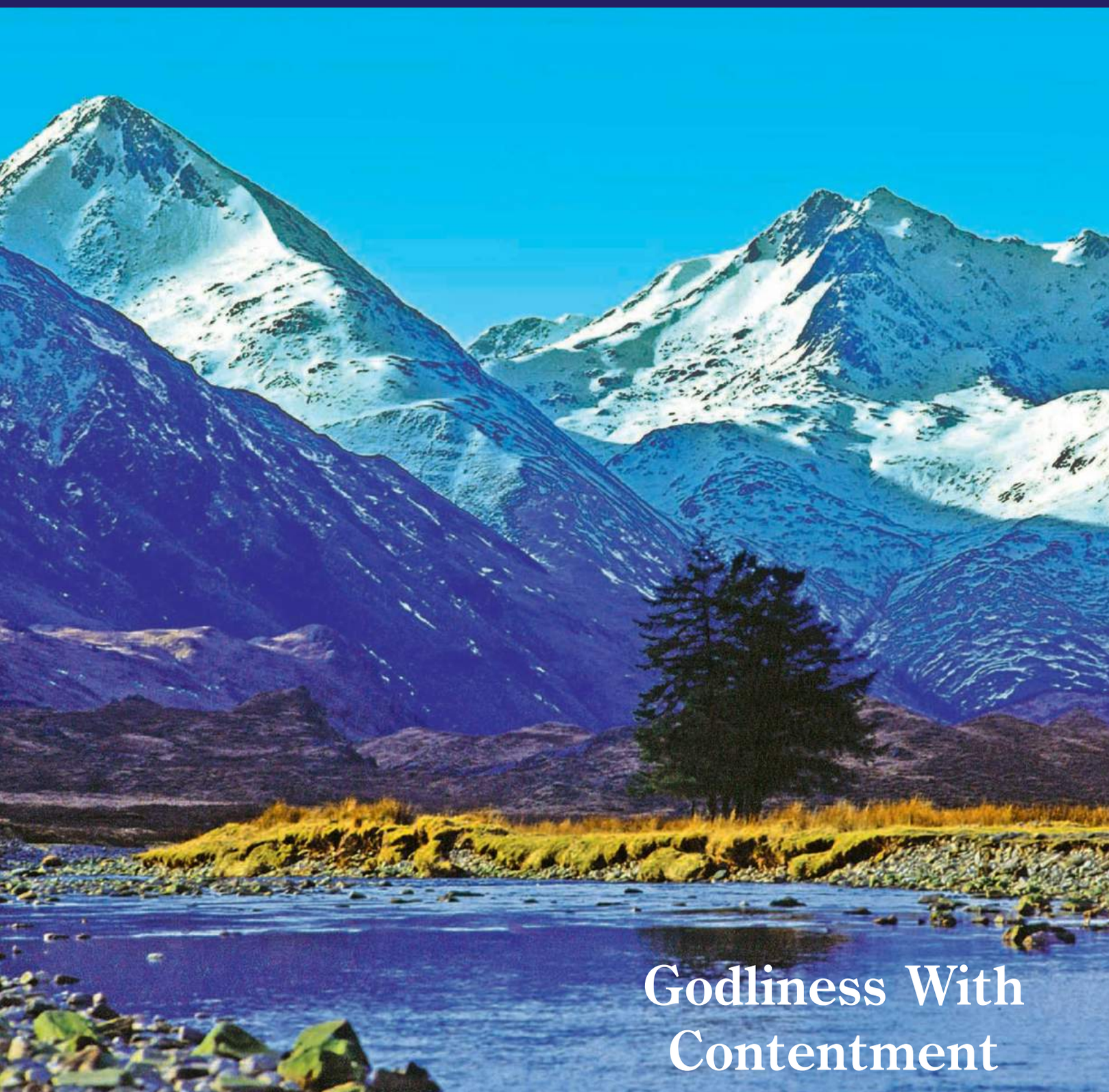
Free Church Witness

FEBRUARY 2017 ISSUE



Godliness With Contentment

Published by the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing)

Price: £ 2.00

CONTENTS

Editor
Rev William Macleod
B.Sc. Th.M
25 Branklyn Crescent
Academy Park
Glasgow
G31 1GJ
Tel 0141 959 0292
williammacleod@fccontinuing.org

Cover: Glen Shiel, Wester Ross

Page

Godliness With Contentment.....3

Thomas Chalmers (1780 - 1847)..... 5

Remittances December 2016.....6

Repeal The Abortion Act 1967.....7

Encouragement in Trials.....9

Choosing a Minister.....11

News Desk.....14

Books.....18

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
Tel: 01808 521474

Witness on Tape

The Free Church Witness magazine is available on twotapes 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

Psalmody CDs

Available from Rev. Andrew R. Allan
Tel: 0141 328 1707 psalmody@fccontinuing.org
www.sing-the-psalms.webs.com

Church Website at:
www.freechurchcontinuing.org

Twitter: twitter.com/fccscot

Facebook: 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
Mob No: 07793 535227

Published By

Free Church of Scotland (Continuing)
25 Branklyn Crescent
Academy Park
Glasgow
G13 1GJ

COMMUNIONS

February:

19 Stornoway

26 Harris

March:

12 Ness, Portree

19 Knightswood

Picture Editor:

Rev. Andrew R. Allan

Design, Layout & Print:

DM Design & Print
25 Loch Lann Road
Inverness IV2 7HB

Godliness with Contentment

How little contentment there is in our society ! People are constantly grumbling and complaining. There's so much covetousness and jealousy around. Lots of people are talking of their rights and how they are not getting what they deserve. In this selfish culture Christians ought to stand out as lights in this darkness, thankful for God's rich providence, rejoicing in the Lord Jesus Christ and knowing that their heavenly Father is working out all things for the best. Friends, let us make sure we are enjoying godliness with contentment which is great gain (1Tim.6:6).

Financially Content

Paul warns young Timothy, 'We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out' (1Tim.6:7). As Job put it, 'Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither' (Job 1:21). Our life here is short. Soon we die and enter eternity. What is the point of accumulating great riches – because we will have to leave it all behind us? Often what is bequeathed to family, causes only strife among them, or is squandered in folly. So the apostle advises, 'Having food and raiment let us be therewith content' (1Tim.6:8). The desire for riches leads to sin, 'But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things' (vv9-11).

We all know the saying, 'the love of money is the root of all evil' and believe that it is true, yet everyone wants to be a millionaire. The wealthy banker John Rockefeller was once asked, 'How much money is enough?' He replied, 'A little bit more'. Money is addictive; the more you have the more you want. Greed and covetousness will give a man no contentment. Almost everyone in Britain is wealthy in comparison to three-quarters of the world's population, yet there is discontent with both wages and with social security allowances.

Sadly, Christians absorb the values of the world around them.

