount: 'Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?' (Mt.6:26). God is a wonderful loving Father. Paul assures us: 'My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus' (Phil.4:19). The Christian gets the best of both worlds, 'Having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come' (1Tim.4:8).

---

### **3.) Land of Excellent Laws**

Some countries have very bad laws. We think of the blasphemy law in Pakistan which has been used by Muslims to destroy their Christian neighbours. Here in Scotland there was an attempt to bring in the 'named person law' which would allow the state to monitor the work of parents in general in the rearing of their children. Thankfully the courts declared the data-sharing aspect of the scheme illegal. But this promised land has excellent laws specially designed by an all-wise God for the good of His people. Paul states what every Christian knows, 'I delight in the law of God after the inward man' (Rom.7:22). The laws of this pleasant land are the best possible.

### **4.) Wonderful Fellow-citizens**

The people who belong to this country are described as saints. At one time they were sinners but they have been all born again and are very different from what they once were. They are not perfect but are changing more and more for the better, being sanctified by the Spirit of God. Also they are very loving, caring for, supporting and praying for one another. Jesus said: 'A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another' (Jn.13:34-35). John adds, 'We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren' (1Jn.3:14). All the people of this land are like one family with God as their Father.

### **5.) Wonderful Presence**

A unique feature of the Land of Promise was that God dwelt there. The Shekinah cloud of His glory was in the holy of holies, in the temple in Jerusalem. God sat on the mercy-seat, between the cherubim, above the ark of the covenant. Today God's people are described as His temple. Our King is not far off in some distant palace but lives in the heart of every true Christian and also where the two or three are gathered in His name. 'God is in the midst of her' (Ps.46:5). Our King is so close to us that we can address Him at any time of the day or night. What a blessed land!

### **6.) Wonderful Worship**

In the Roman empire they worshipped the emperor Caesar, but he was a man with obvious

faults. The King, the Emperor, who is worshipped in this land, has no faults. He is worthy of worship as the Creator and Sustainer of all. He is almighty, wise, holy, just and loving. Today many worship money, celebrities, singers, football teams etc. It is so foolish, but man needs to worship something or someone. In this pleasant land they worship the living and true God who is worthy of all our praises.

### **7.) Purposeful lives**

How many empty and pointless lives there are! Give a cow plenty of grass and water and it is perfectly happy. But man needs something more. Lots of money, a house, a car, a wife, food and clothes cannot satisfy. He tries drink, drugs, immorality, but still there is a craving. But in the pleasant land, glorifying and enjoying God satisfies perfectly.

### **8.) Joyful Land**

Some people think of Christians as sad and unhappy people. Of course this is a lie from the devil. Rather, this is a blessed land where everyone is normally happy and has a right to happiness. God gives to all the inhabitants His Holy Spirit dwelling in their hearts and one of the fruits of this is joy. Christ's followers have the joy of complete forgiveness, peace in their conscience, assurance of their salvation, adoption into God's family and the wonderful hope of an inheritance in heaven.

### **9.) Safe Land**

We live in a world of increasing dangers. The nations have huge stockpiles of nuclear weapons and those who have their fingers on the buttons do not seem always to be the most stable and reliable. Then there are the terrorists who have brought their wars from the Middle East to our doorsteps. We never know when a madman will blow himself and us into eternity. But, in contrast, this pleasant land is safe. Here we are under the wings of the Almighty (Ps.91:1). 'No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord' (Is.54:17). When the Israelites three times a year made their journey to Jerusalem to keep the feasts of the Lord, God guaranteed that no-one would covet their land

---

or invade their territories. We are often attacked but we are more than conquerors and Satan shall be bruised under our feet shortly (Rom. 16:20).

### **10. An Everlasting Land**

Everything in this world is decaying. All good things come to an end. Old age and death affects us all. But there is one thing that endures. It is the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus

Christ (2Pet. 1:11). Here we have a treasure which neither moth nor rust will corrupt and thieves cannot break through and steal. Those who enter this land are happy ever after. It opens into heaven.

### **Conclusion**

Israel despised the pleasant land. Do you? Fellow Christian, rejoice in this wonderful land to which Christ has brought you.

# **Meditating On His Love**

*Rev. Craig Denniston* (Gardenstown FPC of Ulster)

*The substance of a devotional talk given at the School in Theology September 2016 on the words: 'Thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women' (2Sam. 1:26).*

Friendship is one of the greatest of human relationships. It brings together two people who develop a great deal of affection and love for each other. In 2 Samuel 1 we have recorded how David is informed of the death of his dear friend Jonathan. As this news reaches David, the memories of his friend Jonathan come rushing back to his mind and David pays his deceased friend the most heart-warming tribute by declaring 'thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women'.

The friendship between these two men is a pattern for how all believers are to have fellowship together. But beyond the intimate friendship between David and Jonathan, we have the shadow of Christ and his intimate love for His people. As we observe David meditating upon the love of Jonathan, we can say that believers should be those who are constantly recalling the love of Christ. The sad truth is we do not meditate enough on the love of the Lord Jesus Christ for us. If we did, we would be less willing to rush into sin, and instead hunger to spend more time with our Lord in His Word and prayer.

### **1) The Existence of His Love**

Love is an intimate bond between two people, expressing itself in desire and affection. This is



clearly seen in the relationship that developed between David and Jonathan and should be seen between the believer and Christ. We know that Christ loves His people from passages such as Jeremiah 31:3, 'The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee'.

While 'love' between two people can change with circumstances, the love that Christ has for His people never changes. We might be tempted to question if He can love us the same when we sin,

---

but the truth is, Christ's love is unchanging: His love for us is the same during our life, as it was before, and as it will be after. Our love towards Him may change, but His love to us is eternally the same.

When David meditated upon his dear friend Jonathan he did not question how Jonathan felt towards him; rather David recalled Jonathan's love and specifically noted that his love was 'to me'. Each believer has the blessed privilege of recalling the love of Christ for them. We can say His love is 'to me'.

One of the sweetest things a parent can ever hear from their child are the words 'I love you'. How much sweeter are the words from our Saviour and Redeemer: 'Since thou wast precious in my sight... I have loved thee' (Is.43:4)! It is not merely another human revealing that he loves us, it is the infinite and eternal God, the Sovereign Creator, and the King of Glory declaring His love for us.

