

# Free Church **Witness**



**APRIL 2015 ISSUE**

## **No More Sea**

*Rev James Clark*



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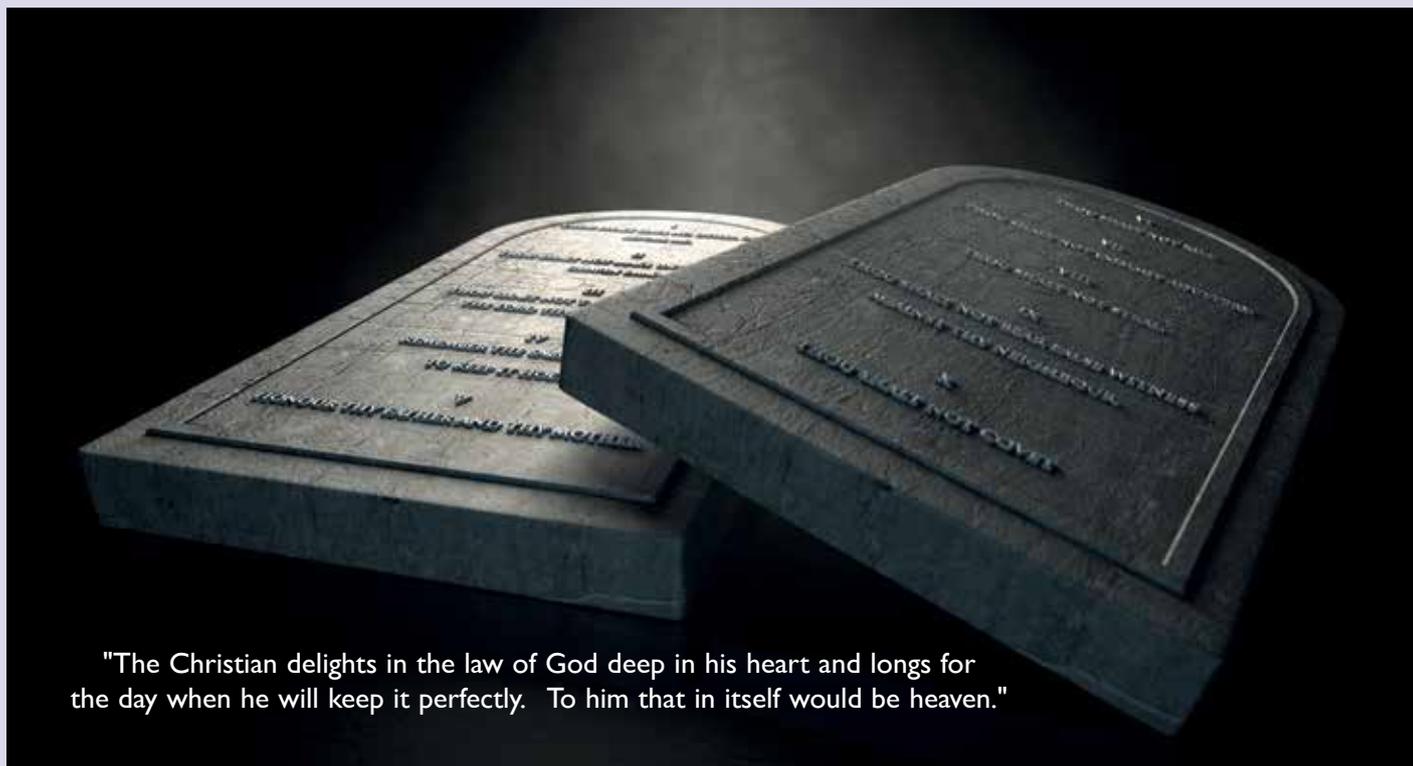
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"The Christian delights in the law of God deep in his heart and longs for the day when he will keep it perfectly. To him that in itself would be heaven."

## Progressive Sanctification

Last month we saw that definitive sanctification is an act of God which changes a sinner into a saint. Now we come to progressive sanctification which is the process from the time of conversion till death. It involves dying unto sin more and more and living to righteousness. Only those who have been effectually called and definitively sanctified are progressively sanctified. All of them are sanctified.

### Shorter Catechism

The Shorter Catechism gives an excellent summary of progressive sanctification:

Q. 35. What is sanctification?

A. Sanctification is the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness.

### Work of Grace

Unlike justification, adoption and definitive sanctification, progressive sanctification is a work not an act. It takes place over a period of time, usually a long period, rather than happening in a moment. Sanctification is 'through virtue of Christ's death and resurrection'. It is of grace freely bestowed for the sake of Christ's work on the cross. It is not based on our merit. It is not our work but God's and yet we have a role. We are to exercise faith in

God for our sanctification as well as for our justification. All glory must be given to God.

### Sanctification and the Word of God

Sanctification takes place through the Word. 'Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth' (John 17:17). The law of God is vital. It has three uses. (1) The law tells society how to live. (2) The law convicts the sinner of sin and lostness and closes out all other hopes but Christ. (3) The law is the rule of life for the Christian. We are told what is right and what is wrong. We are warned of chastisement and punishment. We are given promises and encouragements for obedience.

### The Spirit

He is called the Holy Spirit not because He is holier than the other persons of the Trinity, but because His work is to make us holy. He applies to us the Word of God. He convicts us of our sins. He stirs up our consciences. He gives us grace to turn from sin to God. He lives in our hearts uniting us to Christ. 'If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body ye shall live' (Rom.8:13). It is only by the Spirit that we can overcome sin and make progress in holiness.

### Weakening and enlivening

Sin dominates the unbeliever. Its rule is broken by definitive sanctification. Yet it is still there. Like a field

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or garden where the ground has been turned over, there may not be a weed in sight. Yet after a few days weeds begin to show again. The roots of the old nature remain. It is a life-long activity keeping the garden clean and rooting out the old sins. We are to 'mortify the deeds of the body'. Colossians 3:1-5 challenges us, 'Seek those things which are above ... set your affection on things above.... Mortify your members which are upon the earth: fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence and covetousness which is idolatry'. There is to be a killing of sinful desire and a striving to live for God.

### **Renewing in the image of God**

Man was created in the image of God especially in knowledge, righteousness and holiness (Col.3:10, Eph.4:24). That central part of the image was totally lost. However with conversion and sanctification there is a renewing in the image of God. We are made like God again. We are conformed into the image of Christ (Rom.12:2).

### **Perfectionism wrong**

There are various forms of perfectionism taught in different churches. Often this false teaching is drawn from passages such as Romans 6. For example the Keswick Movement taught that by faith one could attain to a 'higher Christian life'. Their favourite catch phrase was, 'Let go and let God'. Believe for sanctification. Their idea was that the Christian life should not be a struggle against the world, the flesh and the devil but simply a believing and a relaxing and then you will attain perfection. John speaks against all perfectionism when he states: 'If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us' (1Jn.1:8-10). The idea of a second blessing leading to perfection or something like it is totally unscriptural.

### **Confession and Scripture**

While the Shorter Catechism and the Westminster Confession provide us with a good summary of Bible teaching yet the Scriptures are our final authority. We believe the truths in the Confession only because they are taught in Scripture. We shall therefore consider Romans 7:14-25 but concentrating especially on verses 22-23.

### **Delight in the law of God**

Some argue that Romans 6 describes victory over sin. The Christian has died to sin. Therefore when they come to Romans 7:14-25 they argue that what we have there is an unconverted man. They ask, How can the Christian be described as a wretched man? How can a true believer who has died to sin say, 'I am carnal, sold under sin' (v.14)?

First, it has to be pointed out that in vv.1-13 Paul is using the past tense. In vv.7-13 Paul is giving some of his autobiography. He speaks of the work of the law in his life and the conviction of sin which he experienced. However, when he comes to vv.14-25, he uses the present tense.

Second, it should be noticed that what we have in vv.14-25 is true Christian experience. Only the Christian delights in the law of God after the inward man. The Pharisee keeps the law out of duty and for self-righteousness but has no delight in it.