Content with job

Many think to themselves, I deserve to have a more prestigious job, I ought to be earning more, I shouldn't have to work such long hours and should have more free time for my family, I should be promoted at work as I am more capable and hard-working than so and so, etc. Paul warned, ' Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called. Art thou called being a servant? Care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather. For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant. Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men. Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God' (1Cor.7:20-24). O to be content! It's not a sin to apply for a new job and

move on, but strive to be content. Do not let ambition make you unhappy. Here we have no enduring city. We have to live and work here for a few years, but this is not our home. Let us set our hearts on heaven.

Content with health

No one has perfect health, at least not for long. We live in a cursed world where death reigns supreme. We are all terminally ill. Many people live with troublesome conditions. The older you grow the more frequent become the appointments with doctors and hospitals. We are thankful for our health service and the free health care it provides for all, but despite medicines, surgery, exercise and careful diets many still suffer from weakness, aches and pains and all will eventually die. Why me? Others seem to live healthy pain-free lives. Actually we know little of what others have to endure and it is unwise to wish to be in their shoes. Our loving heavenly Father has ordained what we have to enjoy and endure and He knows best and His grace is sufficient for us.

Content with family

I wish I were married, had a supportive husband, a loving wife. I wish my husband was more caring and sympathetic and spent more time with me, talking and sharing. I wish my wife were more efficient and complained less. I wish I had children. I wish my children were more intelligent, more sporty, more practical, more loving, more appreciative, more obedient. Other people seem to live in such happy families but not me. We think we know best but God knows us and our limitations far better than we do. He knows our capabilities. He gives to each one of us the family and circumstances which are for our good.

Content in bereavement

It is hard when you lose a loved one. Grief is natural and love means pain in parting. Lazarus' godly sisters felt it greatly when he died. After the death of Stephen we read, 'Devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him' (Acts 8:2). You have had a happy marriage and then the person you are closest to in life, the one into whom you have grown, for the two shall be one, is taken away from you. The close bond means a huge hole is left in your life. Perhaps a dear child has been taken from you. None knows your pain but one who has gone through it. But it is possible for you to sorrow too much; you grumble and complain and really it is against God. How much better the patience of Job, 'the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord' (Job 1:21).

Content in old age

Childhood and youth are generally happy times. With middle-age come cares and worries and with old age, aches, pain and weakness. How could anyone be happy with the loss of hearing, of sight, of smell, of taste, of memory and of mobility? Some age gracefully, ripening for glory, but others increase in irritability and grumpiness. With better healthcare more people are living longer. How rare and beautiful to see an old Christian, godly and content, waiting for the Master's call! Why should you not be content in old age?

Reasons to be content

Remember you have a Father in heaven who cares for you. He is almighty and loving and delights in answering your prayers. He controls everything and has made a great promise, 'All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose' (Rom.8:28). No trouble comes your way but that which God knows and ordains to be a blessing to you. You may not see it at the time but His Word assures you of it and He cannot lie. He trains and disciplines you to be His heir and share in His eternal home.

Remember you have a Saviour who loved you and died for you. He is now at God's right hand making continual intercession for you. Actually He is more than a Saviour, He is your bridegroom and He is preparing a home for you and getting the wedding feast ready. Surely some discomfort can be endured by you on the road to marriage and the palace.

Remember you are the temple and dwelling place of the Holy Spirit. He has taken up residence in you. You are united to God and the Spirit is applying to you the redemption purchased by Christ. The Spirit's great work is to sanctify you and assure you of your salvation and to preserve you for eternal life. 'Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption' (Eph.4:30). You grieve Him by complaining.

Godliness is the answer

Real godliness is the answer to discontentedness. Many are godless, so it is no wonder that they are unhappy. Created by God in His image, our souls are restless till they find their rest in God. What essentially is godliness? It is loving God, pleasing Him and keeping His commandments. It is staying close to God, reading His Word, meditating upon it, praising Him and praying to Him. It is being God-like. It is believing in and rejoicing in Him and in His promises. All the promises of Scripture are ours in Christ. I am assured 'I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me' (Phil.4:13). God says 'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, 'The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me' (Heb.13:5-6). Paul writes 'My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus' (Phil.4:19). The Psalmist describes how privileged Christians are, 'The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them. 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 [lack] any good thing' (Ps.34:7-10). Rather than grumbling and complaining let us strive in our own experience to discover that 'Godliness with contentment is great gain' (1Tim.6:6).

Thomas Chalmers (1780 -1847)

Rev. John Keddie

Thomas Chalmers Statue, Edinburgh

Often described as the greatest Scotsman of his age, Thomas Chalmers was something of a polymath. He became a colossus for evangelical historic Calvinism in Scotland in his day, and arguably the most influential instrument used by the Lord in His church in Scotland since John Knox.

It wasn't like that initially, for, although obviously a young man of unusual ability, he went into the ministry of the Church of Scotland at Kilmany, Fife, in 1803 in an unconverted state. The ministry was a sinecure which gave him, as he saw it, ample opportunity for more pleasurable pursuits and recreations. He could spend a few hours on a Saturday working up a sermon and that was fine. Otherwise he would be pretty well away from the congregation much of the time.

Chalmers was your typical moderate minister. But all that changed in 1810/11 when he experienced an evangelical conversion. He was a transformed man. As a result, in God's grace, this was the catalyst for a seismic change not only in his own life and ministry, but also in the course of evangelical religion in Scotland. How anyone could cram so many varied achievements into one life seems incredible to us today.

Consider:
1815 – Became minister of the prestigious Tron Church in Glasgow
1819 – Moved to St John's also in Glasgow
1823 – Appointed Professor of Moral Philosophy at St Andrews University
1828 – Appointed Professor of Divinity in Edinburgh
1843 – Leader in the formation of the Free Church of Scotland at the Disruption.
First Professor of Divinity at New College (till his lamented passing in 1847).

Chalmers emerged as leader of the evangelicals in the Church of Scotland. He encouraged the development of extension churches from the parish church and became involved as leader of those who resisted State interference in the appointment of ministers in congregations against the wishes of the people in the years leading up to the Disruption of the Kirk in 1843. Chalmers was a man of apparently limitless energy, an excellent mathematician and a philosopher with an interest in contemporary sciences. He was an outstanding preacher and an inspiring lecturer whose influence in the Edinburgh Divinity Faculty was to have a profound effect in that generation in raising evangelical preachers and Calvinists in the ministry of the Kirk. He was a prolific speaker and writer. His writings, on all sorts of subjects, amounted to 25 volumes of Collected Writings produced in his lifetime and 10 further volumes of Posthumous Works published after his passing. In many respects he led a counter attack on the sceptical principles of the French Revolution.
Chalmers' statue is to be found in the intersection of Castle Street and George Street in Edinburgh. It is an imposing statue. The sad thing is that very few passers-by will have the slightest idea who he was. Scotland has moved very far from the Calvinist vision of this great man of God.
Here is a taste of Chalmers the entreating gospel preacher in a sermon on Isaiah 27:3-5: 'Surely when I am busy at my delegated employment of holding out the language of entreaty, and of sounding in your ears the tidings of gladness, and of inviting you to enter into the vineyard of God — surely at the time when the messenger of the gospel is thus executing the commission wherewith he is charged and warranted, he may well say — that there is no fury in God. Surely at the time when the Son of God is inviting you to kiss Him and to enter into reconciliation, there is neither the feeling nor the exercise of fury. It is only if you refuse, and if you persist in refusing, and if you suffer all these calls and entreaties to be lost upon you — it is only then that God will execute His fury, and put forth the power of His anger. And therefore He says to us, "Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little"'.