The Apostle Paul experienced many trials and difficulties in his Christian life, yet he boldly declared of Christ that he 'loved me, and gave himself for me' (Gal.2:20). In all our circumstances of life we should never forget the existence of the love of Christ to us.

## **2.) The Evidence of His Love**

### **(i) Provision for David**

When David killed Goliath he was compelled to come and stay with Saul but as a humble shepherd he did not have garments suitable to wear in the king's house. However, we read in I Samuel 18:4 that Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle. When David lacked proper attire his friend Jonathan made provision for him by taking the very clothes off his back and giving them to his friend.

This is a wonderful picture of what Christ has done for His children. The Puritan preacher Matthew Henry said: 'Our Lord Jesus has thus shown his love to us, that he stripped himself to clothe us, emptied himself to enrich us, nay he did more than Jonathan, he clothed himself with our rags, whereas Jonathan did not put on David's'. Believers today have lost their filthy rags and received the garments of Christ's perfect righteousness. How humbling to think that the

King of Glory put on our sinful rags and suffered the punishment that came with them.

### **(ii) Protection of David**

When king Saul, the father of Jonathan, sought to kill David, David had to flee for his life. Normally a son would side with his father and his king in such a scenario, but the loyalty of Jonathan's heart belonged to David. In I Samuel 20:3-4 when David lamented the threat of Saul for his life, Jonathan vowed to his friend, 'whatsoever thy soul desireth, I will even do it for thee'. In protecting David the fugitive, Jonathan was risking his own life.

How much further has Christ gone for His covenant people! He has not just risked His life, He laid it down. For the joy that was set before Him, He endured the cross in the place of His people. The cup of God's wrath that was handed to Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane was drunk until not one drop remained. Christ has protected and saved His people from the curse of the law and the wrath that was due to fall on them.

### **(iii) Promotion of David**

Quite often the heart of man is proud and desirous of positions of power and pre-eminence. As the son of Saul, Jonathan could have desired the position of king and treated David as a threat. Instead, Jonathan recognised that David was to be king ahead of him and therefore promoted David before himself. We are told in I Samuel 18:3, 'then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul'.

When we meditate upon the promotion that Christ gives to the sinner, it is breath-taking. Christ finds the sinner in the gutter of iniquity; He pulls him out; cleanses him from his filth in His precious blood; gives to him a new heart, and promotes him to the position of 'son of God'.

## **3.) The Expression of His Love**

### **(i) Term: 'Wonderful'**

We have recorded in I Samuel 20:41 the second last earthly encounter between David and Jonathan: 'And as soon as the lad was gone, David arose out of a place toward the south, and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himself three times: and they kissed one another, and wept one with another, until David exceeded'.

Our culture is probably unfamiliar with their actions, but this was the common way for Jews to express themselves in biblical times. The thought

of these two friends parting company – perhaps never to see each other again – caused them both to weep uncontrollably.

As David received the news of the death of Jonathan, his mind likely turned back to this occasion when his dear friend wept on his shoulder leaving his garment wet with tears, enabling David to say that Jonathan's love for him was 'wonderful'.

When we meditate upon the love of Christ for us the English language does not have a sufficiently profound word to describe the love of God. 'Wonderful' is probably the best single word we can use, and even it falls short.

(ii) Tense: 'was'

When Jonathan died the expressions of his love towards David ceased. David would only have past memories to recall.

Although the Lord Jesus Christ died, the expressions of His love have not ceased, nor are they to be thought of in the past tense. In fact, the expression of His love continues, for we are told that he continues His work as our Great High Priest, praying continually for us in heaven (Heb.7:3, 25). How comforting to know that our Saviour-King is praying in love for us. We should be those who meditate daily on His love to us and are

able to say, 'Thy love to me IS wonderful'.

#### 4.) The Extent of His Love

David described the love of Jonathan in great terms: he says that Jonathan's love for him was so great it exceeded the love of women. As a married man with two wives at this stage in his life, David knew very well the love of women. Marital love is quite often the strongest kind of love between two adults; yet David describes the love of Jonathan for him as being greater than marital love.

So strong was the love between these two men we are told the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David (1Sam.18:1). The term 'knit' in the Hebrew language signifies being bound together. Such was the love between these two men that their souls were in union together.

Surely this should be the same with the believer and Christ: should our souls not be 'knit together' with our Saviour? Should our will, desires, and passions in this life not be in perfect harmony with Christ's? Should the burning desire of our heart when we wake each day not be the same as Paul's when he cried out 'that I may know Him!' (Phil.3:10). When we meditate upon His love we will love Him more, we will desire Him more and we will glorify Him more in our lives.

## Congregational Remittances - January 2017

CENTRAL BUILDING FUND YTD 2016	ORDINARY REMITTANCES		
	2017 January	2017 To January	2016 To January
Presbytery of Inverness	£	£	£
Aberdeen	0	1500	1500
Duffell-Dunrobin	814	1884	2345
Inverness	0	2000	1500
Kilmorack & Strachglass	0	1400	1400
Poolvick & Aulibea	5	878	508
<b>Total Inverness</b>	<b>819</b>	<b>7640</b>	<b>7053</b>
Northern Presbytery			
Aberdeen & Strathmore	0	0	0
Braemar	0	0	0
Kiltearn	0	0	1000
Tarbat	0	4000	2000
<b>Total Northern</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4000</b>	<b>3000</b>
Southern Presbytery			
Aberdeen	70	785	788
Ayr	0	900	900
Dumfries	0	0	200
Edinburgh	1700	1200	1900
Glasgow-Partick	849	1500	1500
Glasgow-Shieldhall	0	1250	2000
Glasgow-Knightwood	0	2200	1500
Rothsay	0	0	0
<b>Total Southern</b>	<b>2619</b>	<b>7835</b>	<b>8688</b>

CENTRAL BUILDING FUND YTD 2016	ORDINARY REMITTANCES		
	2017 January	2017 To January	2016 To January
Outer Hebrides Presbytery	£	£	£
Croes	0	1950	1997
Harris-Leverburgh	0	1350	1250
Harris-Scalpay	0	1800	0
Knock & Polt	0	1000	0
North Uist	590	1050	0
Sunnisay	542	6464	6426
<b>Total Outer Hebrides</b>	<b>1232</b>	<b>13614</b>	<b>9273</b>
Presbytery of Skye & Lochcarron			
Bracadale & Durnach	888	1450	1450
Kilmuir & Benshall	0	800	800
Lochaber	85	150	150
Smith	0	0	450
Portree	0	1500	1200
Snizort	0	1500	1300
<b>Total Skye/Lochcarron</b>	<b>853</b>	<b>5400</b>	<b>5100</b>
Smiths Falls	0	1000	1000
<b>Total Congregations</b>	<b>5323</b>	<b>38488</b>	<b>34114</b>
Other Donations	0	1323	1883
Legacy	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5323</b>	<b>40612</b>	<b>35947</b>
Including Gift Aid	0	0	0