Think of the First Commandment: 'Thou shalt have no other gods before me'. Only the true Christian loves God and delights in God with all his heart. The Second Commandment is concerned with worship. Many worship out of a sense of duty or come with worship that they enjoy and which makes them feel good. The true Christian wants to please God and worship only as He commands. The Third Commandment is concerned with the name of God. The True Christian loves the name of God and is concerned to think reverentially of God as well as not to swear. The Fourth Commandment requires us to give one day of the week to God. For the true Christian the best and most pleasurable day of the week is God's day. The Fifth Commandment asks us to honour our parents. True Christians love and obey their parents even when they are unjust because they love God. They pay respect to all in authority from the heart not just outwardly. The Sixth Commandment not only condemns murder but also requires us to have no hatred in our hearts for anyone. It is natural to hate someone who hurts but it is not Christian. The Seventh Commandment not only condemns adultery but, as Jesus says, condemns adulterous looks and thoughts. This is very hard, but the Christian delights in this law. The Eighth Commandment requires scrupulous honesty. Christians are concerned and have a sensitive conscience. The Ninth Commandment condemns lies and hypocrisy and the true Christian deep down approves of that. The Tenth Commandment says that we are not to covet, to be jealous, or to be desirous of money and possessions. The world is full of covetousness but the Christian strives to be content with such things as he has.

Now the Christian hates sin, would love to be perfect, but is very far from perfect. However the Christian delights in the law of God deep in his heart and longs for the day when he will keep it perfectly. To him that in itself would be heaven.

### **The Christian has another law in him**

Paul uses strange language here. He speaks of two laws. What does he mean? A law is a principle which commands and demands. It is powerful. God's law commands us to obey God, but inside every Christian is another law which commands us to do the opposite. In fact it brings us into captivity which is a very strong

term. Paul says 'I am carnal' (v.14) with fleshly desires. I am 'sold under sin', an unwilling captive. This is quite different from selling oneself to sin as Ahab did. I have been freed from slavery, yet sadly seem so ready to go back to slavery. In v.15 I find that I do what I do not want to do. In v.16 I agree with the law of God that it is good, though I do not obey it. In v.17 he states that it is his indwelling sin that disobeys. In v.18 he admits that there is nothing good in him, yet he desires to do good. In v.21 he writes that when he would do good evil is present. In v.24 he cries that he is a wretched man doing the evil which he hates, yet he longs for deliverance.

### **The Victory of the Christian**

The cry 'O wretched man that I am' seems like defeat. In our own experiences we feel that we have many defeats. Yet victory is sure. The cry, 'Who shall deliver me?' is followed immediately by 'I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord' (v.25). Sin has such a grip of us. The world, the flesh and the devil are powerful but I have also died to sin. Its reign over me has been broken. It is like a chained lion. The slave master is calling to us through the fence.

'I thank God'. God the Father elected me from before creation. God the Son died for me on the cross. God the Holy Spirit came into my life through the effectual calling and regeneration. I have been united to Christ as a branch to the vine or a member to the body. I have been justified and adopted. I am being sanctified. God is doing

it in me. One day I will be glorified and made perfect. It has all happened as a result of God's eternal love and the atoning death of Christ. Our eventual glorification is dependent on the intercession of Christ going on now in heaven for us. 'He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them' (Heb.7:25).

'So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin' (Rom.7:25). The rational thinking part of me serves the law of God, but the flesh, the indwelling corruption, serves the law of sin. So Paul asserts: 'There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit' (Rom.8:1).

### **We must mortify sin**

'If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body ye shall live' (Rom.8:13). Depending on the Spirit we must act. We have a duty to be constantly putting sin to death. We must trample upon it. We must fight against it. It is a life-long activity. We must crucify it.

We must also seek to live for God, grow in grace, bear the fruit of the Spirit, do the work of God. The godly minister Robert Murray McCheyne said, 'The greatest need of my people is my own holiness'. He also added that there is no joy like the joy of holiness. John Newton as an old man wrote: 'I am not what I ought to be, not what I wish to be, not what I hope to be, but thankfully not what I once was'.



"We must also seek to live for God, grow in grace, bear the fruit of the Spirit, do the work of God."

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## Public Prayer: Leading & Following (Part II)

Rev Gavin Beers

*Last month Mr Beers dealt with those who should be present for public prayer and the fact that one leads the whole congregation.*

### Whose Voice leads in Public Prayer?

If we take the question back to 1 Timothy 2 where Paul is instructing the church about public prayer the answer is plain. Paul's command is that men should pray. In v8 he says, 'I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting' but the word 'men' is not the general word (anthropos) referring to mankind, but the specific word (andras) which distinguishes men from women (gunikas v9). Men are to pray in the church where women are obviously to be present but the woman's voice is not to be raised above others in the congregation in the same way as the man's. So Paul continues, 'Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence' (vv11-12). This accords with his counsel to the church in Corinth in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 which we will look at later.

In both instances silence is commanded for women in the context of public worship in general and of public prayer and teaching the word of God (1 Tim 2, 1 Cor 14:34-35) in particular. Some dispute this prescription of silence altogether as a relic of Paul's 1<sup>st</sup> Century culture. Others of a more conservative strain allow that the silence applies to preaching but deny it has any reference to leading in prayer. Both these views either ignore the plain teaching of Scripture or interpret the specific passages out of their immediate and broader context. We must keep the following things in mind when making our way through this issue:

First, it should be noted that there is no example anywhere in Scripture in which a woman takes the lead in any part of the public worship of the church. In the Old Testament the prescribed order was for men to lead and the same pattern carries over into the New. In both testaments women would evidently join in the corporate singing of the body and the congregational 'amen' but they are never seen in a position of leadership or authority; they do not officiate or govern; they do not preach, where one voice is raised above the congregation; nor is there an example of their leading in prayer when they would be the public representative of the church leading all the congregation, including the men, in prayer.

Secondly, the practice of the church as it developed from

the apostolic time does not appear to have followed any other pattern than this. This is true of the Reformation period and the centuries that followed. The agitation and change in practice seems to have come into the church in correlation with the rise of feminism in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. In other words, it appears to have been motivated by cultural not Scriptural considerations.

Thirdly, where Scriptural arguments have been offered to support the view that women can lead in public prayer, these arguments are taken out of the context of the rest of Scripture and when examined closely they do not support the case at all.

1. Hannah has been used as an example of women leading in public prayer (1 Sam. 1:9-18). However, while Hannah was in the Tabernacle she was not attending an assembly of public worship. She went to offer her own private supplication to God in which she was leading no-one else to God in prayer. Furthermore, the passage clearly makes the point that she was not praying audibly but inaudibly (v13).

2. Acts 1:14 is also appealed to in order to justify women leading in public prayer due to the presence of women in the upper room when the believers were engaged in prayer. No-one disputes that women were present on this occasion; nor is our position that women should not attend upon public prayer. Our position is that the church should be present at prayer meetings and that men should lead in prayer. Acts 1 gives no evidence to contradict this but only proves that women were present (not leading) on this occasion of corporate prayer.

3. 1 Corinthians 11:5 is also appealed to in support of women leading in public prayer and at first reading it may appear to justify the practice. Paul says, 'But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head...' From this some conclude that as long as the woman covers her head she is permitted to lead in prayer, but this does not necessarily follow. We cannot conclude from Paul's forbidding the one thing that he commends the other. For example, if a policeman said to you, 'Anyone speeding through a red light will be prosecuted', does it then follow that to drive slowly through a red light is permitted? That is the kind of logic employed in concluding women can lead in prayer from 1 Corinthians 11:5. In addition, there is no explicit

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reference to leading in prayer in the text, though we admit the inclusion of 'prophesying' would indicate the raising of one voice above others.