Congregational Remittances - December 2016

	CENTRAL BUILDING FUND YTD 2016	ORDINARY REMITTANCES 2016 December	2016 To December	2015 To December
	£	£	£	£
Presbytery of Inverness				
Aberdeen	0	1300	18525	21543
Duthil-Dores	16083	743	27095	26105
Inverness	0	9300	44570	36016
Kilmorack & Strathglass	0	2621	22500	22500
Poolewe & Aultbea	498	1813	13039	12509
Total Inverness	16581	15776	125728	118673
Northern Presbytery				
Assynt & Scourie	510	3837	12065	8148
Brora	250	0	15091	15233
Kiltearn	538	3700	10674	10012
Tarbat	0	5500	23943	19292
Total Northern	1298	13037	61773	52684
Southern Presbytery				
Arran	463	359	9525	9650
Ayr	0	900	13676	14383
Dumfries	0	320	520	100
Edinburgh	20396	2000	26032	30683
Glasgow-Partick	10193	0	20000	24000
Glasgow-Shettleston	5	2000	28839	27462
Glasgow-Knightswood	48	2243	30822	27084
Rothesay	0	0	1260	3130
Total Southern	31104	7822	130675	136492

	CENTRAL BUILDING FUND YTD 2016	ORDINARY REMITTANCES 2016 December	2016 To December	2015 To December
	£	£	£	£
Outer Hebrides Presbytery				
Cross	0	1755	22548	25431
Harris-Leverburgh	278	1850	21261	20464
Harris-Scalpay	0	1800	28332	29567
Knock & Point	0	1375	20818	21906
North Uist	6844	642	14500	14000
Stornoway	4712	6200	91902	94333
Total Outer Hebrides	11833	13622	199361	205702
Presbytery of Skye & Lochcarron				
Bracadale & Duirinish	121997	1450	20555	13694
Kilmuir & Stenscholl	0	2000	16713	16814
Lochalsh	385	4650	21496	18482
Strath	140	730	8780	9170
Portree	1092	4500	24193	19400
Snizort	1104	4000	30048	28995
Total Skye/Lochcarron	124717	17330	121786	106556
Smiths Falls	0	0	2000	
Total Congregations	185533	67587	641322	620107
Other Donations	0	1567	22418	27960
Legacy	0	0	1000	0
TOTAL	185533	69154	664740	648067
Including Gift Aid	4866		132731	122319

Repeal The Abortion Act 1967

Our Home Mission Worker Mr Donald John Morrison has written a letter to every Member of the UK Parliament asking for the repeal of the wicked Abortion Act of 1967.

The first letter below was sent to the press.

Letter to the Press

Back on a very dark and dismal October day in 1967 one of the worst ever laws in this country, the Abortion Act, was passed by Parliament. Next year in 2017, if the Lord tarries, this dreadful law will be 50 years old. While pitiless and heartless pro-abortion activists will be celebrating this anniversary, there are countless numbers across the UK who will be lamenting. They are craving, and earnestly praying, for the day when the Abortion (1967) Act will be forever aborted. And no wonder, when one considers the appalling statistic that nearly 8.5 million babies have been aborted, across the UK, up to the end of 2015. Enough is enough.

Through your letters pages, I wish to inform your readers that I have written to all 650 MPs in the House of Commons asking them to consider the case for rescinding this Act. The letter, accompanied by a booklet *Abortion: open your mouth for the dumb* (published by the Banner of Truth Trust) was sent to MPs on 28 November 2016.

The author of the booklet, Peter Barnes, clearly argues for the biblical teaching that the unborn baby is in God's image and so protected by the sixth commandment. The deliberate taking of human life is therefore a breach of this commandment, as we read in Exodus 20:13: 'You shall not murder'.

It is a terrible thought to consider, as I highlighted in the letter, that the mother's womb is the most dangerous place to live in, when it should be the safest. This is a numbing and disturbing thought. When the unborn baby cannot speak for itself, the Bible exhorts us to open our mouth, as loudly as we can, for the dumb (Prov.31:8).

I am now earnestly appealing to Christians across the nation to pray that God will, in His grace and mercy, intervene for the good of our unborn children, and that MPs will be persuaded to repeal the Abortion (1967) Act. Let us believe that there is mighty power in prayer and that God is 'able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think'. Martin Luther reminds us that 'Prayer is that mightiest of all weapons that created natures can wield'.

Can I encourage you not only to pray, but also write to your own constituency MP, highlighting how unlawful and wrong abortion is, and why the time has now come for Parliament to rescind the Act it passed in 1967. After we've prayed, let us continue to pray.

Letter to Members of Parliament

You will be aware that next year (2017) is the 50th anniversary of the passing of the Abortion (1967) Act. I am making an urgent, and pressing, appeal to you to take this opportunity to consider the case for repealing the Act.

While life, I hope, is precious to you and me – it is not precious to everyone. This dreadful Act has seen to that. Since it was passed, a monstrous and nauseating crime has been daily perpetrated in hospitals and clinics throughout the length and breadth of our nation. And most people do not even blink or give it a second thought. What kind of a people are we when we cannot rescind what was never intended in the first place?

Sir David Steel, who introduced the Bill at the time, made this clearly known in July 1967, when he robustly said: 'It is not the intention of the promoters of the Bill to leave a wide open door for abortion on request … Nobody is advocating abortion on demand in this Committee or anywhere else'. Lord Silkin, who was sponsor of the Abortion Act 1967 in the House of Lords, also said the same thing: 'It is certainly not a general licence to a medical practitioner to carry out an abortion on anybody who desires it'.

Surely I do not need to respectfully remind you that, while the Bill was passed primarily to allow legal abortions for women whose health would be seriously put at risk from a pregnancy, abortion in Britain today is, tragically, a normal fact of life. We now know that 99% of abortions should not have taken place. With around 200,000 abortions a year, one in three women will have an abortion in her lifetime. Sexual health policy supports the provision of abortion, and 98% of abortions are funded by the NHS.

It is also deeply disturbing to consider that since 1967, up to the end of 2015, some eight million babies (comparable to the current population of London) have been aborted in England and Wales, while 484,000 have been aborted in Scotland alone, over the same period. These desperately sad, and chilling, statistics ought to take our breath away.

Each abortion snuffs out an innocent human life. It should not be allowed to happen because the Bible reminds us in Psalm 139.13-16 that life, from conception, is sacred and precious: 'Thou hast covered (or knitted together) me in my mother's womb … I praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made'. All human life is created in God's image and so is intrinsically valuable from conception. It is our duty to defend the sanctity of human life. The deliberate taking of human life is a breach of the 6th Commandment: 'You shall not murder' (Exodus 20:13).