# Obituary - *Alistair Gillies*

When the cedars of Lebanon begin to fall in that great wind which must inevitably blow, their loss is never so noticeable as when the forest is already sparse and bare. Alas, today, the righteous who 'grow like a cedar in Lebanon' (Ps.92:12) are few, and when in the early hours of Tuesday, 6th September, 2016, Alistair Gillies, Ar-Dachaidh, Portree, fell asleep and went to, we believe, his eternal rest, that gap in the forest grew inexorably wider.

Born in 1935 to John and Rolina Gillies, Fladda, Raasay, Alistair had a good upbringing. Though not professing members of the local Free Presbyterian Church, the Gillies family strictly observed the Sabbath and in that home the Bible was the rule of their faith and practice. In those formative years two experiences would impress the young Alistair; firstly, the impact of worship in the home, and, secondly, an account his mother would often repeat to him. She would tell him that when he was a small child the Free Presbyterian missionary, Neil MacLeod (her brother), remarked to her, 'This child will yet be one of the Lord's'. Alistair often told of this event while struggling (unsuccessfully) to overcome tears, and it was obvious that in his unconverted days those words often spoke to him from the great pulpit of the memory.

Although a keen shepherd all his life, Alistair had an early education in the school of godly practice. Working on a fishing boat, the 'Johan', with the much respected Lochcarron Free Church elder, Mr Alick MacRae, he witnessed all labour standing still while MacRae 'took the books', morning and evening, and when disembarking on Raasay at FP Communion times he received a warning from MacRae to 'attend the services'.

In the early 1960s, Alistair met Mary MacLennan, Scalpay, and the couple were united in marriage in the Free North, Inverness in November, 1964, and thereafter they set up home in the north end of Raasay before relocating to Portree in 1969.



Unbeknown to many, the Lord was working with Alistair Gillies during these years, and for some time had laid on his heart a particular portion of Scripture. Around 1980 Alistair attended the Free Presbyterian Communion in Oban, where the assisting ministers were Rev Donald Campbell, Edinburgh, and Rev Donald J MacLennan, Staffin. It was on the Saturday that Mr MacLennan was due to preach, planning to take his text from Psalm 116:1: 'I love the LORD, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications'. That morning the Lord took away that text from Mr MacLennan, and he was constantly led to the thought, 'feed my lambs', and with only an hour before the worship the Song of Solomon 2:10-13 came 'forcefully' to him: 'My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone .... Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away'.

That Saturday Alistair Gillies heard the passage read; he heard the text announced; he heard the account from the pulpit of the Lord's dealings with his servant that very morning and the belief expressed that this text 'is for someone here today!' This was the text that Alistair had been wrestling with for all this time. What outward signs were shown that day in Oban Free Presbyterian Church are now locked away, but they did not go unnoticed by the senior minister present, the

---

Rev Donald Campbell. As the congregation emerged to face torrential rain, Mr Campbell turned to Mr MacLennan and with reference to his particular text, remarked: 'You will never make it as a weather forecaster but the Sun shone on one of Christ's lambs today and it will not go down throughout eternity'. Mr Campbell knew Alistair Gillies: almost four decades previously he was inducted to Raasay in 1942 when our late friend was a boy of seven years old.

Alistair professed faith in Portree Free Presbyterian Church a short while later – most probably in 1981 – and in later years upon joining Portree Free Church his consistency was recognised first by his induction to the diaconate in December 1989, and later his ordination to the eldership in 2001. Alistair was later installed as an elder in Kilmuir & Stenscholl Free Church (Continuing) in May 2007, and became Session Clerk in 2010 – a position which he held until poor health ensued.

The men under whose ministries Alistair Gillies sat will remember him for various things – his diligence, kindness and generosity have been mentioned by them all. However, in times of crisis in the Church Alistair Gillies could be counted

upon not to waver: to do what was right according to the Biblical principles surrounding doctrine, worship, and practice was his duty and, like every Christian, his calling. He would lament the declension he witnessed latterly in the confessing church by those brought up to 'know the everlasting Gospel', and how there was a weakening in successive generations.

Familiar phrases he used in prayer, such as, 'the place which knows us now shall know us no more', and after we enter 'the swellings of Jordan', and 'the Lord is speaking to us at the expense of our fellow man', are now all true of our friend, as they will be of us. Alistair's remains were laid to rest in Portree cemetery, where many of the Lord's people rest awaiting the trumpet's sound when they shall arise and sing eternally 'unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood' (Rev. 1:5).

Our prayerful sympathy goes to Mrs Mary Gillies, a faithful helpmeet, to Alistair's daughter, Dolina (and John Murdo) Martin, and son, John Angus (and Anne) Gillies and family, praying that the one who is 'a father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows' will be their portion and strength.

*Rev Raymond A. Kemp*

## **Obituary - Lachlan MacDougall**

On 5th August the North Uist & Grimsay congregation lost its senior elder when Mr Lachlan MacDougall, Bayhead, went to his eternal rest.

Lachie, as he was popularly known, was born in 1936, being the third of twelve children. The family lived in Claddach Carinish at the southern end of North Uist, occasionally attending services in the Church of Scotland. Lachie was educated at Paible School in Bayhead, on the west side of the island, and worked in a variety of jobs. Having been employed in the construction of the new school building at Bayhead, which opened in 1965, he became the janitor, holding the post for over



thirty years; he was well-known in the local community as a result. Following retirement from the post in 1996, Lachie's main occupation was fishing, which he did from his own boat out of the neighbouring island of Berneray.

In 1959 Lachie married Mary Ann from Bayhead, and she was to prove a true helpmeet to him. At that time their interest was more in the things of this world than those of the world to come. God had a purpose of grace toward them however. It was seen first in Mary Ann, and then became evident in Lachie in a striking way. The couple having spent the Saturday evening socialising, as was their custom, and having retired for the night, Mary Ann was awakened in the early hours of the Sabbath by the sound of a voice in the room. When aware that Lachie was no longer beside her, she realised that the words she was hearing were his; he was on his knees, praying earnestly to the Lord. That morning Lachie went to the house of God, a changed man, and never looked back.