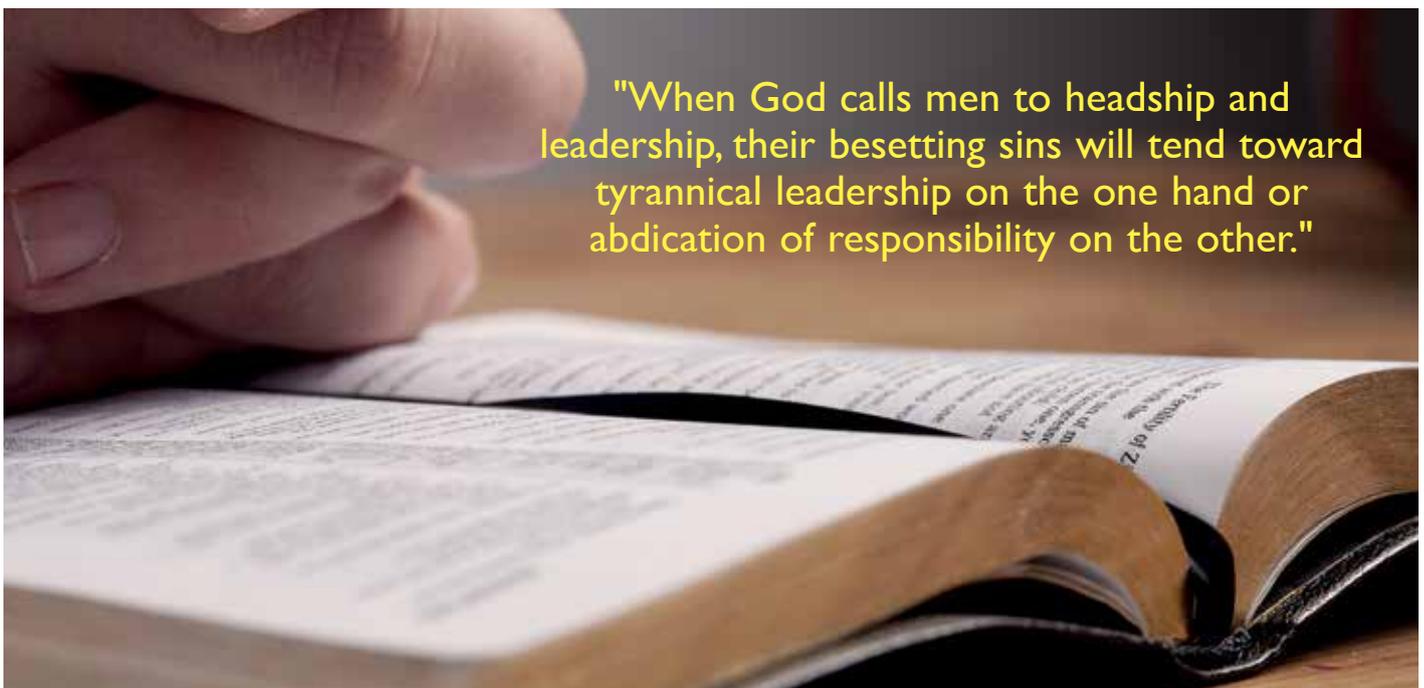
This reference to prophesying in 11:5 further weakens the argument which would justify women leading in prayer because when Paul comes to 1 Corinthians 14 and is dealing specifically with prophesying and speaking in tongues (vv23-24, 26-27, 31-32) and appealing for Biblical order (v33), he immediately says, 'Let your women keep silence in the churches', going on to exclude even the public asking of questions in the worship service. If he is forbidding women from prophesying in chapter 14, he cannot be permitting it in 11:5 where it stands beside prayer; and if he disallows even the asking of questions – which is usually a submissive act, how then could he be advocating women taking the position of leading the congregation in prayer? Again we find no warrant for the practice of women leading in public prayer from 1 Corinthians.

## Conclusion

We have considered the nature of a prayer meeting as a diet of worship in which the whole church should be present. We then established that in public prayer one voice is raised above all to lead the congregation with one heart to God. We noted also that the Scriptures make clear that the person leading the congregation in this way is to be male – this is the order the Lord has ordained for the church and therefore we are duty bound to submit to and delight in His will in this matter. Men should lead in public prayer, but we are foolish to think that simply knowing this will translate into obeying it. As with all obedience, this is a spiritual matter. When God calls men to headship and leadership, their

besetting sins will tend toward tyrannical leadership on the one hand or abdication of responsibility on the other. One result of this will be that men don't want to lead in prayer and are happy for women to do it. This can be observed in many churches where women are permitted to lead in prayer in open prayer meetings, men's voices increasingly growing silent while more and more female voices are heard. On one occasion a woman in such a church said to me she did not believe women should lead in prayer, but she prayed because the men wouldn't pray! Another problem we may face is that in churches where men are required to lead in public prayer, some men will not profess faith out of a fear of being called to lead. Neither of these things should surprise us in the battle for obedience; nevertheless, men must resist the cowardice that would allow such abdication and instead spiritually 'man up'. Then we must teach our boys and young men by precept and example in preparation for their leadership roles in the church of the next generation.

It also follows that women should desire men to lead in public prayer. If men are tempted to abdicate the responsibility that God has laid on them to lead, the women's temptation will be to usurp this responsibility – not only at home but in church. Women should strive instead to love the will of God in this whole matter, not viewing it as harsh or a put down against their sex. Then they should do all in their power to encourage men to pray. If a husband struggles at home to lead the family in prayer, she should let him struggle on and encourage him; likewise she should encourage her sons and pray for the men of her congregation that they might be led to proficiency in this great work of leading the church of God to the throne of grace in prayer.



**"When God calls men to headship and leadership, their besetting sins will tend toward tyrannical leadership on the one hand or abdication of responsibility on the other."**

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## Holiness and Happiness

*Rev David Murray*

**H**appiness is the opposite of holiness. At least that's what the devil tells us. You can have either happiness or holiness but you cannot have both. And given the choice, most try happiness. Wouldn't it be great if God had said somewhere that holiness and happiness are inseparable, that you can't have one without the other.

He did? Where? What exactly did He say?

'This day is holy unto the Lord your God; mourn not, nor weep... for the joy of the Lord is your strength' (Neh.8:9-10). The people had rightly mourned over their sins, but there came a point when their weeping went on too long and too deep, and God said through Nehemiah, 'This is a holy day. Therefore let it be a happy day'. He underlines by saying, 'Go home, have a feast, and celebrate with your friends and family, because this is a holy day'.

The logic is inescapable. Happiness is not only compatible with holiness, it is an essential part of it. Without happiness, holiness is incomplete. Indeed, it is no longer holiness.

But what kind of happiness are we talking about?

Nehemiah defines it as 'the joy of the Lord'. It is a joy that comes from God and is centred in God. God

gives it and God is it. And given that the people had been repenting of their sins, this can only be an Old Testament call to joyful faith in God as their Saviour from sin.

And as if we needed another reason to pursue, accept, and enjoy the happiness of holiness, Nehemiah adds the motive: 'For the joy of the Lord is your strength!' Holy happiness strengthens us. It produces defensive and offensive strength. It powerfully protects us from evil and it empowers us to fight for good.

Holiness, happiness, and hardiness. A blessed trinity from the Blessed Trinity!



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## No More Sea (Rev 21:1)

*Rev James Clark*

**A**mong the things which are missing in Heaven, there is first and foremost the absence of the sea. This may surprise many, but spiritually speaking, the sea is something in this world which we have to cross to reach 'the haven we desire to see'. Also the sea puts a distance between ourselves and those whom we desire to be with; it is a boundary between two lands.