It is a terrible thought to consider that the mother's womb is the most dangerous place to live in, when it should be the safest. If abortion is rightly regarded as murder, what blood we as a nation have on our hands! In recent years, nations have been held to account for genocide and mass murder. Can we be in any doubt that we are under the judgment of Almighty God?

Enough is enough: the slaughter of the innocent unborn baby must no longer be allowed to continue in this country. Abortion must be aborted. If lawmakers and politicians in London and Edinburgh have any heart and know anything about pity, kindness and compassion, then let them show it by repealing the Abortion Act 1967, one of the worst ever laws enacted in this country.

Surely the time has now come for you, as an MP, and your colleagues in Parliament to begin the long awaited process of repealing the Abortion Act 1967. I trust you will appreciate that I am making this deep heart-cry on behalf of those who, sadly, cannot speak for themselves. The evidence is in the enclosed booklet which I sincerely hope you will read and then act on. I look forward to hearing sympathetically from you in due course.

Enc.: *Abortion: Open your mouth for the dumb.*

Encouragement in Trials

Rev. Roy Mohon

(Presbyterian Reformed Church, Stockton-on-Tees)

The following is the substance of a devotional talk given at the School in Theology in Larbert, September 2016.

The church is often in tribulation. In the 1950s British churches had significant congregations, shops were closed on Sundays, and Evangelical ministers could still be heard on the BBC. Now all is changed, Christians can be thrown out of their jobs and open air preachers are sometimes thrown into police cells. What are we to think and what are we to do? There are key encouragements from the Isle of Patmos. Patmos looks attractive in the tourist brochures but it is not sand and surf that we are to seek but Christ the Rock who speaks to us through his servant John: 'I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last' (Rev.1:9-11). Our Patmos experience begins here.

The encouragements of being 'companions'

We are often alone in our storms. A Christian might be the only believer in his family or in his workplace. John's words, 'companion in tribulation' remind us that we do not suffer for Christ's sake alone. There is a balancing spiritual togetherness and we are to be encouraged by our spiritual bond (see Acts 14:22). Though our spiritual brotherhood involves trials and temptations, we find in them companionship in fellowship together. This companionship is more than personal, it is official. We are to be encouraged that we are citizens 'in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ'. The kingdom citizen has privileges, responsibilities and confidence. The UK might be threatened with breaking up, but Christ's kingdom endures forever. Visiting an elderly Christian in Machermore Castle Christian eventide home, I was filled with wonder that Satan's stronghold, where Margaret McLachlan was held before her martyrdom, is now Christ's sanctuary for the compassionate care of aged believers. Truth is stranger than fiction because we are not dependent on human resources for our perseverance or witness. The Saviour says, 'Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world' (John 16:33).

There is also the encouragement of our calling and this is especially true of Gospel ministers. John was imprisoned on Patmos 'for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ'. Why, in the 1960s, should God the Holy Spirit visit a house in The Avenue, Coxhoe, a County Durham village readers and millions of others will never have heard of? It was there that my conversion and call to the ministry began. Every pastor has a similar tale to tell. Privilege does not get any higher in this world than being called from insignificance to faithfully expound the word of God 'as good stewards of the manifold grace of God' (1Pet.4:10). 'The testimony of Jesus Christ' is the minister's business so that He who declared Himself the eternal Word, the Lamb of God, and the fountain of life should be made known (John 8:58; 10:11; 11:25-26). What, therefore, have we to lose by preaching Christ?

School of Theology, Carronvale House, Larbert

The encouragement of the Comforter

John writes, 'I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day', and we are to be encouraged by having the Holy Spirit with us. Unlike charismatics we do not lay claim to visionary and prophetic experiences. We are not 'in the Spirit' in the inspired sense. There is an ancient premonition from a time of intense imperial persecution. One of the emperor Julian's followers asked a Christian what the carpenter's son was doing. 'Making a coffin for the emperor' was the reply. A few days later the message arrived that the emperor had been slain in battle. This 'prophecy' was an impressive insight into where things were headed but added nothing to the rule of faith and practice. Our personal and ecclesiastical authority is the canon of Scripture and we believe that the canon of Scripture is closed. The Westminster Confession of Faith (chap.1:6) states: 'The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man's salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture: *unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men* '.

The Bible is our complete and sufficient authority for the evangelisation of the lost and edification of the saints. Our rejection of contemporary signs and wonders is not a rejection of the Holy Spirit. We believe He is very much at work in spiritual restoration.

We are to be encouraged by having the Spirit with us 'on the Lord's Day'. Church and nation can expect greater spiritual blessing by diligent observance of the instituted Lord's Day than by observing a church calendar of human invention, even though the latter has points of contact for attracting unbelievers. Sunday was the specific time that the risen Christ appeared to His disciples and was also the day He chose to give this final, inspired Book of Revelation to His afflicted church in order that believers might be more than conquerors (Rev.1:1,3). The reading, hearing, and observing of Christ's Word is the route to blessing. Word-focused worship is our agenda but we use the Bible not as an idol but as a lens through which to see Christ. Both at the beginning and close of the apostolic age Christ endorsed the change of the Sabbath day from the seventh to the first day of the week and showed His intention that the day should be a day of immense blessing to His church. Ought we not to have a serious intent to observe it with this blessing in view?

The encouragement of knowing Christ

John heard behind him 'a great voice, as of a trumpet'. The bugle is a modest instrument but bugle calls are full of significance and compelling authority. The reveille sounds and the camp stirs! John reports an infinitely superior call. I 'heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last' (Rev.1:10-11). Doubtless the wonderful vision of verses 12-20 influenced John's introductory greeting in verses 4-8. His greeting is full of majesty, urgency and comfort, bringing everything into proportion. Congregations see a weak, mortal preacher but the unseen presence is that of the triune God manifest in Jesus Christ the mediator by the Holy Spirit. Notice the following encouragements:

(1) Christ is the God-appointed Mediator. He is our prophet, 'the faithful witness' who appeared to Abraham, wrestled with Jacob, was at the bush with Moses, and trained His apostles. He is our priest who was delivered for our offences and was raised again as 'the first begotten of the dead' for our justification, and the Lord's Day assures us of our spiritual re-creation. Christ is our king, 'the prince of the kings of the earth'. His reign has no democratic mandate but is of divine authority, as David explains, 'The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool' (Ps.110:1).

(2) Christ is the Saviour of His people. He is the One 'that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood'. In infinite love He shed His most precious blood that elect sinners would be washed clean. Love indeed that gave all to secure forgiveness for the chief of sinners and for that multitude beyond human calculation drawn from all nations.

(3) Christ is the one who shapes our destinies. He has 'made us kings and priests unto God.' Elijah had lost direction when he fled from Jezebel but there was still much for him to do. Just so the Saviour must draw out our hearts to his purpose for our lives that his will might be accomplished in and through us.