Mary Ann was a bright Christian and a great support to Lachie. They worshipped in the Kilmuir congregation of the Church of Scotland. Lachie was ordained to the eldership in 1965, and during vacancies he would often take the prayer meetings, Mary Ann giving him encouragement when he felt his inability for such duties. It was a great blow to Lachie when Mary Ann died in 1995 at the relatively young age of 62, and it is true to say that in many ways he was not the same man afterwards.

In 2002 difficulties in the Kilmuir congregation led Lachie and a number of others to worship in the Free Church (Continuing) at Bayhead, during the ministry of Rev James Gracie. Lachie was inducted as an elder soon after. His first language was Gaelic, in which he always prayed. He was blessed

with a soft and melodious singing voice, which meant that he was often employed in leading the Gaelic praise. He will be remembered as one who had a kind and gentle nature, a prayerful concern for souls, including his loved ones, and a burden for the Lord's cause. We give thanks to God for the contribution he made to the congregation, and pray that others will be raised up in our day who will serve Christ faithfully.

In his final years Lachie suffered with Parkinson's disease and other afflictions, which meant that he could no longer attend public worship. As well as the help provided by his family, he appreciated visits from the Lord's people, especially when they would conduct worship with him. When the illness took its final toll, the well-attended funeral bore testimony to the regard in which Lachie was held and the affection many had for him. It was fitting that the final singing (in Gaelic) was of these words from Psalm 107:

*The storm is chang'd into a calm  
at his command and will;  
So that the waves, which rag'd before,  
now quiet are and still.  
Then are they glad, because at rest  
and quiet now they be:  
So to the haven he them brings,  
which they desir'd to see.*

We extend our condolences to Lachie's son Charlie and his wife Paula, and to the three grandchildren. We also remember the surviving brothers and sisters. It is our prayer that in their sad loss they will experience true and lasting comfort. May they come to know the God of all grace through the Lord Jesus Christ, who died for sinners and rose again for them – the precious Saviour each of us must find before our own time comes to leave this world.

*Rev David M Blunt*



NORTH UIST  
& GRIMSAY  
FREE CHURCH  
OF SCOTLAND  
(CONTINUING)

# Ripening For Glory

*The opportunities that we have had for serving God in China have come to us through Mr Case Kleppe, a Dutchman who lives and works in America. He wrote in December 2016:*

I wanted to reflect a moment on my dear parents. Many ask me how my father (Rev J M Kleppe) is doing, the co-founder of our ministry. My father is due to be 87 on March 7, DV. His mental health is good but his lower back gives him much trouble. This forces him to walk with a stick. He is still able to drive his car but in a limited manner. His heart is reconciled to the way God leads his life. He misses my mother a lot and talks about this every day. His desire is to be with the Lord and he greatly looks forward to that day.

At this time of year I always reflect on my dear mother, who has been with the Lord now for eleven years. Two weeks before she passed away, the Dutch Reformed daily newspaper, *Reformatorisch Dagblad*, asked her to write a short article on Eternity. They have a practice of publishing in their New Year's eve issue many short essays on various topics of daily life. Knowing she was terminally ill, the editor asked my mother to write about her expectations of her life to come. She wrote this short article which was published on December 31, 2005. Six days later she passed away (aged 71), on the morning of our daughter's wedding which both my father and she had intended to attend. For her it became another wedding, eternally happy to be with the Lord she loved so much.

## **Through Him I have an eternal future**

*Mrs M A Kleppe - van Bellen*

When I was yet young, the Lord convicted me of my sins. It became a reality to me that I had to die and appear before God. As a result, my future became fearful and dark. But the Lord was willing to have compassion on me. Christ revealed Himself to me and liberated my soul. There was from me only admiration and worship when the love of Christ ran like a stream through my soul. Over three months ago, my surgeon told me the grave news that I had a serious and malignant cancer. A big operation awaited me. The operation,

which has since taken place, was successful, but I have an incurable cancer.

When I heard this heavy news, the Lord was willing to lovingly embrace me and give me much strength. I said to my husband and children, 'Now I experience what my God is to me. He gives strength and faith, right when we need it'. I believe my eternal future is safe with my faithful God and Father. Christ is all my hope and desire. He is my Redeemer and my eternal Bridegroom, my only comfort in life and death.

Even although I entrust my beloved husband, children and grandchildren to the Lord for the future, I bear in my heart much sorrow to leave them behind. But yet, with desire I look forward to my eternal future with Him who bought me with His precious blood. Then I will praise Him forever and in amazement and worship bow down before Him and say: 'It is through Thee, through Thee alone, because of Thine eternal good pleasure'.



Mr & Mrs J.M. Kleppe

# R.C. SPROUAL'S SECOND CONVERSION

*Rev David Murray (Grand Rapids, USA)*

**Q. How many times can a person be born again?**

A. Once.

**Q. How many times can a person be converted?**

A. Many times.

The Apostle Peter is an example of this. Although already born again, with God-given insight into the person of Christ (Mt.16:17), Jesus told him that some time in the future he would be converted which would result in him being a strengthener of other believers (Luke 22:32).

R C Sproul is another example. Again, although born again, dramatically converted, and thoroughly changed in his desires and life, Sproul underwent a further subsequent conversion which was no less dramatic. In chapter 1 of *The Holiness of God*, he explains how in his early Christian life, 'I knew who Jesus was, but God the Father was shrouded in mystery. He was hidden, an enigma to my mind and a stranger to my soul'.

While listening to a boring philosophy lecture in college, the teacher started explaining Augustine's views on the creation of the world. The next several pages contain the most beautiful writing on God's creation that I have ever read. Here's a sample:

'The first sound uttered in the universe was the voice of God commanding, "Let there be!" The command created its own molecules to carry the sound waves of God's voice farther and farther into space.

'As soon as the words left the Creator's mouth, things began to happen. Where his voice reverberated, stars appeared, glowing in unspeakable brilliance in temp with the song of angels. The force of divine energy splattered against the sky like a kaleidoscope of colour hurled from the palette of a powerful artist. Comets crisscrossed the sky with flashing tails like



Fourth of July skyrockets. The Supreme architect gazed at His complex blueprint and shouted commands for the boundaries of the world to be set.