### **Separation**

The sea is a symbol of separation. In his exile on the Island of Patmos the Apostle John would look across to the land of Asia Minor (Turkey). Over there was the congregation he had been separated from, Ephesus, where he was the Pastor. The sea separates those on the land and those on the sea, and those still on the sea and those in heaven. The believer is on a voyage home (Psalm 107:23, 24). When there is no more sea, there is an end of separation; there is reunion. The sea gives up the dead (bodies) as stated in Revelation 20. There is no more

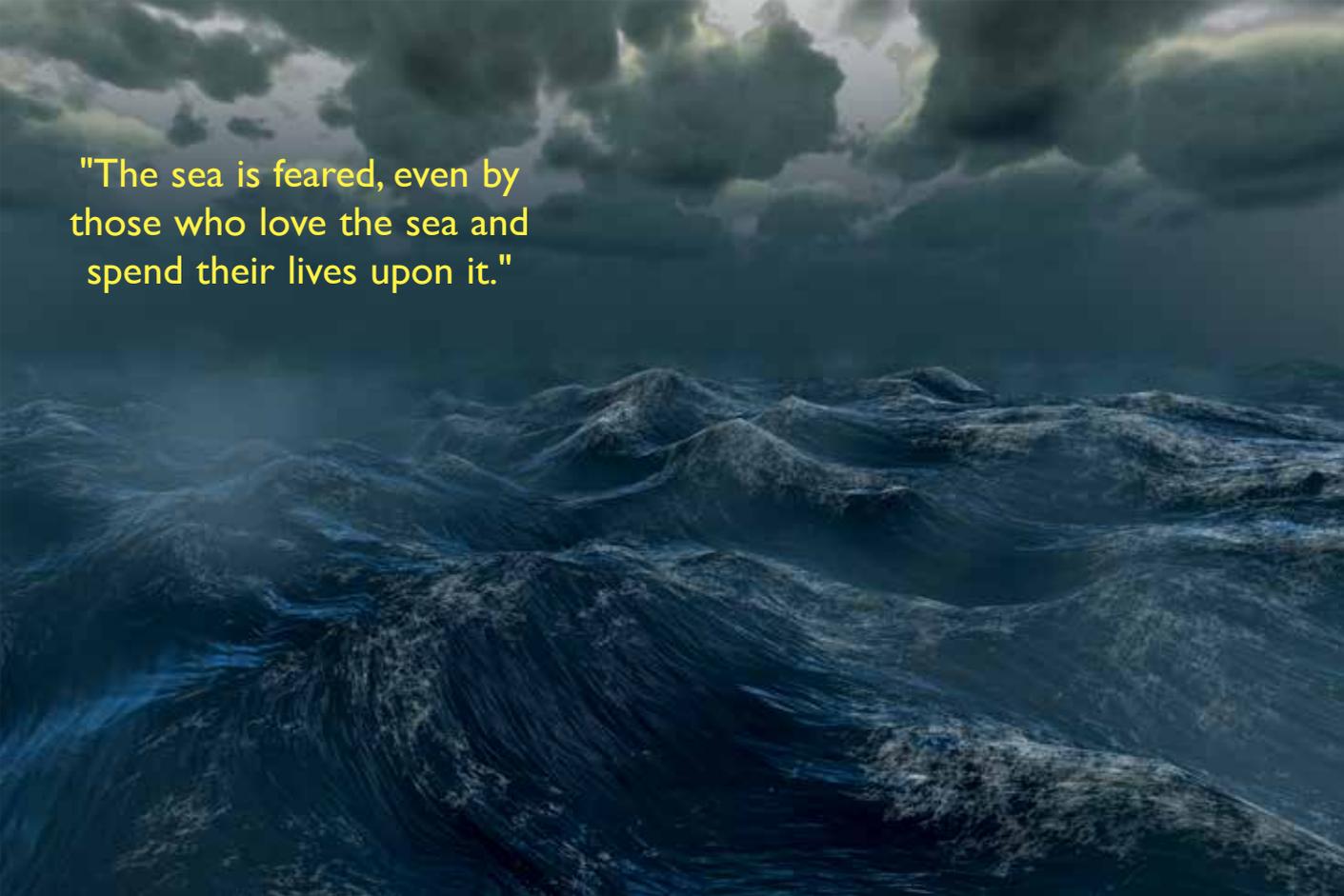
sea, they have landed, the voyage is over. Some perhaps grumbled about the everyday routine of the voyage, but a crew needs to be disciplined in order to successfully complete the voyage, and that often requires practice of the same things. There is often 'sorrow on the sea' (Jer.49:23), but there is also 'no more death'. All of God's elect safely made it alive to the other shore by following God's Word, as the sailors did in Acts 27.

### **Change and Unrest**

The sea is also a symbol of change and unrest, the 'troubled sea' (Isaiah 57:20). On the voyage it is different every day. There are storms of agitation, and the resultant temptations to panic, and act foolishly. These storms arrive suddenly; many are not seen as they move towards us. They often strike against us when we are least prepared, especially if we have not had time to recover after the previous storm. These contrary winds make us 'reel to and fro' (Psalm 107:27). Sometimes we

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"The sea is feared, even by those who love the sea and spend their lives upon it."

are becalmed and feel we make no progress. At such times we must be patient, but also continue in our duty and pray for the Spirit to move our earthen vessels, but it will be in God's time, not ours. Sometimes the typhoon is so fierce that we feel in danger of being overwhelmed with the waters (Psalm 124:3, 4, 5). At such times we must ride it out on the anchor of hope. It helps if we have seasoned mariners with us who have been through such before. At other times we may have only the illusion of progress, when in reality the wind and current are pushing us backwards, without our being aware of it. This is why we need to continually check our course and progress by our chart and compass, the Word of God. It is so easy to measure our progress by how we feel – drifting happens without any sound or disturbing motions. But when there is 'no more sea', changes and unrest are now behind us and the sailors are at rest in the haven (Psalm 107:30).

### **Danger**

Thirdly, the sea is a symbol of danger. Noah saw a 'Flood' of God's judgment. The sea is feared, even by those who love the sea and spend their lives upon it. It brings to us a trial of strength and endurance; not every ship in the convoy which started out made it across. Apart from knowing that there is an enemy searching for and tracking us silently and invisibly in the deep, we must also be on the lookout for the rocks which increasingly appear as we near the other land. Many have been

shipwrecked by overconfidence in themselves and losing confidence in God; they left off to watch and scan the horizon. Some also felt carnally secure when they had actually been holed below the waterline, not checked and not visible to themselves; although others may notice that they are listing to one side. We must pause and plug such gaps by repentance and continue on. This has to happen every day on the voyage. Many 'who need no repentance' continue on, gradually taking in water and suddenly sink. It appears sudden, but because of this lack of scrutiny it was inevitable. Some let themselves drift along with the current of the world or the worldly church and fail to maintain a strict narrow course. There is only one narrow way between the rocks and the mines. As Robert Bruce said, 'The believer must steer between the extremes of legalism and presumption'. The Lord says to us all, 'Watch' and also 'Pray', not only out of concern for ourselves but also for others. None of us can remain here upon the land or sea; we must all pass on to one or the other land, one of great light, another of great darkness. We must pray that the Lord will prepare us by grace for glory (Psalm 84:11), so that when we come to the end of the voyage we will hear Him say when the evening has come, 'Let us pass over unto the other side' (Mark 4:35). No doubt you would like to go to Heaven, but are you willing to cross over with Christ?



# News



## ***The Knock & Point Kirk Session (Left to Right):***

*Mr Calum Macleod; Mr Donald Buchanan; Rev Alasdair Macleod; Mr Angus Macleod*

## **Knock & Point Induction**

*Report by Rev Graeme Craig*

**D**espite a winter storm which brought wind and snow and left the islands cut off from the mainland, a congregation of 200 crowded into Knock & Point Free Church (Continuing) at Garrabost on Friday 30th January,

for the Ordination and Induction of Rev Alasdair J Macleod to the pastoral charge of Knock & Point. Rev Kenneth Macdonald, Moderator of the Outer Hebrides Presbytery, preached from Ezra 7:10 drawing out lessons from Ezra's life as he

sought to lead the Lord's people. He was a man sent by God who studied the Word, obeyed the Word, and taught the Word. As such he was a pattern for every Gospel preacher, who must study and also obey God's word if his people are to profit. We

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# Desk

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must be not only hearers, but doers of God's Word.

After the appointed questions were duly answered and the Formula signed, Mr Macleod was set aside for the work of the holy ministry and admitted to the charge of Knock & Point. He was then addressed by Rev Greg MacDonald who exhorted him from 2 Corinthians 12:14-18, stressing especially that the ministry is no casual labour or part-time calling but that the minister must, like Paul, lovingly spend and be spent in the work of the Gospel. He has souls to feed and stray sheep to gather into the fold. All he does must be devoted to this end and he must have this priority in his life. Thereafter Rev Graeme Craig addressed the congregation, reminding them they would benefit from the preaching of the Word and pastoral visitation as they recognised that ministers are a blood-bought gift of Christ to His church, who are sent as His ambassadors to speak in his name. However, ministers are also a part of the body of Christ, and thus it is the duty of the congregation to support the ministry through prayer and other practical means. The need for encouraging their minister was also stressed, a point picked up by a speaker later on that evening.

Following the service, the gathering adjourned to the Sandwick Hall where a beautiful spread was provided by members and friends of the congregation. Presentations were made to Mr & Mrs Macleod and their young son James William, welcoming

them into the congregation. Mr Craig was also thanked for his labours over the past two and a half years as Interim Moderator. Mr Macleod then thanked the congregation for all their kindness since his arrival and the encouragement they had been to him already. He was grateful to them and above all to God for their call to be their minister. Although some time had elapsed since he had been licensed to preach, he recognised that this was the Lord's doing, and he could give thanks for God's teaching and providence throughout that period, and especially for the overruling that had led to the union of people and pastor that evening. He also spoke of his family connections with the Free Church in the area going back to the Disruption, his great-great-great grandfather, Alexander Macleod, being one of the original Trustees of Knock Free Church, and an elder from 1851. Furthermore, the present house used as a manse is on the same croft on which his paternal grandmother, Mary Macleod, was brought up.

Due to the inclement weather, all those Mr Macleod had intended to ask to address the gathering were stranded on the mainland. However, there were friends present who were asked to speak, following which Mr Macleod brought proceedings to a close with worship.

Since the translation to Inverness of their previous minister, Rev James Clark, the congregation have battled on, seeking to keep aloft the Gospel banner in this part of the Lord's

vineyard. They are not strong but the Lord has sustained them and has provided for them the precious gift of a Gospel minister. He has answered their prayers and we continue to pray that the Lord would richly bless Mr Macleod as he settles into his ministry in Knock & Point.

## Scaladale weekend

The next Scaladale weekend is scheduled for Friday 24 July till Monday 27 July 2015. The subject will be 'Joseph as a Type of Christ'. The speaker for the weekend, DV, is Rev James Clark, who serves as minister in the Inverness, Greyfriars congregation. The weekend is aimed at those in the 20 - 30 age bracket. Due to the limited overnight accommodation available, priority will be given to those who live in the Outer Hebrides and who fall within the indicated age range. However, it is advised to book as soon as possible to ensure you are not disappointed. The Scaladale Centre is a residential centre, situated in Ardvourlie on the Isle of Harris (HS3 3AB). The centre accommodates bedding for twenty eight people, but can be used as a conference facility for up to sixty people. More information is available at [www.scaladale-centre.co.uk](http://www.scaladale-centre.co.uk). The cost for the full weekend is £50.00. Bed linen (if required) £4.00. Day/evening visitors £10.00. For a booking form and any further information please contact: Murray Mackay, mobile (text only): 077935 35227. Email (preferable): [murray.mackay@gmail.com](mailto:murray.mackay@gmail.com).

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## No room for Mum and Dad

*Christian Institute*

The guidance behind schools' regulator Ofsted's 'inappropriate' questioning of ten-year-olds about lesbians has been revealed.

The Daily Mail reported that inspectors are briefed to ask pupils as young as four about homosexuality, transsexualism and same-sex parents. Inspectors are instructed to ask pupils about different types of families including having 'two mums or two dads' but there is no reference to families with both a mum and a dad.

Recently the head of Ofsted, Sir Michael Wilshaw, denied that pupils have been questioned about 'inappropriate' topics. He was asked about complaints of 'intrusive' questioning of pupils at Grindon Hall Christian School in Sunderland and The Durham Free School, whilst giving evidence to the Education Select Committee. Parents of children at Grindon Hall school objected to questions asked by inspectors, including if they knew what lesbians 'did' and if their friends felt trapped in the 'wrong body'. Free Speech Safeguard (Christian Institute)

A free speech safeguard has been introduced into a new anti-terror Bill, following widespread concerns that Christian Unions and other university societies could face censorship.

Warnings about the threat to free speech have come from student charity the UCCF, university leaders, a top QC and numerous Peers. Under the draft guidance for the Counter-Terrorism and Security Bill, university societies would be forced to hand over presentations to be vetted.

However, recently the Government introduced an amendment which requires universities to give 'particular regard' to freedom of speech when fulfilling their duty to combat terrorism.

It has also committed to rework a paragraph in the guidance which was at the centre of the controversy. The revised guidance will need Parliamentary approval before it can be implemented.

The Christian Institute welcomed the climbdown while noting that a 'close watch' on the guidance was needed ahead of it being finalised.

It said: 'Thank you to all our supporters who prayed about this important matter and responded to the consultation'.

## MPs back GM Babies

*Christian Institute*

MPs have voted in favour of legalising controversial techniques to create three and four-parent babies, despite serious safety and ethical concerns. Following a House of Commons debate, MPs voted 382 to 128 to approve regulations allowing procedures aimed at creating children free from mitochondrial disease.

Conservative MP Fiona Bruce said during the debate, 'once these procedures that we're asked to authorise

today go ahead, there will be no going back for society'. Labour MP Rob Flello said he feared that families will be 'let down tragically' due to the lack of certainty around the techniques.

A ComRes poll released ahead of the vote revealed that only ten per cent of the public think the Government is right to push through the regulations before the conclusion of recommended safety tests. And the number of people opposing the procedures (41 per cent) is more than double the number of those who support them (20 per cent), according to the survey commissioned by Christian charity CARE.

Scientists have warned about the unknown consequences of the techniques, called Maternal Spindle Transfer and Pro Nuclear Transfer. Dr Trevor Stammers, Programme Director in Bioethics and Medical Law at St Mary's University in London, said: 'We do not yet know the interaction between the mitochondria and nuclear DNA. To say that it is the same as changing a battery is facile. It's an extremely complex thing'.

Dr Paul Knoepfler, associate professor at the University of California, commented: 'Since this is uncharted territory and the children born from this technology would have heritable genetic changes, there are also significant unknown risks to future generations'.

MEPs have written to the Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt warning that the UK may be breaking European laws by approving the techniques, as they modify the germ line. The Council of Europe's Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine is against anything that changes genes across generations.

The World Health Organisation also says that techniques 'where there is an intention or possibility of altering the genes passed on to the next generation' should not be permitted 'in the foreseeable future'.

Writing for the Telegraph online, columnist Dr Tim Stanley said Britain is being 'unusually reckless' in pressing ahead with three and four-parent babies.

The House of Lords is now set to vote on the Human Fertilisation and Embryology (Mitochondrial Donation) Regulations 2015, which if approved could come into force in October.

## All Age Holiday, Arbroath

*Emily Maclean*

Once again, Derick and Maryanne Gillies ran the excellent All Age Holiday last year. It was held at the spacious Windmill Christian Centre in Arbroath. We all enjoyed a great week of fun and fellowship. Friends of 'all ages' met together, as old friends re-acquainted and new friends were introduced. We quickly became like one big happy family! It was especially nice to have a Fijian family from Royal Regiment of Scotland, 3 Scots (formally the Black Watch) with us.

The speaker was Rev Alasdair Macleod who had two topics: the main topic in the evening was 'Daniel in a Pagan



*All Age Holiday, July 2014, Arbroath (for group photo, see rear cover)*

Society', and the children's topic in the morning was the 'Whole Armour of God'. Young and old greatly benefited from these talks as we learned how Daniel obeyed God in a heathen society and was blessed. We were able to learn too how much we need to put on the whole armour of God to protect us from the world, the flesh and the devil. We had a quiz each evening in relation to the talks and everyone joined in learning some memory verses from Ephesians 6:13-17. The younger children enjoyed making their own suits of armour in the arts and crafts – although I think the mums were getting quite competitive! The older children enjoyed sports outside and also table tennis and pool competitions.

In Arbroath it is self-catering and we had two amazing cooks, Isobel McQueer and Debbie Allan who provided three delicious meals a day. Mealtimes were relaxed occasions, with everyone helping each other, and tidying up took no time at all. We even enjoyed the famous Arbroath smokies one night!

The holiday last year was over just five days, which flew past. We enjoyed a group outing to Dunnottar Castle – which is set on a high clifftop and another to the lovely white sands at Montrose beach. There were plenty shops and places of interest in Arbroath itself and a large fun pavilion and beach very close by to the centre. On Friday night we had the prize giving for the individual competitions and teams – we all enjoyed receiving medals and trophies for our efforts.

I have been attending the All Age Holiday for the past

seven years and have made great friends. Whether old, young, on your own, or as a family – everyone is welcome and everyone mixes in so well and helps each other. I have always enjoyed the holiday although I must say this one was my favourite! Everything went very smoothly and I am looking forward to going again this year!

This Year's All Age Holiday takes place from the 11th to the 18th of July and the speaker, DV, will be Rev Kenneth Macdonald.

## **Libya and Egypt**

*E Kendal*

**O**n Thursday 12 February, after Islamic State (IS) published issue 7 of DABIQ (the official IS propaganda magazine), its photographs of 21 Copts (native Egyptian Christians) dressed in orange prison suits on a Libyan beach went viral on social media. The fate of the Copts was unclear as the article did not say they had been executed. On Friday 13 February the families of the pictured Copts demonstrated in Cairo. Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi ordered that urgent assistance be rendered to Egyptians wanting to be evacuated from Libya. A committee established in January to investigate the kidnapping of the Copts stepped up efforts to clarify the situation and uncover their fate.

On Sunday 15 February Islamic militants associated with Islamic State's Wilayat Tarabulus (province of Tripoli) released a video showing the 21 Copts being beheaded

simultaneously. It is IS's largest mass beheading and the first such terror statement to be performed outside the IS 'Caliphate' in Upper Mesopotamia. The footage, entitled, 'A message signed with blood to the nation of the cross', opens with a scrolling caption referring to the hostages as 'People of the cross, followers of the hostile Egyptian Church'. Before the killings, the militant spokesman, standing with a knife in his hand, declares in a North American accent: 'All crusaders: safety for you will be only wishes, especially if you are fighting us all together. Therefore we will fight you all together until the world lays down its burdens and Jesus, peace be upon him, will descend, breaking the cross [symbol of Christians], killing the swine [food of Christians] and abolishing jizya [protection money for Christians – signalling the end of 'protection']'. The sea you have hidden Sheikh Osama Bin Laden's body in, we swear to Allah we will mix it with your blood'. The 21 Copts are then laid face-down on the sand and simultaneously beheaded. The militant spokesman then points northward across the Mediterranean and declares: 'We will conquer Rome, by Allah's permission'. Meanwhile, a scrolling caption on the video states: 'The filthy blood is just some of what awaits you, in revenge for Camilia and her sisters'. As soon as the footage was verified as authentic, Egypt's President Sisi announced seven days of national mourning. Egypt's military response has begun.

The reference to 'Camilia' refers to a lie propagated by Islamic propagandists. When Camilia Shehata went missing in July 2010, her husband (a Coptic priest) reported her disappearance to the police, frantic that she might have been kidnapped by Islamic fundamentalists for forcible conversion. His fear was reasonable as this is a well-documented common occurrence in Egypt, practised by Islamists in co-operation with fundamentalists in the security forces and local government. As it turned out, Camilia had simply gone to stay with relatives in Cairo after she and her husband had argued. When she returned home with police, Islamists propagated the lie that Camilia had converted to Islam only to be forcibly re-converted by the Church which was now holding her against her will. To quell the rumours, Camilia appeared on national TV declaring that she had never converted to Islam but that did not appease the Islamists. Just like the blood-libel lie (which claims the Jews use the blood of Christian children in their rituals) has been used to incite hatred and violence against Jews, the Camilia lie is being used to incite hatred and violence against Copts. The Islamic State of Iraq used the Camilia lie to justify its deadly 31 October 2010 siege and bombing of a Chaldean Church in Baghdad which claimed the lives of 58 Chaldean Christians and left more than 70 with terrible injuries.

On Tuesday 17 February the Libyan Herald and Stratfor Intelligence reported that 35 more Copts had been

kidnapped in Libya in locations controlled by Ansar al-Sharia and Islamic State. Libya's internationally recognised government (now based in the eastern city of Tobruk) is participating with Egypt in the airstrikes on the IS stronghold of Derna alongside Egypt. But Libya Dawn, the Islamist group in control of Tripoli (Libya's capital in the west), has vowed to retaliate against the airstrikes and has given Egyptians 48 hours to leave the country.

Pray:

That the 'God of all comfort' (2 Corinthians 1:3-5) will pour peace and comfort into the shattered hearts, families and communities of Upper Egypt as they mourn the loss of their loved ones. 'Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved: for thou art my praise' (Jeremiah 17:14):

That the Spirit of God will guide Egypt's religious and civic leaders (Christian and Muslim), including President al-Sisi, so there will be no jihad against the Copts; may the Lord intervene in Egypt and Libya so that any violence against the Church will be quickly contained and justice upheld (Isaiah 59:15b-19).

## Highland Bible Conference

*Rev James Clark*

The next Highland Bible Conference is due to take place on Saturday 15th August 2015 from 10am to 3pm at Kingsview Centre, Inverness. The theme is to be 'Arminianism, Amyraldism and Calvinism'. The speakers are to be Rev Harry Woods, Rev Raymond Kemp and Rev James Clark. The cost is £8 (includes lunch 12.30 -1.30pm) and children are free.

## Legacy

The congregation of Knightswood FCC was greatly encouraged recently to receive a legacy of £101,673 from the estate of their late, beloved member, Mrs Kitty Bauer. This is a tremendous help and will, when placed with savings already accumulated, allow them in due course to buy a suitable manse.

## Live Telephone Services

For those with computers and internet access the services from Dores FCC and Knightswood FCC can be heard live on [live.bible-sermons.com](http://live.bible-sermons.com). For those who do not have computers they can simply ring the numbers below and listen in to the services by telephone. Due to an increase in listeners the phone number to listen to services from the Dores congregation has had to change. The new telephone number is 01463 513512. Knightswood have also now started a telephone link too. The Knightswood services can be listened to on Tel: 0141 255 1541. Both numbers play a Psalm loop between services but have a few minutes silence prior to the start of a service.

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## Obituary - Mr Iain Macrae (Deacon, Snizort)

It was with a mixture of sorrow and disbelief that the news circulated throughout the Snizort congregation that Mr Iain Macrae, one of our Deacons, had suddenly passed away. Iain had appeared to be in his usual health and had been present at the prayer meeting and the study group just two days before.

Iain was born within the bounds of this parish and it was here, in the little hamlet of Eyre that he spent most of his days. As the name suggests, Eyre is a high spot; a favourite for eagles and other birds of prey. However in his earlier years Iain had little thought of the higher things and his interests did not go above the things of this world.

He would attend regularly on the church services and had a great deal of respect for the things of the Lord – a respect which would have been instilled in him from his youth. Yet there was one thing lacking. He had not 'passed from death unto life'. A dutiful son, he would bring his mother to the means of grace, but it became apparent after her death that he too had an interest in the Gospel of redeeming grace. Iain's desires had begun to soar upwards and he had come to discover for himself that 'they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength;

they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint'.

He professed faith in July 2000 and the following year he was ordained as a Deacon. Some years later he became the Church Officer. Being of a very retiring nature he went about his duties quietly and with a minimum of fuss. We had expected that, in the ordinary course of things, he would be spared to render further service in the Lord's cause. His sudden passing at the age of 68 years reminded us afresh that His ways are not our ways nor His thoughts our thoughts.

We extend our deepest condolences to his sole surviving sister Chrissie and the wider family, committing them all to the 'Father of mercies and the God of all grace'.

*Rev Murdo A N Macleod*



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## The Trinity in Christian Practice (Part I)

**Rev Alasdair Macleod**

*The first part of a paper delivered at the FCC Southern Presbytery Colloquium, 13 December 2014*

### Introduction

The Trinity is a basic, and in a sense, the basic fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith. It opens up the identity of the God we worship, His nature as a Triune being, at once wholly unified, and yet in profound and loving fellowship with Himself in three Persons. Yet it is also unifying for God's people on earth, for this doctrine is ecumenical and unites professing Christian believers across the globe as no other doctrine can. Most importantly, this doctrine is directly connected to the believer's hope of salvation. It is principally in His saving work that God has been revealed as Trinity, as the distinction of the Divine Persons is only meaningful to the church militant in terms of the differing functions attributed to each person in the way of salvation. At the

deepest level, it may be that the glorification of Himself as the Triune Being was the essential purpose of the whole Divine decree of the creation of the Universe, and of the redemption of God's people.

The orthodox doctrine is familiar, but requires restatement at this point. God is eternally One, a Being in complete harmony with every aspect of Himself: 'Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD' (Deut.6:4). There is one Divine essence, and He is God. But God exists in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, 'and these three are one true, eternal God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory; although distinguished by their personal properties' (Westminster Larger Catechism, Q.9). The Triune nature of God is exhibited with great clarity in the Biblical

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account of the baptism of Jesus (Mt.3:13-17), in the Apostolic benediction (2Cor.13:14), and above all in the church's Great Commission from our Lord (Mt.28:19). The 'personal properties' of the three Persons are, in their inherent sense, difficult to understand, referring as they do to an eternal relationship far beyond our comprehension. Again in the words of the *Larger Catechism*: 'It is proper to the Father to beget the Son, and to the Son to be begotten of the Father, and to the Holy Ghost to proceed from the Father and the Son from all Eternity' (Q.10). In the ontological sense, that is, in the nature of being, this is all that can be said about the three Persons in their inherent distinction; and therefore, as stated earlier, it is rather through salvation that the Trinity is meaningfully revealed. We can discern the three Persons because of their differing functions within the economy of salvation: thus the Triune God is known, understood, and glorified in the praise of His creatures.

There is something profound in the Triune nature of God: to be three in one. It is curious to note the significance of the number three, even in human life: it has a natural satisfaction, a sense of completeness. Consider the classic three-point sermon: proposition A, proposition B, and proposition C: even divorcing form from content, we receive an impression of something thorough, memorable and resonant. Even in the secular world, this is recognized. The modern public-speaking coach, Carmine Gallo, refers to the 'rule of three', the natural ability of the human mind to receive and retain three pieces of information, which she calls 'one of the most powerful concepts in writing and communication' (*Talk Like TED*, p.191). Moving into the sphere of relationships, we know that human beings here are designed for relationships in twos in this world, and that when this rule is breached, whether through polygamy or adultery, the consequences are grave. Yet is human marriage itself not basically a provisional institution, of which the Saviour says that 'in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven' (Mt.22:30)? The relationship of two is incomplete and passing, but the relationship of the Divine Three is eternal, and our eternal hope is participation in that loving fellowship of the Triune God, a relationship both full and satisfying, world without end. Now it is not my purpose in this paper to trace the historical development of this doctrine, to prove the elements of it from Scriptural exegesis, or to counter the opponents of Trinitarian doctrine in their heretical rejection of these revealed truths. For those requiring assistance in these areas, an outstanding resource is the little book *The Trinity* by Edward Henry Bickersteth, which, 150 years after its publication, stands unrivalled in its field as an exegetical refutation of Unitarianism in all its forms. Bickersteth arranges the relevant Scriptural

passages in parallel columns, showing how each of the truths predicated of God is also predicated of Christ, in a masterly refutation of the age-old Arian heresy. He later accomplishes the same with regard to the Holy Spirit. His work shows how wildly unbiblical are those cults that question the Deity of Christ, preeminent among them, of course, the so-called 'Jehovah's Witnesses'. But equally, it is not my purpose to consider the believer's relationship to God in His three Persons in His private life of prayer and communion.

Rather, I intend to address the subject of 'The Trinity in Christian Practice', having regard to the public walk of the Christian believer in relationship with the Triune God. This I will sub-divide into three principal heads: first, and at greatest length, 'The Trinity in Christian Worship'; then 'The Trinity in Christian Preaching'; and, finally, 'The Trinity in Christian Service'. With such a subject, it cannot be sufficiently emphasized that we do not suggest or countenance the notion that we have a relationship with three different gods, which would be to stray into the heresy of polytheism. Nor can we consider God as merely revealing Himself to us in three modes, as though to condescend to our limitations by appearing in differing forms: for this would be to revive the ancient heresy of modalism. Rather, we have a revelation of God in Scripture as objectively, meaningfully, and originally the Triune Being, in three Persons. Thus in each of the specified areas, we have a public walk with the One God, but we may also consider ourselves, without contradiction, as having a public relationship with each Person of the Godhead.

## **I. The Trinity in Christian Worship**

In the worship of God, we as the people of God undertake the highest and most solemn duty of our lives. This is the very purpose of our existence, as Isaiah records for us, speaking the word of the Lord: 'This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise' (Is.43:21). And in the various forms of worship, the public worship of God is the highest, for there we join in fellowship with others to praise God, eternally in fellowship with Himself. To worship Him is to enter fellowship with Him in His delight in His own excellences, and fellowship with the angels and saints in Glory eternally singing His praises for His inherent attributes, and for His eternal purpose and temporal achievement of the salvation of His own people. We praise Him as the God who is Love (1Jn.4:8): in His inherent nature in the mutual love of the three Persons of the Godhead, and in the manifold expressions of His love towards His chosen people. Our worship is but the pale and inadequate reciprocation of what we have enjoyed, an expression of love to Him that would truly be a fragile and transient emotion, were it not wrought in us by the power of the Spirit of God. And thus, though

limited in scope and scale, it is permanent in duration, and an earnest of the vastly greater love, and vastly greater capacity to love, yet to come into our hearts.

The Father is perhaps the easiest of the Persons of the Trinity to hold before our minds in worship. He is the Person most directly associated with the creation, and thus with our origin as reasoning beings. Our very existence therefore demands praise for the Father, as the universal generative parent of all creation: the 'One God and Father of all' (Eph.4:6). But beyond that, He is the One who desires, and expects, and commands our worship; as our Lord remarked to the woman of Samaria: 'The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him' (Jn.4:23). The reason for this expectation is rooted in the work of election, whereby the Father has made special choice of us for Himself (Eph.1:4), and in the work of adoption, whereby the Father has become our Father, in a special and particular sense, beyond that implied in creation (Eph.1:5). He has expressed Fatherly love in taking on, of His own free will, the responsibility of securing our salvation, and thus it is the Father who is responsible for originating the plan of salvation. This assertion may be rooted in the general association of the Father with all the providential acts of God, as stated by James: 'Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights' (Jas.1:17). But more precisely, the point may be proved by our Lord's words in His agony in the Garden: 'Not my will, but thine, be done' (Lk.22:42), revealing a decisive will, distinct from, but in harmony with, the Son's human will, originative of the plan and execution of redemption. And equally, it is to the Father that the gift of the Son to secure salvation is directly attributed, in the famous words of John 3:16, where 'God' must be taken for 'the Father' to comprehend the meaning of the text: 'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten

Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life'.

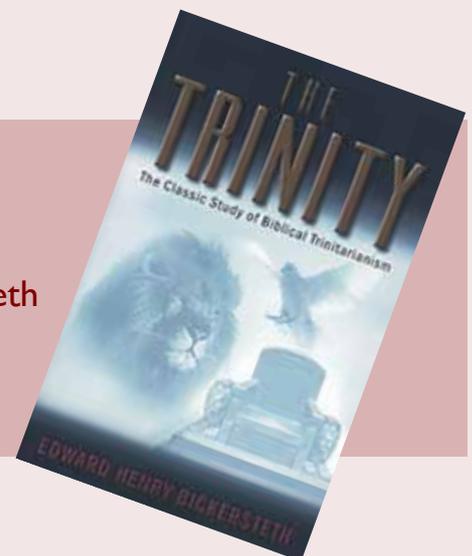
Therefore it is both meaningful and necessary to give worship to the Father, both in His own excellences, as possessing the whole of the Divine essence in equal measure with the other Persons of the Trinity, but more specifically for His creative, originative, elective and adoptive functions within the economy of salvation. He is indeed worthy of all praise, because He has thus secured our salvation by these acts of His own will, and the praise for it must be to Him. In Him we have a sure and everlasting hope, as Paul writes: 'He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?' (Rom 8:32). Do we not therefore owe to Him our worship and adoration? Can we not praise Him in public worship as we read the account of Abraham going to sacrifice His only Son (Gen 22:1-19), and halted by the blessed Providence of God, and realize that the Father did not halt, but completed this sacrifice for His beloved people? Can we not wonder as we read of the new relationship forged in the fires of Calvary, the adoptive fatherhood whereby the Father becomes 'Our Father, which art in Heaven' (Mt.6:9), whereby we become 'heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ' (Rom.8:17)? Must we not hold Him before our minds in adoration, as we sing with the people of God in Psalm 27:10 that 'Though me my parents both should leave, the Lord will me up take'; when we compare Jehovah's love to a father's (Ps.103:13); or when we worship Him as 'A father of the fatherless' (Ps.68:5)? And when we take our Lord's words on our lips: 'Thou art my Father, he shall cry, thou art my God alone' (Ps.89:26), shall we not marvel that we can sing them of ourselves as well, as a fruit of adoptive love, and praise God as our Father in our public worship?

*(To be continued)*



## **The Trinity**

by Edward Henry Bickersteth  
(1825-1906)



## Congregational Remittances - February 2015

CENTRAL BUILDING FUND YTD 2015	ORDINARY REMITTANCES			
	2015 Feb	2015 To Feb	2014 To Feb	
<b>Presbytery of Inverness</b>				
Aberdeen	20	1,300	2,600	2,600
Duthil-Dores	1,628	1,453	3,920	2,491
Inverness	0	1,500	3,000	4,000
Kilmorack & Strathglass	0	1,400	2,800	3,400
<b>Total Inverness</b>	<b>1,648</b>	<b>5,653</b>	<b>12,320</b>	<b>12,491</b>
<b>Northern Presbytery</b>				
Assynt & Scourie	105	0	0	549
Brora	0	2,000	2,000	2,000
Kiltearn	510	500	500	1,000
Tarbat	0	1,500	1,500	3,500
<b>Total Northern</b>	<b>615</b>	<b>4,000</b>	<b>4,000</b>	<b>7,049</b>
<b>Southern Presbytery</b>				
Arran	80	290	1,101	1,226
Ayr	0	800	1,800	1,800
Dumfries	0	0	0	0
Edinburgh	3,399	2,000	4,000	3,000
Glasgow - Partick	1,719	1,700	3,000	4,000
Glasgow - Shettleston	0	2,000	4,000	3,800
Glasgow - Knightswood	0	1,650	3,300	3,650
Rothsay	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Southern</b>	<b>5,198</b>	<b>8,440</b>	<b>17,201</b>	<b>17,476</b>
<b>Outer Hebrides Presbytery</b>				
Cross	0	1,671	3,262	6,492
Harris - Leverburgh	45	1,250	2,500	2,375
Harris - Scalpay	0	2,000	4,000	3,800
Knock & Point	0	1,100	2,900	1,875
North Uist	565	0	1,000	1,200
Stornoway	715	6,082	12,385	13,117
<b>Total Outer Hebrides</b>	<b>1,325</b>	<b>12,103</b>	<b>26,047</b>	<b>28,859</b>
<b>Presbytery of Skye &amp; Lochcarron</b>				
Bracadale	0	3,000	3,000	3,358
Duirinish (Waternish)	0	0	0	0
Kilmuir & Stenscholl	0	1,400	1,400	1,900
Lochalsh	60	900	1,800	2,500
Poolewe & Aultbea	65	740	1,210	900
Ullapool	0	0	0	0
Portree	0	1,200	2,400	1,200
Snizort	0	1,300	2,600	2,600
Strath	40	360	760	525
<b>Total Skye/Lochcarron</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>8,900</b>	<b>13,170</b>	<b>12,983</b>
Smiths Falls	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Congregations</b>	<b>8,951</b>	<b>39,096</b>	<b>72,738</b>	<b>78,858</b>
Other Donations	0	723	2,055	8,482
Legacy	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8,951</b>	<b>39,819</b>	<b>74,793</b>	<b>87,340</b>
Including Gift Aid	0	0	0	0

### Vavuniya Mission Report Rev S N Partheepan

Greetings to you in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We are very thankful for your wonderful support and your commitment to God's work in Vavuniya. I am very sure we will see the Lord's blessing in our land through your support for these projects.

#### Pre-School

The Pre-School ministry is going well by the grace of God and this is now the third year for this work. This year we have twenty-five pupils and two teachers. We are getting good support from the village. The attitude of people is very friendly towards us. Through this ministry we are sharing the Gospel with the children's parents. One family is now coming to our church and is very faithful to the Lord. We visited another family recently and they also promised to start coming to the church. Our school has a good reputation among the other schools and with the Education Department. Pupils

who graduated from the school receive a good report from their primary schools and are rewarded for their behaviour and knowledge. We initially had some opposition because of the Christian influence in the school, but now that tension is decreasing. Thank God for this ministry!

#### Bible School

The Bible School is going well and it is very beneficial to the local pastors. Thank God the first year went well and the testimonies of the students were very encouraging to us in Christ. The teachers are very committed and supportive to our doctrines and practices. Some of the students are understanding the truth and acknowledge their own previous misunderstandings. This year there are fifteen students who are studying through the Bible School.

#### Sabbath-School

Our Sabbath-school is also going well and students are increasing in numbers and in their understanding of the Bible. The teachers are doing a very good job. They also visit the pupils' families. As you may know, around seventy-five children are coming and the remarkable thing is that they are staying for our evening Sabbath worship service. This is very good and what a blessing for these children to hear the gospel in their childhood!

We had a good opportunity to give some small end-of-the-year gifts to them and also a meal. It was a very heart-moving event with these Sabbath-school children.

### **Diaconal ministry**

Under our church's direction, we are helping some of the needy people in our church and also outside our church. We are involved in education, supporting disabled children, providing relief for poor widows, etc. For example, one of the disabled children's families are now coming to our prayer meeting and they have introduced one young man to our church. This fellow is a welder.

### **Children's Bible Printing**

The Children's Bible production is going very slowly because it requires lots of corrections to the Bible translation to ensure that the story of the Bible is correct. Just for an example, take the story of Joseph and the wife of Potiphar. In the Tamil story Bible it says that the wife of Potiphar wanted to marry Joseph. This is just one example, but there are many errors like this in the Tamil version. I have to check and rewrite the story as well as make grammar corrections. Therefore the Bible printing project is proceeding very slowly.

We are retyping all the Bible stories and this will take time to do. The plan is that the typesetting and proof-reading will be completed by the end of April 2015 DV. We are already using this Bible storybook in our Sabbath-school. It is very useful for us and we hope this



printing will help and benefit those who read and teach. Please do pray for this big project.

Please do remember us in your prayers. We cannot do this work in our own strength, but only in the strength of Christ.

We are really thankful for the financial support given to us. May the Lord bless your generous hand according to His perfect will.

Thank you,  
With much love,

### **SN Partheepan.**

Reformed Protestant Mission, Vavuniya, Sri Lanka (Free Church of Scotland (Continuing)).





## **All Age Holiday, July 2014, Arbroath**

“Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord.”

**Psalms 31:24**