(4) Christ is going to return. The Sabbath is a day of glorious prospect because the linearity of God's purpose leads on to the return of Christ, for 'he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him.'

Applying the Patmos encouragement

Lord's Day observance is one precursor of spiritual reviving and awakening. We are not to look to syncretism, ecumenism, cultural adaptation, signs and wonders, or ourselves as alternatives. Robert Shaw explains, 'The proper observation of the Sabbath is a principal means of promoting the temporal welfare of individuals and of nations, of elevating the tone of public morals, of advancing the interests of religion, and of drawing down the divine favour and blessing'. We must pray for this 'drawing down', for Christ is with His people. Though the Isle of Lewis should become a UK Guantanamo Bay for supposed Evangelical extremists, Patmos assures us that the Lord promises, 'I will be there'. A favourite phrase of a Geordie brother comes to mind as a closing exhortation, 'Never doubt it'. So may we be!

Patmos, Centre of Christian Pilgrimage

Choosing a Minister

G.D. Krummacher, (1774 -1837)

Pastor in Elberfeld Germany

(A sermon on Acts 1:21-22, abridged from the German by J. Clark)

These are the words spoken by Peter and John to the assembled disciples, to the 120 who were gathered together. They had to fill the place of the twelfth apostle and the appointment of one to fill his place was a matter of great importance. It is thus with the business which is now before us – the calling of a pastor to this congregation. There is no essential difference between the two purposes; the object of our being brought together today is of a similar character, our desires are similar. May the similarity of our proceedings with those of the apostles issue in a similar honourable result! Although it may not be a Matthias that is given to us, may it be a man after God's own heart!

An hour like this demands reflection. However, as I believe that I understand your sentiments and feelings, permit me to be the interpreter of them. Therefore, let me briefly state, firstly what is our object; secondly, what are our wishes; and thirdly, what are our hopes?

1. What is our object?

It is one of no trivial importance. We are about to engage in a work, the consequences of which cannot be estimated because they are connected with eternity. The work which the Lord has given to us is nothing less than choosing a preacher for His church. In this He has called us together to be fellow-labourers under Himself. This is a great prerogative and a precious element in the constitution of our church. May this right be transmitted unimpaired to the coming generations. We are about to choose a preacher and yet the choice is already divinely made, fixed and decided. We are to have respect to the divine decision and thus, when this is duly considered, we are the heralds of the Lord's decree. We must therefore execute this trust conscientiously and have nothing in view but to seek God's will, reverently committing the case to Him and not selfishly promoting our own opinions. It is not with a spirit of contention that we are to address

this election. We are in the sanctuary of God, we are in the Presence of God. May the Spirit purify our hearts and instruct us in divine things!

Our purpose is to call a man who has already been called by the Lord to an office which, because of its sacred importance, ranks as the highest office on earth. We say with Paul, if a man desires the office of a pastor, he desires what is a good work. This office is not limited in its aims to time but its high aim addresses eternal issues. It is a glorious employment which does not strive, as others do, for that which is temporary and perishable but has respect to immortality. Through this office, blessings of heaven come to earth with the proclamation of a bridge of mercy over the river of death. This office has been instituted by the King of kings and reflects the grace and beauty which is around the throne of the Lamb.

To fulfil this holy office, a man must, we believe, have received a large measure of divine gifts. We are now met together as a congregation to seek to discern these gifts and discharge our duty. We must be engaged in solemn supplications in this important hour – an hour similar to that in which Peter said, 'Wherefore one of these men ... must be ordained to be a witness with us of His resurrection'. May we have the same Spirit which influenced the 120 when these words were addressed to them.

Much depends on the qualification of a minister; he may be a blessing or a curse. It is ministers, above all others, who have brought the most devastation upon the church. It is they who, above all others, are chargeable with the sin of that fearful declension from the faith of our fathers. They have either taken away or added to the Word of God. It is impossible to conceal this – the blame rests with the ministers. It was indeed certain professors who supplied the ammunition but it was the ministers who fired the cannons. They were the channels through which the dark system of false theology first became popular. By words and behaviour, a minister may destroy an entire generation that had been faithfully instructed. If he is a man who is guided by a party spirit or selfish ambition, he will attract the unstable and uncommitted and lead them astray.

On the other hand, what a blessing a minister may be if he is a 'man after God's own heart', preaching the whole counsel of God. Will not streams of living water, in such a case, refresh the surrounding hearers? Will not peace and joy follow his doctrine and, by God's grace, through his instrumentality, will not new life arise in unfruitful despairing souls? Apply yourselves therefore to this great work in dependence upon God; and, I would say again, Pray – supplicate – implore. Consider well what Paul has said of this office in his second Epistle to the Corinthians, 'who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament'. We are in search of a man whom God makes able. A Gospel minister is no legal taskmaster – no imprisoning jailer. He preaches that the Son makes sinners free, free to follow Him.

2. What are our wishes?

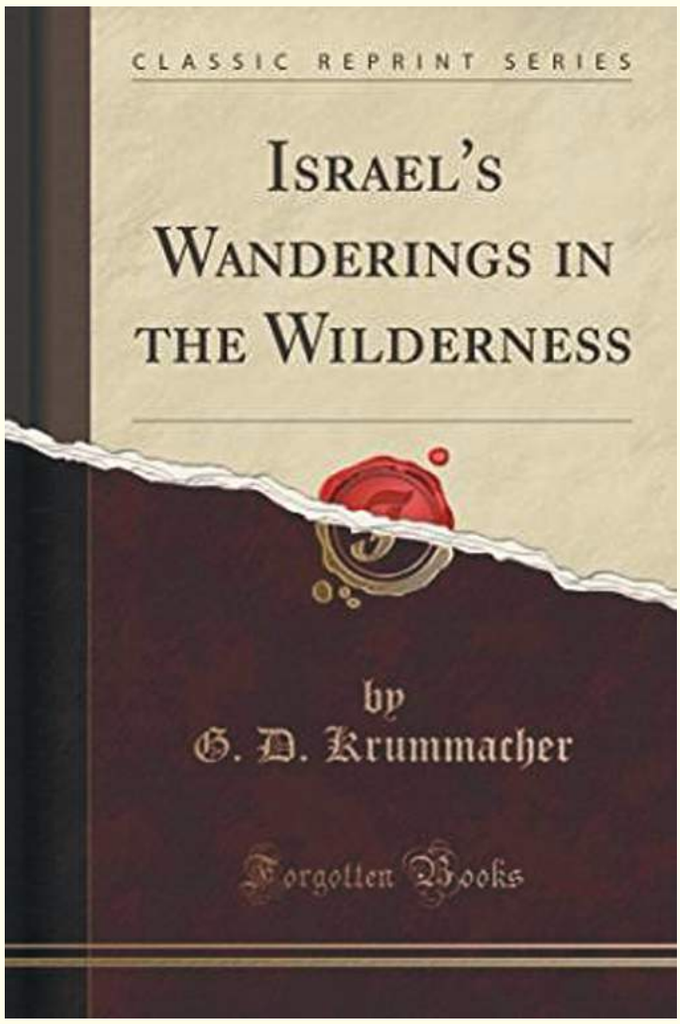
These, I think, must be apparent to all – they are in harmony with those of the venerable assembly to which our text introduces us. They desired a man who had been in their company, whose voice had been heard in the midst of them. It is such a man that we desire; one built on the foundation of the prophets and apostles, filled with their wisdom, comprehending their mysteries. Is not this the thing which is most essential, and about which we are most anxious? It is not simply a matter of having personal virtues and being an example to others. The man must have the Holy Spirit and know the risen Christ. We seek another shepherd to be added to this Christian community, to a portion of the church of Christ; and, in so doing, we know well what sort of man you desire – a man who is one in heart and soul with the apostles.