'Then God stooped to earth and carefully fashioned a piece of clay. He lifted it gently to His lips and breathed into it. The clay began to move. It began to think. It began to feel. It began to worship. It was alive and stamped with the image of its Creator'.

Sproul says he had always known that God created everything out of nothing; but it was when he realised how he did it that his whole view of God changed. He went from being a functional Unitarian to being a worshipping Trinitarian. He describes it as being converted not merely to God the Son, but to God the Father. 'Suddenly I had a passion to know God the Father. I wanted to know Him in His majesty, to know Him in His power, to know Him in His august holiness'.

It's beautiful isn't it? But what can we learn from Sproul's second conversion? Here are five lessons.

## **1.) Don't rule out multiple conversions.**

We have so much to change in our lives, especially in our view of God, that we should not

be surprised at subsequent “conversion-like” experiences where God enables us to take a quantum leap in our knowledge and understanding of God. We should be thankful for every such conversion.

**2.) Don't seek multiple conversions.**

God normally works gradually, not dramatically. We shouldn't be worried if we've never had such a dramatic experience. The norm for most Christians is a slow gradual process of ongoing conversion in our God-view, self-view, and world-view. Seeking out the sensational or the dramatic is only going to disappoint and to discourage.

**3.) Don't make Sproul's experience the norm.**

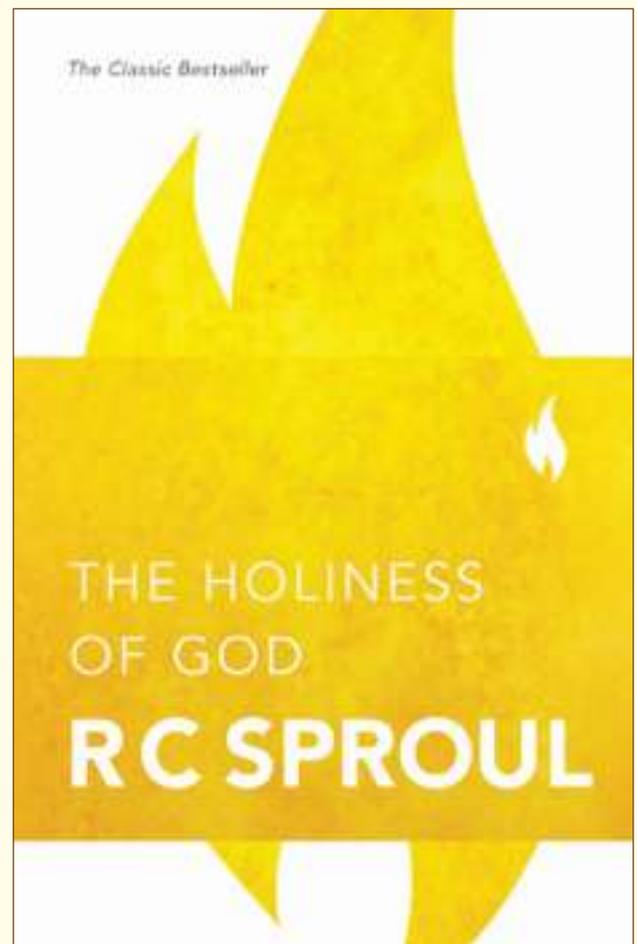
R C Sproul is a unique man with a unique ministry. Looking back, we now know that God had earmarked him to carry a radical message about the holiness of God to this generation of evangelicals who, like Sproul, were (and are) also guilty of a practical Unitarianism, or of a Christo-monism. With that special ministry in view, God gave Him an overwhelming experience of His holiness that would flavour everything he would subsequently do, say, and write.

**4.) Use Sproul's experience to challenge your faith.**

Although we shouldn't make Sproul's experience the norm, we should ask ourselves if we too have been guilty of practical Unitarianism. Maybe we have focused almost exclusively upon Christ, with no real knowledge of or acquaintance with the Holy Father. If so, then Sproul's experience should encourage us to ask God to show us His holiness, to reveal Himself to us through His Word. Who knows what might happen? Maybe the next R C Sproul is out there and about to be readied for a worldwide ministry.

**5.) True conversion will make us desire God.**

There are many spurious spiritual experiences that are nothing but sheer emotionalism, lasting only for a few minutes with no permanent spiritual fruit. But true and spiritual experience results in a hunger for God and a passion to know Him, especially in His holiness.



**TEMPLEPATRICK / DOAGH**  
*Spring Conference Addresses*

**Speakers:** Rev. Trevor Kirkland (Doagh Free C of Scotland Continuing)  
Rev. David Silversides (Loughbrickland RPC of Ireland)

1997	The Millennium & Revelation 20 (A-mill and Post-millennial view) Pt. 1 & 2
1998	Using our jubilation in the glory of God (Pt 1 & 2)
1999	Can you trust the Bible in your Hand? / The Sufficiency of the Bible for the Millennium
2000	Jesus Christ in Contemporary Society - (The Biblical Christ / Current Views of Christ)
2001	The NT Age & the Ministration of the Spirit / Jonathan Edwards & signs of the Spirit's work
2002	The Regulatory Principle Professed, but Avoided / Principles of Worship in their Biblical and Contemporary Setting
2003	Old & New Testament love - are they the same? / Understanding the Imprecatory Psalms
2004	The Verdict of the Scriptures on Open Theism / The Doctrines of Open Theism
2005	The Free Offer of the Gospel & Pastoral Support / The Free Offer - A Personal Perspective
2006	Handling the Word / Confessional Approach to the Word
2007	The Covenant of Works / Pt 1 & 2
2008	Prayer: What It is and Why It Can Be Difficult / Personal Counsel and Advice in Prayer by the Pastors
2009	John Calvin: His Life & the Truth of God's Sovereignty / The 1854 Revival in Ireland
2010	The Law and the Christian / The Christian and the Hostile State
2011	The Preservation of Scripture / The Translation of the Authorised Version
2012	The Present Crisis in Church and State (Pt 1 & 2)
2013	Old Calvinism / New Calvinism
2014	The Riches of the Covenants in Scripture / (In the Writings of Jonathan Edwards)
2015	Is there an Unpardonable Sin? / (Is Atonement Redundant?)
2016	Calvin on Islam / Do we all worship the same God?

**2016 marks the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the T'patrick/Doagh Spring Conference.**  
An MP3 CD is now available containing all the above (two addresses annually by each speaker) for 25 a copy, including postage and packing.  
Please send requests to: Miss Claire Lucas, 15 Lisbane Road, Scarva, Craigavon, BT63 6LN. Email: [claire.lucas58@btinternet.com](mailto:claire.lucas58@btinternet.com). Mobile: 07964 246635



# News

## **New Manse**

*(Rev Calum Smith)*

The Congregation of Bracadale and Duirinish Free Church (Continuing) were recently successful in purchasing a very suitable property for a manse next to the Congregation's main building at Struan. We wish to thank the General Trustees for all

their efforts, as well as the Finance and Sustentation Committee and the General Treasurer. We would also like to thank those who gave pledges for their overwhelming generosity which enabled us to meet our financial requirement. Above all, we give thanks to the Lord for His great provision.



---

# Desk



---

## **Evangelist cleared at Sheriff's Court** *(Christian Concern)*

Gordon Larmour was charged with behaving in a 'threatening or abusive manner aggravated by prejudice relating to sexual orientation' and 'assault', after he shared the Christian position on homosexual practice with some young men in the street.

The trial happened on 9 January at Kilmarnock Sheriff Court. Supported by the Christian Legal Centre, Gordon was found 'not guilty' after the evidence against him broke down.

Gordon, who often visits Irvine to offer gospel leaflets to people, offered a leaflet to a group of young men who were passing through the town. He shared with one of the men how meeting God had turned his life around. Another of the men, who said he was a homosexual, asked Gordon for God's opinion of those who engage in homosexual practices. Gordon told him what the Bible teaches. Gordon's answers angered the man and he tried to hit Gordon. The young men then began to chase Gordon and shouted abusive comments at him. Police officers called to the scene were told by the young men that Gordon had made 'homophobic' remarks, so he was arrested and taken to a police station and held overnight.

Gordon was charged with behaving in a 'threatening or abusive manner aggravated by prejudice relating to sexual orientation' and 'assault'.

At the trial on 9 January 2017, two of the young men who spoke with Gordon appeared as witnesses, along with a police officer.

The Sheriff made the decision for the case to be heard in private, concerned for the sensitivities for one of the young men. But the young men's

accounts of the events did not agree, and the police officer was unable to say for certain whether Gordon had said anything more than 'the act [of homosexuality] was wrong'.

Because the evidence against Gordon broke down, Gordon's solicitor, CLC allied lawyer Alastair Ross, made a submission of 'no case to answer'.

The Sheriff found that Gordon was 'not guilty' only an hour after the trial began.

*It raises our concerns when we hear that a man faithfully proclaiming God's Word is locked up overnight on the hearsay of another man. We are thankful that he was cleared, but it appears that the situation for open-air preachers is becoming more difficult. The freedoms we thought we had are being taken away.*

## **Cannabis is not harmless**

*(Christian Institute)*

Cannabis is 'not the harmless substance some would have us believe', the Scottish Conservatives' shadow justice secretary has said, after figures revealed an all-time high in hospital admissions related to the drug.

Last year, Scottish police officers were given new powers to issue 'Recorded Police Warnings' to people who are caught with cannabis.

Douglas Ross, shadow justice secretary, has slammed the 'Warnings' for giving the wrong signal to drug users and described cannabis as a 'gateway drug to even more harmful substances'. He added, 'It's quite alarming that quite so many people are being hospitalised through using cannabis, a drug many people feel authorities are going soft on. We have a massive fight on our hands in Scotland both with illegal drugs and so-called legal highs. Now is not the time to give in and wave the white flag. We

---

need to crack down on those who are circulating drugs of all kinds on our streets, and reinforce the message about just how damaging taking these substances can be'.

Figures released by the Information Services Division found that 913 hospital admissions involving drug use in Scotland were related to cannabinoids between 2015 and 2016, up from 802 between 2014 and 2015. The number of overnight hospital stays involving cannabinoids, the active compounds in cannabis, were also alarmingly high during the period, especially compared to 553 for cocaine-related admissions. Head of Communications at The Christian Institute, Ciarán Kelly warned against the Scottish Government's changes in its approach to dealing with cannabis at the time it was announced, predicting it would embolden drug users. 'This change implies that cannabis is not a serious drug and should be dealt with leniently. But cannabis is a very serious drug and creates very serious problems for many individuals, families and communities', he said.

### **Un-British and homophobic**

*(Christian Institute)*

Saying that marriage is only between one man and one woman goes against British values, the Government's integration tsar has claimed. Dame Louise Casey made the inflammatory remarks in front of MPs as they questioned her on a major report. Discussing the 'Trojan Horse' school affair, she likened Roman Catholic schools' support for traditional marriage to the extremism exposed in Birmingham.

Dame Louise said the issues raised by Trojan Horse were 'not okay, in the same way that it is not okay for Catholic schools to be homophobic and anti-gay marriage. That is not okay either — it is not how we bring children up in this country'. Speaking to the Communities and Local Government Committee, the integration tsar went on to accuse opponents of same-sex marriage of merely using religious conservatism as a cover to hide their 'anti-equality' views. Dame Louise said: 'It is often veiled as religious conservatism, and I have a problem with the expression "religious conservatism", because often it can be anti-equalities'. She added that people

should be allowed to live the lives they want, but must not 'condemn others for living differently'.

Dame Louise's 199-page report on integration, published last December, recommended that holders of public office, swear an 'equality oath' affirming British values. The idea was later backed by communities secretary Sajid Javid who said those who do not accept such values will 'struggle to play a positive role in British life'.

But the idea has been criticised in the media and The Christian Institute warned it could lead to people with traditional views being excluded.

### **Online Divorce**

*(Christian Institute)*

Couples will be able to file for divorce online this year, if a controversial new project goes ahead. Government ministers are drafting a pilot scheme which will allow divorce proceedings to be initiated over the internet for the first time, in order to save time and paperwork.

The move was instantly seized upon by family lawyers, who would like the Government to allow no-fault divorce. Nigel Shepherd, a family partner at law firm Mills & Reeve, claimed a change to the law to remove fault in divorce is crucial. And Jo Edwards, head of family at Forsters in Mayfair, said requiring fault in divorce is 'over-complicating the whole process. It is time to allow couples to divorce in a more dignified fashion'.