The disciples at Jerusalem were not satisfied with a mere yes-man having neither experience, spirit nor life. The man they wished for had not only been in their own company but in the company of the Lord Jesus. He must be one who has visited Christ prayerfully and whom the Lord has visited experimentally. He must be a man, not only of spiritual books, but of spiritual experience. He must be a man on whose heart is deeply engraved the testimony of the Father, 'This is my beloved Son, hear ye Him', a man to whom the Holy Spirit has given the key of the treasure house of Christ's doctrine, a man who knows how to rightly divide the Law from the Gospel, a man who draws near to God the sinner's way, the blood bought way of

a crucified Saviour, a man who is at home in the company of Christ. Oh, how heartily will such a man be received by us! With these qualifications, whatever else may be lacking, the main point is gained. The man whom we choose must not be attracted to the honey of popularity; his sufficiency must be in his God. Neither must he blow his own trumpet but sound the trumpet of the Lord. We must pour out our desires for such a man before the Lord in prayer.

3. What do we hope for?

Our hope is according to our wishes. Peter says, 'One must be ordained'. Why 'must'? This does not mean that he whom we choose must come. This would be pride and arrogance – that this congregation is so great that he must come! Instead, we must choose with humility and commit the man to God for His guidance. It must not be our choice alone that compels the man to come. As Luther says, 'Man proposes but God appoints'. May God give us a man who shall make us glad. But who shall that man be? We pray for light from on high. The gates of heaven are open to our prayers through Christ. The decree of Almighty God shall yet be unveiled. We pray with the 120: 'Lord, searcher of hearts, show us whom Thou hast chosen'. May we have the grace to perform this present duty with reverence and godly fear.



Gottfried Daniel Krummacher was a German Reformed clergyman. He studied theology at the University of Duisburg and became a pastor in Bärl in 1798, and in Elberfeld in 1816. He was the leader of the Pietists of Wuppertal. He published several volumes of sermons, including one entitled *Die Wanderungen Israels durch die Wüste nach Kanaan* 1834, translated into English and published as *Israel's wanderings in the wilderness*, 2 volumes 1837–38.

News

Lockerbie New Church

(Rev D Fraser)

It was on Saturday, 21st May 2016, that a company from North, South, East and West gathered at Ebenezer Hall, Park Square, Bridge Street, Lockerbie, to celebrate the acquisition of a new place of worship for the Dumfries Congregation. The inaugural service was conducted by the Rev Andrew Allan, Partick, lately Moderator of the Southern Presbytery. A powerful sermon was preached from the first chapter of John's Gospel, verse 29, 'Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world'.

On the conclusion of the service, greetings were read out and books presented to mark the occasion.

After a lavish refreshment prepared by the ladies, a further session was taken up with an inspiring address by Rev J J Murray on the theme, 'The Zeal of the Covenanters'. This provided an appropriate

Desk

study for the South West of Scotland, an area studded with memorials to the great and steadfast witnesses who suffered for truth and for righteousness in these parts and who forged the character of the best Scots for generations thereafter. Sadly, they are now largely unknown by the present inhabitants. We pray that our witness established there will resurrect that godly testimony, as one of them said on the scaffold, 'The Covenants, the Covenants will be the reviving of Scotland!'

As the little congregation bravely attempts to revive the Gospel testimony in the area, we covet your earnest prayers for the dew of Heaven to anoint these labours. Services are held every Sabbath Day at 2.30 pm and a meeting for study and prayer is held in Dalbeattie on Tuesdays at 7 pm. For details please contact the local elder, Mr J M Noble at Tel. 01228513516.

Sudan Persecution

(E Kendal)

The Islamist and Arabist Government of Sudan (GoS) is waging a jihad of ethnic and religious genocide as it seeks to eliminate all opposition to its Islamist and Arabist policies. The African Christians of the Nuba Mountains are preparing for another season of aerial bombardment and genocidal jihad. In the cities, Christian schools and churches operated and attended by Nuba and other 'southerners' are facing increased pressure. Five churches in Khartoum have been slated for demolition, while the trial of the Reverends Hassan and Kuwa (both Nuba), Darfuri convert Abdelmunim Abdelmoula and Czech aid worker Petr Jasek has resumed. For investigating and also for reporting persecution and supporting the persecuted church, the men stand accused of serious national security offences. Please pray for Sudan and its church.

Terror in Egypt

(E Kendal)

On 11 December the Egyptian Christians worshipping inside Cairo's St Peter and St Paul church (El-Botroseya) were doubtless aware of the elevated terror threat. After all, Christians have been targeted over the Christmas-New Year period before. On 7 January 2010, seven Coptic youths and one Muslim guard were gunned down as they emerged from a Christmas Eve midnight mass in Nag Hammadi. In the early hours of 1 January 2011, 23 mostly Coptic Christians were killed when an Islamic suicide terrorist detonated his explosive-laden car outside a Coptic church in Alexandria during a midnight service to welcome in the New Year. Consequently, the worshippers inside El-Botroseya that Sunday – men seated on the left, women and children seated on the right (as is Coptic tradition) – were doubtless grateful for the armed guards stationed at the door.

Part of a large Coptic Church compound, El-Botroseya is located adjacent to St Mark's Coptic Cathedral, the most significant Cathedral in the Coptic Church, the Seat of the Coptic Orthodox Pope. Inside El-Botroseya the believers were celebrating Advent – a time when many Christians look forward to the Nativity of Jesus. As it happened, it was also 'Mawlid', the day when Muslims celebrate the birth of Muhammad. As the service drew to a close, a man reportedly entered the church and walked in amongst the women and children where he detonated an explosive vest containing 12kg of TNT. In addition to the bomber, 24 worshippers were killed – mostly women and children – making it the most deadly attack on

Christians in recent years. A further 49 were wounded. Instead of guarding the entrance, the security guards were reportedly sitting in their car. *We must remember in prayer those who suffer persecution in our violent world.*

Nigeria Persecution

(E Kendal)

Security is failing in Kaduna, a volatile Sharia state which straddles Nigeria's ethno-religious 'fault-line'. On the evening of Sunday 13 November Fulani Muslims besieged and attacked five villages in Kauru Local Government Area in what is a predominantly Christian Southern Kaduna. Armed with guns, knives, machetes and explosives, the Fulani killed 45 mostly women, children and elderly Christian residents while wounding dozens more and displacing thousands. Numerous vehicles and over 120 houses (including eight house-churches) were torched. Frustrated by the endless carnage, Christian leaders have reiterated the call for more security, including the establishment of a military base in Southern Kaduna. The organised ethno-religious cleansing taking place must be seen in the context of classic Islamic jihad. With whole Christian communities erased, the church is bleeding. Please pray for Nigeria and for its Church.

Transsexualism

(Christian Institute)

A nine-year-old girl became one of the youngest children in the UK to be given hormone blockers to 'pause' puberty, it has been revealed. After being allowed to dress as a boy since she was around five, the now ten-year-old girl, who calls herself 'Jason', started taking hormone blockers privately last April. Research has shown that the vast majority of children who experience feelings of gender dysphoria grow out of it.

The child appeared on the Victoria Derbyshire programme with her mother, who praised a CBBC documentary about a transsexual teenager. The girl's father had previously called his daughter's feelings 'a phase'. But after she watched this programme, he and her mother 'explained' transsexualism to her and allowed her to 'live as a boy'. Her mother, Leanne, said she would continue taking hormone blockers until she was 13 or 14, and is able to make the decision of whether she wanted to begin taking irreversible cross-sex hormones, which would cause the girl to develop male characteristics.

The Christian Institute's Simon Calvert strongly criticised the BBC. He said: 'Apparently the father of this child dismissed allowing his daughter to "live as a boy" until his daughter watched a CBBC programme on transsexualism. This is proof that BBC children's programming is being used to get parents to go along with the transgender movement. The BBC is meant to be impartial on controversial issues but all pretence of impartiality has gone out of the window. Telling people they can change their biological sex is just a fallacy. People who genuinely struggle with gender dysphoria need compassion and patient help to come to terms with reality. Instead, the BBC thinks we should try to change reality'.

In the past five years, 120 children under the age of 15 have been given hormone treatment by the NHS. Dr Helen Webberley, who was also interviewed on the programme, runs a private gender identity clinic, which gives children under 16 cross-sex hormones – although this is below the recommended age given by the NHS. When asked how she knew that offering and performing these treatments was right, she responded: 'How does anyone know that anything is right?' She added that in this case, the decision was informed by talking to the girl, her parents, teachers, family and friends.

When people no longer respect God's law they have no guide. To begin with there was a move to legalise same-sex marriage and so undermine marriage itself. Now the move is to remove sexual distinctions. Basically it is an attack on the Creator and His established order. He created us in the beginning in His own image, male and female.

Strathclyde University Ban

(Christian Institute)

Pro-life students have been likened to the BNP after their group was banned by the students' association at Glasgow's Strathclyde University. Students were also told that allowing their group to join the University of Strathclyde Students' Association (USSA) would be 'a barrier to freedom and equality' to all women on campus. The group has now been banned from joining USSA after previously being advised that they

could not receive funding until they had done so. 'If a society's beliefs contradicts association policy then it is not allowed to affiliate', said Raj Jayaraj, President of the USSA. 'If a society representing the British National Party came on campus then we would not allow them to affiliate'.

Chloe Lindsey, a student at the university strongly criticised the decision saying: 'The suppression of freedom of speech has no place in a university which claims to be liberal and forward-thinking'.

Minutes from a USSA meeting record the view that allowing pro-life groups would be 'a barrier to freedom, equality and body autonomy for those with uteruses on campus, and therefore not only violate existing standing policy, but also act against the interests of a large amount of the student population'. The pro-life students have written to officials at the university asking them to intervene. The decision to deny funding to the group last year was slammed by John Deighan, the chief executive of the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children Scotland. He said: 'It is quite remarkable and incredibly sad that in this day and age our universities, which are supposed to be the bastions of free thinking and liberal mindedness, should be transformed into centres for intolerant censorship. Universities should be guardians of debate and challenging ideas, rather than banning people just because they don't like their views'.

The so-called 'liberal' is actually an intolerant bigot.

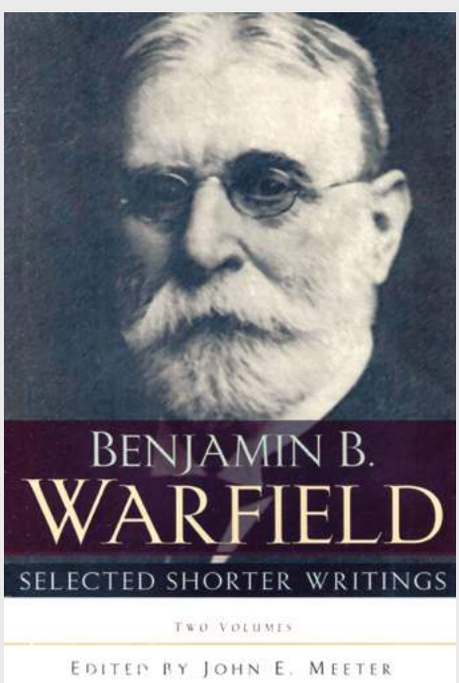
Forty Years Service

(Rev E T Kirkland)

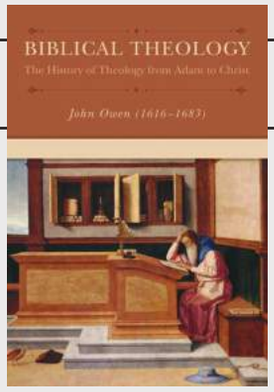
At the meeting of the Southern Presbytery held in Edinburgh on 12 December, Rev William Macleod received a presentation to mark his forty years of service in the Christian ministry. Mr Macleod was ordained to the ministry on 12th October 1976, when he was inducted to Partick Free Church, Glasgow. He moved to Portree in 1993 and from there to Thornwood (now Knightswood) Free Church, Glasgow, in 2006.

Mr Macleod played a leading part in the events which led to the formation of the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing) in 2000, being editor of the Free Church Foundations magazine. From 2002 to 2014 he was Principal of the Free Church (Continuing) Seminary, and from 2000 he has been editor of the Church's magazine, the Free Church *Witness*, a position from which he expects to retire in May. In the course of his studies for the ministry Mr Macleod spent a year at Westminster Theological Seminary, and he has long had an admiration for the men of old Princeton. Among the books that were presented to him by the Presbytery Moderator Rev E Trevor Kirkland, Ballyclare & Doagh, are the Selected Shorter Writings of Warfield, and a modern biography of Charles Hodge. And just to ensure that the Scottish dimension is represented, he also received a recently-published Fasti of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland which covers some of the stirring events in Scottish church history over the past 300 years and more.