Simon Calvert, Deputy Director for Public Affairs at The Christian Institute, responded: 'This pilot scheme, a terrible idea itself, has been seized upon by those intent on introducing "no-fault" divorce. But marriage is by far the most stable form of relationship for raising children. Rather than attacking it, lawyers who often see at first hand the hurt and damage done by family breakdown, should be arguing for schemes that back this great institution, such as compulsory marriage counselling and financial support for married couples'.

Recently, more than a hundred lawyers marched on Parliament calling for the Government to weaken the law on divorce. Family lawyer group Resolution led the action.

The Christian Institute has warned that liberalising the law further would undermine marriage and lead to more family breakdown.

---

## **100,000 lives saved**

*(Premier – A Bushfield)*

More than 100,000 people are alive today because the 1967 Abortion Act was not implemented in Northern Ireland, a new campaign group has estimated. The Both Lives Matter group, a movement that includes the Evangelical Alliance in Northern Ireland, found the figure by comparing the Northern Ireland situation with the rates of abortion in Scotland. The report then estimates the number of abortions carried out for Northern Irish women in England and Wales based on UK Department of Health data which is cited in academic literature by pro-choice advocates. The difference between these figures is the number of people alive today because the 1967 Act was not enacted in Northern Ireland.

*We thank God for those precious lives saved in Northern Ireland.*

## **Russia**

*(E Kendal)*

On 19 January a Working Group formed by the Russian Duma (legislative assembly) met to revisit Russia's controversial Anti-Terror law, also known as the Spring Package or the Yarovaya Law. Enacted in July 2016 the law includes anti-mission measures that have caused problems for numerous believers, particularly Protestants (especially Baptists), as well as ethnic Ukrainian and American priests, pastors and missionaries. The law has been heavily criticised both internationally and at home. Last September President Vladimir Putin told his ruling United Russia party that the deeply unpopular law may need to be 'adjusted to not put people in a difficult position'. However, nothing was done. Stratfor Intelligence notes: 'Instead of hitting the streets this time, Russians took to petitioning instead'. Hundreds of thousands reportedly signed an online petition and the government is aware that if society's concerns are not taken seriously, protests will surely follow. After discussing the issues on 19 January, the Working Group were expected to submit recommendations to the Duma & President Putin. *Pray for Russia and for freedom for Christians to worship and evangelise in that great country.*

## **Turkish Persecution**

*(E Kendal)*

Rev. Andrew Brunson (48), American Protestant pastor of the Dirilis (Resurrection) Church in

Izmir, Turkey, and his wife Norine were arrested on 7 October last, deemed a threat to national security. Norine was subsequently released, but Brunson was transferred to the Harmandanli Detention Centre where he is being held incommunicado. He faced court on 9 December accused of 'terrorism' and links with the Gulen Movement. The Erdogan government blames the Gulen Movement for last July's failed coup attempt and maintains that the US was complicit. Fethullah Gulen has lived in self-imposed exile in the USA since 1999. Turkey is demanding his extradition (so maybe they wanted a bargaining chip). The Brunsons, who have three children studying in the US, have lived in Turkey for the past 23 years. Andrew Brunson's situation is dire.

## **Problems in Egypt**

*(Barnabas Fund)*

Christians are bitterly disappointed that Souad Thabet's case has been thrown out. In May 2016, a 300-strong Salafi mob attacked a 70-year-old Coptic grandmother, Souad Thabet, from the village of al-Karm in Minya province, 250 kilometres south of Cairo. Thabet was stripped naked, beaten and paraded through the street following a rumour that her son was having an affair with a Muslim woman. Thabet's husband and daughter-in-law were also attacked and injured. At the same time, the mob attacked several Christian houses, burning seven to the ground, including Thabet's.

President al-Sisi, who has been reaching out to the Christian communities across Egypt, demanded an immediate investigation into the attack, apologised directly to Souad Thabet and ordered that the destroyed houses be repaired by the government. Charges were subsequently brought against Nazeer Ishaq, the husband of the woman alleged to have had the affair with Thabet's son, and several members of the mob.

On 14 January, prosecutors announced that the case had been thrown out, citing insufficient evidence due to the fact that several witnesses had changed their testimonies. Thabet's lawyer, Ihab Ramzy, calls it 'a calamity', claiming that the witnesses had changed their statements under threat from the Salafi defendants. He says he will be filing an appeal for the prosecution to re-open the case.

In the meanwhile, two other related cases are still ongoing: twenty-five villagers charged with arson

for the destruction of the houses, and two local detectives who face charges of tampering with evidence and changing Thabet's testimony.

Anti-Christian persecution – ranging from marginalisation to murder – is not uncommon in Egypt. It is more blatant and unrestrained when it occurs outside the larger cities in the provincial or

### **Sermons on Titus**

John Calvin,

Banner of Truth Trust, hbk, 293pp, £15.00

This very readable, modern, translation of sermons by Calvin on the Epistle of Titus brings the great Reformer right into our company; one almost thinks he is talking to us in the flesh, though centuries gone from these scenes of time! The translator is Robert White, a former lecturer in French Studies at the University of Sydney.

This edition is presented in the customary high quality of the Banner of Truth. Others may find as I did that taking it up to read in small doses is the best way to savour Calvin's message. One may also feel that a certain amount of the teaching is commonplace, but this is to fail to recognise that Calvin was the pioneer of this practical application of Scripture. He has laid down the lessons that have been taken up by us all again and again down the generations! For example, 'Moreover we see many to-day whose ears are so delicate that, as soon as a raw nerve is touched, they fret and fume and demand a complete change when the preaching is not to their liking'.

The Epistle is covered in 17 sermons, but unevenly; for instance there are four sermons on the first six verses but only one for the last eight verses. Calvin begins with a useful outline summed up thus: 'We therefore see that the sole purpose of Paul's letter was to defend Titus' cause, and give him every assistance while he was engaged in the work of the Lord'. Indices of subjects and Scriptures conclude the volume.

Through the course of a discursive exposition, Calvin brings many practical applications before his Genevan congregation. These frequently make pointed reference to the abuses of Popery, e. g., 'The Papists loudly proclaim God as Saviour but do they see the gospel as the power of God for their salvation? They growl at it like wild beasts and furiously persecute it'. On the other hand, preachers receive valuable correctives: 'Those

rural areas where law and order are less stringently maintained. Coptic Christians are deeply disillusioned by the whole affair and Souad Thabet is very bitter: 'I have been treated cruelly and unfairly ... it looks like the case has been cooked up so that there is no evidence ... May God bring me justice'.

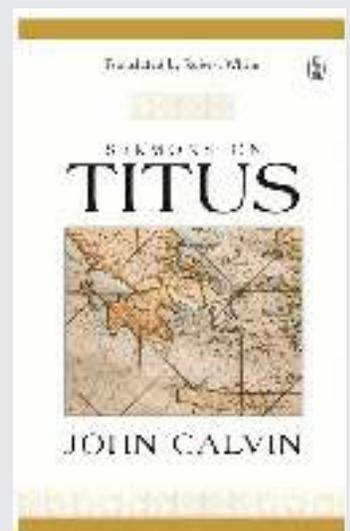
# Books

called to preach should not be too hard-headed, they should be teachable, mild-mannered and peaceable, wishing only to edify ... In disposition they should be flexible. It is a fact that those who are guilty of pride are likely at anytime to be schismatics, creating factions in God's church'. He is not above censuring women for 'decking themselves out like dolls'. As for men, 'Each man should be his own judge and jury and condemn himself before he judges his neighbour'.

Calvin has been called the 'Theologian of the Holy Spirit' and, true to form, he waxes eloquent on his theme in Sermon Sixteen: 'If we do not have the Holy Spirit, Christ would have suffered in vain'. 'Again, if we know that through him (Christ) we are reconciled to God the Father and are made completely righteous, we should also understand that he bestows all these things on us by his Holy Spirit'.

I hope these samples will whet the appetite of many of our readers to purchase this excellent introduction to Calvin's rich mine of edifying and thought-provoking expositions. What joyful freedom of spirit these Genevan hearers enjoyed from their illustrious pastor, after having being released from the chains of Rome!

*Rev David Fraser*



## War and Faith

Don Stephens, Evangelical Press, pbk, 141pp. £6.99

Having read and greatly enjoyed Don Stephens' earlier book *War and Grace*, I was keen to read this one which is a kind of sequel. It provides short biographies of Christians who were caught up in the Second World War. It starts with Steve Stevens, a South African pilot, decorated for his bravery and later using his skills as a Mission Aviation Fellowship pilot.

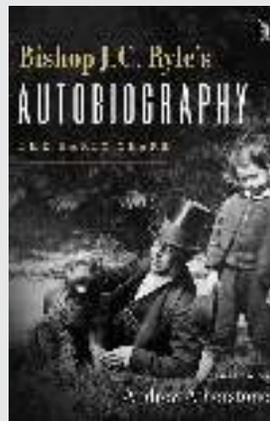
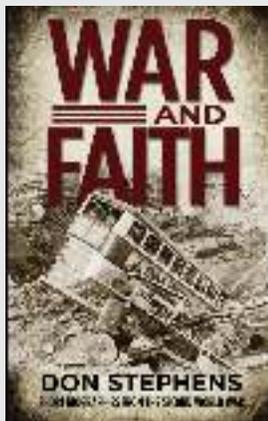
Next comes Jane Haining, from rural Dumfriesshire, who became matron of a hostel for girls attending a Church of Scotland school in Budapest, Hungary. This was part of the Mission to the Jews started by 'Rabbi' John Duncan 100 years before. Because of her love for the Jewish children and efforts to protect them, she was arrested and taken to Auschwitz where she was put to death on 17th July 1944. Even although she had been a Jewish Missionary, Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Martyrs and Heroes Remembrance Authority, awarded her the title 'Righteous Among the Nations'.

There is the fascinating story of Bastiaan Ader, a minister who became a Dutch resistance leader. It was in his home that the Jew, Johanna-Ruth Dobschiner, who wrote the book *Selected to Live*, hid for part of the war. He was arrested and shot by the Nazis a month before his 35th birthday and sixteen days after the birth of his second son.

The account is given of Rachmiel Frydland, the Polish Jew, brought up to be a rabbi, but converted by the sovereign grace of God. He suffered much brutality and avoided death by many wonderful escapes and after the war became a minister in the USA.

This is an interesting book to read and a challenging one. Our lives are so easy. We suffer little and are very ready to complain. A book like this challenges us to reassess our priorities, to see the foolishness of setting our hearts on earthly treasure and success. Life is short and uncertain but let us prepare to meet our God and lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven.

Rev William Macleod



## Bishop J.C.Ryle's Autobiography – The early years

Ed Andrew Atherstone, Banner of Truth trust, hbk, 319pp, £15.50

John Charles Ryle (1816-1900) dictated this autobiography in 1873. He speaks in detail about his family background, childhood, days at Eton and then Oxford. It was while at University that he was converted from an ignorant though largely respectable life. The solemn reading in church of Ephesians 2 and especially verse 8, 'For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God', had a significant impact, though surprisingly he does not mention this in his autobiography.

Two years after his conversion something happened which was to have a deep impact on his life and leave an aching wound. He had grown up in great wealth and affluence. He loved Henbury Hall which had become his family's home in 1835. But one June morning in 1841 they woke as usual wealthy, but went to bed bankrupt. His father's bank had failed. John, as the eldest son now aged 25, had expected to inherit the home and planned to enter parliament as an MP. Penniless and homeless, he spent some painful months living with friends. He said that if he hadn't been a Christian he would have been tempted to commit suicide. He was offered a curacy which he accepted, because he could see no other way to earn his bread. From there he served in other charges till eventually he became bishop of Liverpool. He often refers to the pain of poverty but at the same time is able to see God's hand, through this, leading him into the ministry. His early years as a minister were marked by considerable suffering. His first two wives suffered from prolonged illnesses, died young and left him with dependent children.

The autobiography of his early years was written for the benefit of his children and not with a view to publication. The historian will find many valuable footnotes added by the editor. There are four lengthy appendices, and also added are several of Ryle's earliest and rarest tracts, as are his last will and testimony and a funeral sermon preached following the death of Georgina Tollemache who was a great supporter of his ministry in Helmingham. He described her as the 'brightest example of a Christian woman I ever saw'. His tracts and sermon demonstrate his easy style in writing and his direct challenging of the unconverted with the claims of the gospel.

This volume is a useful supplement to Iain Murray's excellent recent biography *Prepared to stand Alone*.

Rev William Macleod



“I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord.  
Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem.”

**Psalm 122:1-2**

**Published by the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing)**