Presentation to Rev. Wm. Macleod



Books



Biblical Theology

John Owen,
Translated from Latin
by Stephen P. Westcott,
Soli Deo Gloria, hbk, 861 pp, £35

This massive tome was first published by John Owen in 1661, and was not included in the standard 16 volumes of his Works in the nineteenth century edition, for the simple reason that it was still only available in the original Latin. This translation into English, first printed in 1994, was therefore very welcome, making the material available for the first time to a popular readership. Ironically, this provenance gives the text a freshness of tone that would otherwise be lacking, as Owen's English prose is notoriously dry and heavy. However, the book remains through sheer length a demanding read, but one that will reward persevering attention.

The title is possibly a little misleading, as the term 'Biblical theology' is generally used nowadays, following Geerhardus Vos's book of the same title, for the history of God's revelation, whereas this work is rather a history of theology as it developed in human history, both in the progressive advancement through revelation and equally through the downgrade into idolatry and apostasy of much of the world's population.

True theology is shown to have its origin in Adam's knowledge of God in the Garden of Eden, through the whole testimony of creation and Creator alike to his unfallen intellect. But with the Fall, the knowledge of God derived from creation is inadequate as a basis for theology, which rather depends on God's revelation of Himself.

Owen displays massive learning in developing the subject, especially regarding the progressive development of idolatry amongst most of the human race in the generations after the Flood. However, the book is undoubtedly somewhat rambling in structure, with long digressions on subjects of contemporary controversy, such as the 'notes' of the church, in answer to a Romanist apologist, bearing little relevance to the developing argument of the book as a whole. There is some dubious speculation, such as the theory that Joseph of Arimathea visited Britain.

There are strikingly useful passages though, such as Owen's concise but illuminating surveys of the theology of Abraham (pp.364-69), and of Moses (esp. pp.434-38), and some novel but important topics are addressed. For example, Owen contends that Hebrew was the language of Eden, and advances two compelling arguments: that the names of individuals given in the early chapters of Genesis have etymological significance in Hebrew only (e.g. Genesis 3:20), and could not therefore be correctly testified in the Scriptures if Hebrew was not the vernacular; and that the confusion of the tongues at Babel was a judgment, which would not apply to the faithful 'seed of the woman', and thus Abraham's use of the language later known as Hebrew would stand in direct continuity with the Patriarchs.

However, there are also a couple of points at which later scholarship has shown Owen's arguments to be wrong. In particular, he contends that the first alphabetic writing was given by God on the tables of stone at Mount Sinai. Modern archaeology shows, however, that in the preceding centuries early alphabetic writing was in use, though interestingly in the same part of the world, amongst Semitic workers on the Sinai peninsula, suggesting that the Lord adopted this system, already pre-existent in His Providence, and doubtless known to Moses and other Israelites through their work in that area, for the beginning of His written revelation.

Owen is also wrong to contend that the lettering of these days was the same as 'modern' Hebrew (in fact, scholars now have evidence of the alphabet of 'paleo-Hebrew'), and is gravely in error in arguing that the vowel pointing, the system of markings under Hebrew letters (now known to have been developed by the Masoretes in the early Middle Ages), was part of the written inspiration of the Word. He is disappointingly dogmatic on these matters in arguing against defenders of the correct views. For example, he asks, if the vowel pointing is uninspired, 'would not the very foundations and structure of Scripture be undermined and, at length, cast down' (p.512)?

In fact, this question can be firmly answered in the negative. While it is true that the same string of consonants can sometimes form several different words in Hebrew depending on the pointing, the context will usually determine decisively which is correct. Indeed, to a natively fluent speaker of Hebrew, this presents so little problem that modern Hebrew text – as any visitor to Israel can see – is generally unpointed, with vowel markings only routinely used for foreign words being rendered in Hebrew script, where the correct pronunciation requires to be specified.

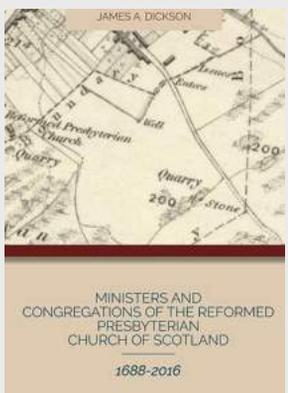
But the central argument of Biblical Theology stands: that Christ is the author of all true theology; that it can be rightly grasped, in the sense of any real knowledge of God, only through the operation of the Spirit upon the soul; and therefore that theology cannot simply be treated as another academic discipline for detached study. True theology does not minister to the prideful spirit of the human heart, but rather to the subjection of the soul before the true and wondrous God, especially as He is revealed in the work of salvation.

Owen emphasizes how the misunderstanding of this truth has resulted in much error entering the Christian Church, especially through the importing of categories and attitudes from secular philosophy. His final chapter on the study of theology, in which it is presented as a spiritual rather than an intellectual growth, is very insightful. As those who seek to know God, it is precious to remember that this is ultimately a relationship, not an academic subject. Coming from an academic theologian of Owen's eminence, who also served as vice-chancellor of Oxford University, this is a helpful and encouraging message.

Rev Alasdair Macleod

Ministers and Congregations of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland

James A Dickson,
Blue Banner Publications,
hbk, 239pp, £19.95



This volume is a storehouse of information. It is the archivists' and also the historical information-gatherers' dream! The author has produced an outstanding fasti of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland (RPCS) covering the whole history from 1688 to date. A brief explanation is given in an Introduction of the origins and subsequent history of the RPCS. There is no doubt that that Church has an honourable history. A division affected the Church in 1863 when it divided into majority and minority Synods. The majority went into a union with the Free Church of Scotland in 1876, but the minority continued separately and is still represented in Scotland by five congregations and ministers.

This fasti covers the entire RP Church from 1688 through 1876 down to the present day. There are details provided of all RP congregations and the ministers associated with them. In total there have been 70 congregations and 195 ministers (including supply preachers) attached to the RPC between 1688 and 2016. In addition there are brief biographical sketches of all the men who ministered or supplied in RP congregations. An interesting Appendix to this volume provides a comprehensive bibliography of writings of RP ministers. This constitutes an impressive piece of research.

There are several notable features of this fasti. As one looks at the various ministers associated with the RPCS it is evident that there were an increasing number of Irishmen among them. In the period since 1900 the RPC has had 40 ministers in charges. Of these 26 have been Irish and only 10 Scots. It appears unlikely that the Church would have continued through the 20th century apart from the support of the Irish brethren. Another feature of the ministry is the fact that the Church was found largely in the lowland and border areas. The only congregations outside the lowlands (before a congregation was established at Stornoway in 2011) were to be found in Caithness (2), Orkney (1), and Argyll-Bute (3), including the only Gaelic-speaking congregation at Lorn!). Apart from the new Stornoway congregation and a congregation at Thurso (which closed in 1928) none of these non-lowland congregations continued into the 20th century.

The author is to be highly commended for a work of painstaking research. This is a beautifully produced book concerning a Church with a goodly heritage.

Rev John W Keddie

“Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you”.

Luke 24:46-49

Published by the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing)