

Free Church **Witness**



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Lessons from Free Church History

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Keddie**



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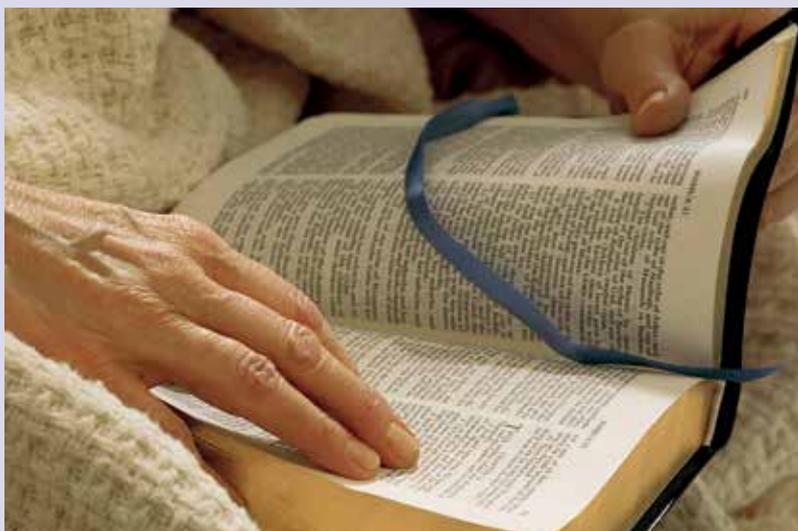
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A Faithful Church Member

Recently I was asked by the young folk to address a fellowship on the topic, 'A Faithful Church Member'. Several said they found it helpful and one asked if she could get a copy of my notes. Being one of the dinosaurs who scribble sermon notes on a sheet of paper there was little from which she or her family could profit in the forwarded scarcely-legible scan. Also due to a technical problem the recording of the address had failed. However the subject is a good one and relevant to all and so I felt it would be profitable to deal with this subject in an editorial. Below I list ten points which distinguish a faithful church member.

1. A Converted Church Member

Fundamental to faithful church membership is first of all having faith. Jesus said to Nicodemus who was not just a member but a minister of the church in his day, 'Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God' (Jn.3:3). All of us are born in sin and shapen in iniquity (Ps.51:5). We enter this world lost and on the way to hell. We have to repent and believe the gospel to be saved. The curse of so many churches is the number of unconverted members. That is especially true of the big, broad churches but do not think that because you are a member of the Free Church (Continuing) then all must be well. Individuals can be deceived and so can kirk sessions.

We enter the visible church's membership by baptism and many do so as infants. However unless that outward baptism becomes an inner reality and we are truly washed from our sins and united by faith to Christ we are children of the devil and cannot be faithful church members. Too many churches receive young folk into communicant membership without any experience of, or

evidence for a living, saving-faith relationship with Jesus Christ. Even Baptist churches, which declare that they baptise and receive into membership only professing Christians, have many in their ranks who have never truly been born again.

Being a church member will save no-one. Going forward at a crusade, saying a prayer and being baptised will not save. Even knowing the truth and understanding the gospel and believing it in an intellectual way is not sufficient, for as James states, 'the devils also believe, and tremble' (Jas.2:19). Ask yourself, Am I a converted church member? Search your heart before God. Make your calling and election sure (2Pet.1:10). So this is the starting point as far as being or rather becoming a faithful church member.

2. An Attentive Church Member

Some church members are satisfied with the minimum church attendance. If they attend church once on a Sunday they feel they have done all that is required. It would seem a bind to have to

attend twice on a Sabbath and the thought of attending midweek would be an intolerable burden. Others would in theory believe that they should attend all three meetings but in practice it takes only the tiniest excuse to keep them away. There are some who are seldom missing from work but often missing from church. There are those who have a cold or are feeling dreadfully tired on Sunday but are going round the shops on Monday.

Now churches could be more disciplinarian and demand the attendance of their members at the stated meetings of the congregation. That however would simply camouflage the problem. You do not have to legislate to get people to attend breakfast, dinner and tea. Appetite brings them there at the stated hour. Here is the root of the problem: if people have no appetite then they are either seriously ill or dead. If professing Christians have no desire for a Sabbath evening service or the midweek Bible-study and prayer meeting there is an obvious question as to their spiritual health. Maybe they have never been converted and are dead in trespasses and sins.

The Psalmist said, 'O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is' (Ps.63:1). His soul yearned for God as dry ground does for rain. Elsewhere he said: 'As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?' (Ps.42:1-2). Just as the deer in the desert pants for water so the true Christian longs for the water of life, the Lord Jesus Christ. The true Christian hungers for the things of God more than for daily bread. Jesus said, 'Man shall not live by bread

alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God' (Mt.4:4). Do you have a strong appetite for spiritual food?

3. A Godly Church Member

Godliness is holiness; it is God-centredness and God-likeness. A godly church member is one who walks with God as Enoch did (Gen.5:24), living a God-pleasing life. The Lord says, 'Be ye holy; for I am holy' (1Pet.1:16), and 'Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord' (Heb.12:14). Nowadays many people think that any emphasis on holiness is legalism. The Christian's sins are forgiven and so there is nothing to worry about. Be happy and at peace. But God wants a holy people, Christ died to make us holy and the Spirit comes into our hearts to sanctify us. If we are not holy we will not get to heaven.

Essentially holiness is obedience to God's revealed will. We have been given the Ten Commandments and they are to be the rule of life. God's Word is to be the constant guide. Holiness is separation from sin, and separation unto the Lord.

Our Saviour said, 'By their fruits ye shall know them' (Mt.7:20). Paul wrote of the great change, 'But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life' (Rom.6:22). James wrote, 'Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only' (Jas.2:24). Some claim to have faith but have no good works but James asserts such faith is dead (v20). A holy life and good works demonstrate that our faith is real. At the end of the world we shall be judged according to our works (Rev.20:12), for saving faith when truly present displays itself in good works. So a faithful church member must be godly.

4. A Loving Church Member

Love is very important in the Christian life. Essentially a Christian is someone who loves God. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, 'If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha' (1Cor.16:22). God is love and as John declared, 'We love him, because he first loved us' (1Jn.4:19).

The church is to be a fellowship of those beloved of God who love one another. John saw love as a mark of grace: 'We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren' (1 Jn.3:14). Jesus stated, 'A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another' (Jn.13:34-35). Because God is love and Christ is love, the love of church members for one another demonstrates that they are the disciples of Christ and the children of God.

5. A Welcoming Church Member

The church of Christ is not a secret society. The gates of the new Jerusalem and doors of the church are always open. We warmly invite all to come and join with us in believing in the Lord Jesus Christ and in worshipping the one living and true God. The faithful church member will be welcoming, open, loving and kind to the outsider who ventures to enter a place of worship. To the outsider who has never attended church it is an alien environment and it takes courage to walk in. The faithful church member will always be aware of such and try to make them feel as at home as they can be amongst those who belong to another world.

6. A Sound Church Member

Christianity is a revealed religion. God has spoken and set before us what we are to believe concerning God and what duty He requires of us. There are many warnings in Scripture to avoid heresy and to reject heretics. The Westminster Confession of Faith gives to us an excellent summary of the teachings of the Bible. The faithful church member will study the Scriptures and helpful books such as the Confession. They will not be carried away with every wind of doctrine. John wrote, 'These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him' (1Jn.2:26-27). The Holy Spirit teaches the true Christian. They will as Peter exhorts, 'Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear' (1Pet.3:15). Heresy will not be tolerated because, 'A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject' (Tit.3:10).

7. A Loyal Church Member

We live in an age when many church members show little loyalty to their own church and rather wander from place to place following the popular preacher or the fashionable congregation. They want to be where the young folk are, or where the families and children are. It is however a serious matter to leave a church, indeed it can be schismatic. One should only leave a church if it has become seriously unsound in doctrine or practice. While pride in self is not to be commended pride in the Lord is, and if one's church is sound and biblical a faithful church member will be 'proud' of their church and loyal to it.

8. A Witnessing Church Member

The early Christian church was evangelistically minded. Wherever the Christians went they spoke of Christ and the way of salvation. At first they only communicated the gospel to those who shared their Jewish background but at Antioch they couldn't keep it to themselves and so

the message was proclaimed by them to all and received by the Gentiles. Christ told His early followers that they were the salt of the earth and the light of the world. There is no salt or light where Christians fail to function as witnesses. Jesus said, 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven' (Mt.5:16). Following the martyrdom of Stephen and the subsequent persecution the church was dispersed and it is said 'Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word' (Acts 8:4). They spoke the 'good news' to neighbours, friends, relatives, fellow-workers and whoever they met. A faithful, church member is a witnessing church member. Are you?

9. A Joyful Church Member

One of the fruits of the Spirit's work in a Christian is joy (Gal.5:22). Paul exhorts the Philippians, 'Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice' (Phil.4:4). The devil tries his hardest to keep the Christian depressed and downcast and too often we allow him. No, as Christians we must be optimistic realising that God is in control. Knowing that all works for the best (Rom.8:28) we should always be happy and thankful. The best is yet to be. Cast all your burdens on the Lord (Ps.55:22).

The Importance of Sanctification

Rev Maurice Roberts

The Apostle Peter informs us that each Person of the Holy Trinity has a distinct work in the salvation of God's people: 'Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ' (1Pet. 1:2). The distinct work of the Father is to choose those sinners who are to be saved; the work of the Son is to cleanse us by His blood; the work of the Spirit is to sanctify those so elected by the Father and so cleansed from their sin by the Son.

We need to be clear as to the differences between Sanctification and Justification:

1. Justification alters our legal standing before God as our Judge; Sanctification is a process by which the justified sinner is made progressively holy.
2. In Justification God imputes to us the righteousness of Christ; in Sanctification God works upon our fallen nature to make it increasingly holy.
3. So, Justification is an ACT of God, which is done at once, as soon as He pronounces us 'Not guilty', when we believe in Jesus Christ for salvation; Sanctification is a life-

10. A Persevering Church Member

A faithful church member must be faithful and keep going, trusting in Christ. It is those who persevere unto the end who shall be saved (Mt.24:13). The Christian road is difficult. There are many obstacles. It's a fight to the finish. 'For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand' (Eph.6:12-13). Press on towards heaven keeping your eye on the finishing post (Phil.3:14). Persecution is to be expected. 'Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you' (Mt.5:11-12). Are you a persevering church member? Remember there is a great reward awaiting you when you fight the good fight, finish your course and keep the faith - 'a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give' (2Tim.4:8) you in that day.

long WORK of God and is not complete till the believer enters the state of death.

Because in Sanctification God is working to put our whole soul right we must, as His people, expect to go through difficult and humbling experiences. Sin is deeply ingrained in our whole nature and so, if we are to be a holy people, we must expect to have to go through many trials and struggles in this process of becoming holy. Sanctification is, according to Samuel Rutherford, the 'stormy north side of Christ'. 'Our pride', he says, 'needs winter weather to rot it'. Sanctification was the great emphasis of the Puritans, just as Justification had been that of Luther and the Reformers.

The Puritans of the Westminster Assembly defined Sanctification in this way: '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' (Shorter Catechism A. 35).

Several things need to be noticed in this fine definition:

1. Sanctification is a life-long process.
2. It is a progressive work, in which the believer grows in holiness.
3. Each particular Christian is at a different stage of this process, so that some are more advanced in holiness than others.

In the light of the fact that God loves holiness and commands us to be holy, it is one of the great duties

of the believer to cooperate with God's Spirit in this process of becoming sanctified.

In the New Birth we do not cooperate, but are entirely passive, since the New Birth is a creative act of God. By this act the whole soul is renewed in the image of God. From hating God, as previously we did, we now love God and desire to please Him. All five faculties of the soul now become active in the believer: mind, will-power, affections, conscience and memory.

The instinct of a newly-born person is to wish to live in fellowship with God, to enjoy God's love and to aim at God's glory. This we are to do by our style of life and by our habits, words and total behaviour. The justified and converted sinner is now a 'new creature' in Christ.

Therefore, in this process of Sanctification, we are called on to co-operate with God: 'work out your own salvation with fear and trembling' (Phil.2:12). A powerful motive is given to us to do so: 'For it is God which worketh in you' (Phil.2:13). Rabbi Duncan well defined for us the nature of Sanctification: 'It is all the work of God, and all the work of man'. We must work at it.

Mistakes are made by some when they try to understand this subject. One mistake is to suppose that a Christian may become perfect in this life. This is an error. The problem the believer has is that there is an opposing force in his soul which frustrates his desire for perfection. We refer to this opposing force of the soul as 'indwelling sin'. It is in every one of the five faculties.

The very best Christian is in this life imperfect in Sanctification. Sadly, we see that King David could make a grievous mistake even at a mature stage of life. Peter too could deny his Lord whom he truly loved. And Paul had to confess: 'The good that I would I do not; but the evil that I would not, that I do' (Rom.7:19).

This honest assessment of our progress in personal holiness must be that of every believer so long as he is in this life. Complete moral and spiritual perfection, however, is given to the Christian in the instant of death. In the moment of physical death the true believer will be perfectly and eternally sanctified and so fitted for life in glory.

To make progress in Sanctification is absolutely impossible before the New Birth. This was the classic mistake of the Pharisees of Christ's day. They foolishly imagined that they could live a holy life by strictly conforming to man-made rules. But Christ exposed their error repeatedly: 'A good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit' (Luke 6:43). We cannot make ourselves holy; but after God has made us holy at our New Birth we must seek to advance in godliness.

Sadly, this same mistake is made by monks and nuns and other devout persons, who endeavour after holiness while as yet they have not been converted by the re-creative act of God, which we call the New Birth.

A further mistake concerning Sanctification is made by some evangelical Christians who believe that God lowers the standard of holiness for His people after conversion. The name we give to this is New Covenant Theology. The mistake is the failure to see that God requires nothing short of perfection from all mankind, whether believers or not. Since God is absolutely just and holy He cannot require of us anything less than absolute moral perfection.

To make this clear to believers, Jesus has stated: 'Think not that I am come to destroy the law... Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law...' (Mt.5:17-18).

God requires of all mankind absolute and total conformity to His Moral Law, summed up in the Ten Commandments. The unbeliever cannot keep God's commandments and, unless he repents and believes in Christ, he will suffer eternal punishment for his disobedience. The true Christian cannot perfectly keep God's commandments, but because he is justified by the imputation to him of Christ's righteousness he will be forgiven his sins.

The temptation for the Christian is to suppose that God requires less of him than a total obedience to the Moral Law, the Ten Commandments. But this is the error which Christ corrects in the above reference to Matthew 5:17-18.

There is only one standard laid down by God for Christian and non-Christian: 'Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect' (Mt.5:48). Again the Word of God declares: 'For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all' (James 2:10). It is our duty as Christians to aim for nothing less than perfection in all we do, say or think. We must not excuse our shortcomings but rather bemoan them, as Paul does: 'O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' (Rom.7:24). BB Warfield defines the true biblical attitude of the believer in these words: 'The Reformers represented the Christian life as a life of continuous dissatisfaction with self, and of continuous looking afresh to Christ as the ground of all our hope'. We are sorry to be so far from perfect; but we rejoice that Jesus our Saviour is perfect – and will in the end make us perfect too. This is the balanced attitude to holiness we are to take in this life. It reminds us that sin is still sin, even in the very best of believers. A time will never come when we shall not need the blessed Lord Christ as our perfect righteousness.

How then are we to look at God's dealings with the believer when he, or she, sins? God will never punish the Christian; but He may well chasten him for sin. Punishment is judicial; chastisement is fatherly discipline. If we wish to avoid chastisement we must take seriously the call to mortify sin and to strive after perfection.

The mistake at the root of New Covenant teaching is to suppose that the Ten Commandments are the 'old covenant made with Israel at Sinai and with no other'. The doctrine we are to hold to is this: 'The Christian is not under the Ten Commandments as a Covenant but as a Rule of Life'. The justification for this doctrine is to be found clearly in Romans 7, where Paul explains that at our New Birth we are divorced from the Moral Law as a Covenant but are, nevertheless, bound in conscience to adopt the Ten Commandments as our Christian Rule of Life. We are not, as believers, obliged to keep the Ten Commandments in order to obtain salvation; but we are, as those who are saved, obliged to keep these Commandments out of love and gratitude to God, whose Law they are. So Christ tells us: 'If ye love me, keep my commandments' (John 14:15).

In short, then, our task as Christians is to work hard to govern our thoughts, words and deeds so that they conform to God's law: to love God above all, and our neighbour as ourself. The immature believer may at first think this an easy task. But as he matures he will realise, as he did not previously, that his whole way of life is deeply influenced by his own depravity, concupiscence, pride and unbelief. As he matures he learns to trust himself less and, now painfully aware of his inconsistencies, to cry out to God for help.

The Apostle Peter and Judas Iscariot both sinned. But

there is a world of difference between them. Peter sinned as a born-again and a justified man. Judas sinned as a godless hypocrite. Both lamented over their own actions. But Peter's sin was pardoned for Christ's sake, whereas Judas' sin, being that of an unjustified man, is still being punished in hell – and will be to all eternity.

Because the believer is in union with Christ the Holy Spirit gives him enabling grace. 'Sin shall not have dominion' over him' (Rom.6:14). Even so, the believer's duty is to give diligence to grow in every virtue and in every good habit of life. Two things which the Christian must learn to do are to put to death all bad actions, and to practise all that is good. The terms for this are Mortification (putting to death) and Vivification (stirring into life). The simple illustration is that of the good gardener. He must do these two things: FEED and WEED. So must we as God's people.

Vitally important to Sanctification are these good habits: regular secret prayer, Bible study and meditation, reading good Christian books, fellowship with other believers, self-examination, and a diligent use of the Sabbath Day. Our generation very much needs to see good examples of godly believers who take the duties of Sanctification seriously. All believers are equally justified, but they are not all equally sanctified. God will bless the careful Christian, who will get his reward either in this life, or in the next - or in BOTH.

Lessons from Twentieth Century Free Church History Part I

Rev John W Keddie



One of the lessons of Bible history is that the church should in every age learn from the Lord's dealings in the past (eg 1Cor.10:1-13). This is also true of later church history. When we consider, therefore, the history of the Free Church of Scotland in the twentieth century the question inevitably arises: What lessons do we learn from its history? This will be very challenging and humbling. Invariably it will also be debatable. But every church on earth is flawed and is challenged to walk more consistently by the Word of God. It is therefore important to be honest if lessons are to be learned so that that church may have a future and a hope in compliance with the divine will and not

experience the removal of the candlestick (Rev.2:5; 3:16). Though Christ is King and Head in His church, and He is building His church so that the gates of hell will not prevail against it (Matthew 16:18), no visible church has an assured right of continuance, apart from faithfulness to the Lord and blessing from the Lord.

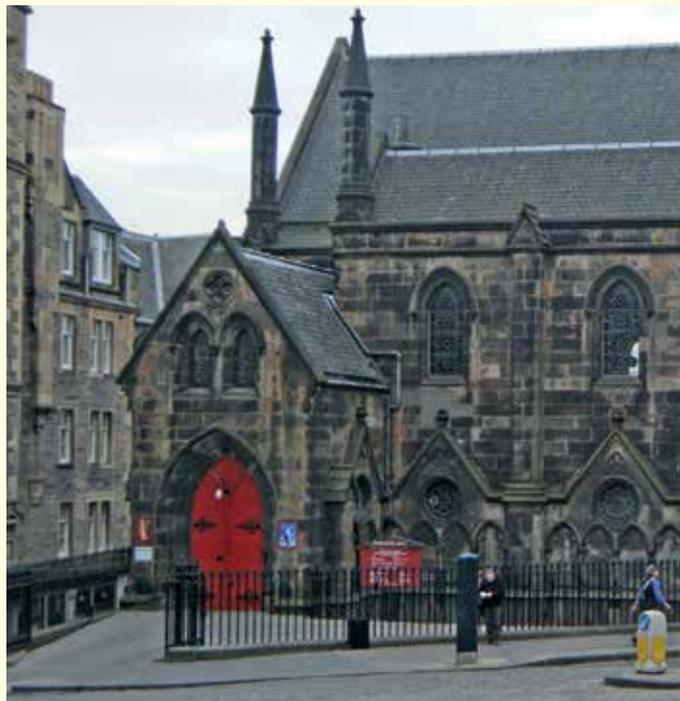
In considering the history of the Free Church of Scotland in the twentieth century the following may be suggested as important lessons to be learned:

(1) The authority of Scripture as the Word of God is crucial to the well-being of the church.

A feature of the Free Church in the latter part of the

19th century was the widespread acceptance of a biblical criticism that effectively undermined the authority of Scripture. This had a telling legacy for the 20th century in terms of the mainline churches' changeable position in theology and worship, in which there was an increasing tendency to modify doctrine and practice in line with prevailing trends of thought and morals in the secularising society around. This was not necessarily appreciated at the time, though it was in essence anticipated, ironically, by an early proponent of the false theology, a Free Churchman, Marcus Dods (1834-1909): 'I wish I could live as a spectator through the next generation to see what they are going to make of things. There will be a grand turn up in matters theological, and the churches won't know themselves fifty years hence. It is to be hoped some little rag of faith may be left when all's done. For my own part I am sometimes entirely under water and see no sky at all'. The truth is that very little of a 'rag of faith' has survived in Scottish church life. The legacy of the 'newer criticism' was far-reaching and destructive to the strength and conviction of evangelical faith, by which alone a vital Christianity can prosper.

A feature of the small Free Church body which continued after the union of 1900 was a recovered commitment or restatement of the old orthodoxy based upon the infallibility and inerrancy of Scripture as the Word of God. This, indeed, was evident in a renewed concern for the application of a 'regulative principle' in worship in which the use only of inspired materials of praise without instrumental accompaniment was reinstated, though not without its struggles. It was also evident in the concern to maintain the perpetuity of the moral law, not least in a conscientious regard for the sanctity of the Lord's day as the Christian Sabbath. The Free Church therefore stood for the continuity of the old school orthodoxy



including an unapologetic concern for consistent Bible doctrine and practice as traditionally maintained in what were considered to be the best days of the Reformed church in Scotland. As David Lloyd George put it in 1918 after observing a Free Church General Assembly: 'these people are conserving something that ought to be conserved, whatever it be'.

From its subordinate standards and principles the church ought to be unswerving and be concerned to strengthen the things that remain that are ready to die (Rev.3:2).

(2) Minority opinion in church matters is not to be discounted simply because it stands apart from a majority consensus.

A perceived problem with the smaller conservative Presbyterians in the 20th century is the fact that they are such a 'remnant'. The majority consensus must surely have far greater claims to being true representatives of Christ's church in the nation, it may be thought. The fact of the dominance in such bodies of a liberal or neo-orthodox theology which denies the infallibility of the Bible and the relevance of the older Confessions is in fact a crucial factor in assessing the situation of the churches in the 20th Century, which saw unprecedented declension within the nation. Naturally this makes life difficult for the smaller conservative churches. The understanding of Christianity in the nation is coloured by a broad church model in which the necessity of the new birth is not emphasised and the question of the place of the Bible and prayer in people's lives is diminished and even the exclusiveness of Christ as Saviour is so often tacitly denied. Churches may be a remnant and in so far as they are answerable to Christ and faithful to Christ they should be unashamed in their distinctness. Not that, of itself, such 'isolation' is pleasant or automatically right. However, there is ample evidence in the Old and New Testaments indicative that the true church was often comprised of small remnants. This may be a distinct encouragement to smaller faithful churches. After all it may be that whilst a remnant is faithful, the Lord's displeasure against a generation is such that He refuses to bless, despite the presence of a Noah or a Daniel or a Job (cf. Ezek. 14:12ff).

At the same time there ought always to be humility and catholicity in outlook. It will be recognized that the 'remnant' is not to be identified with any particular denomination and will no doubt include those of the major liberal mixed denominations who remain faithful to the corpus of the faith. This is evident, for example, in the case of the Church in Sardis which by Christ's judgement was 'dead' and yet there were 'a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments' (Rev.3:4) and they are encouraged to 'be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die' (v2).

Having said this, those who compromise in 'mixed'

denominations often capitulate to prevailing liberal trends against their professed principles in the interests of maintaining some sort of 'peace'. Any such peace, however, is a dangerous one. Besides this there is the impact of theological education. If the theological education of ministers is formally liberal or modernist, there will inevitably be deficiencies in the preparation of men for the ministry which are difficult to redress. Whilst not glorying in smallness, the gospel-faithful smaller churches need not be embarrassed by their minority position as they self-consciously adhere to their historical and biblical foundations.

(3) There ought to be a desire for church unity, albeit on the basis of Biblical principle and not on a 'broad church' platform.

The unions of 1900 (Free Church and United Presbyterian Church, to form the United Free Church) and 1929 (United Free and Church of Scotland) were conducted on the basis of a reduced understanding of and commitment to the formerly accepted doctrinal standards. This was a feature of the 'ecumenical age' which received impetus from a Missionary Conference held in Edinburgh in 1910 and the rise of diffuse ecumenical bodies throughout the century. The compromising lowest-common-denominator position found its fullest expression in the formation of the World Council of Churches in 1948. The Christianity espoused was diffuse and inclusive, and not a little politically motivated from the left. However, because such a preoccupation with ecumenicity has been worked out on the basis of compromises of truth rather than strict Biblical principle does not mean that the smaller conservative,

theologically distinct denominations are exempt from working at church unions with other truly like-minded churches. For the smaller conservative church this will present two differing issues:

(a) On the one hand there will be those other churches whose background and doctrine and practice are to all intents and purposes identical; and,

(b) On the other hand there will be Christian bodies, independent churches or churches of the same or similar order which, however, differ markedly on some principle or other.

The justification for a division on the basis of the departure of the main body from fundamental principles in relation to its Confession and/or worship is one thing. What of the situation where churches fail to get together in cases where there are on the face of it no such hindrances to union? This was and remains a challenge facing the smaller Presbyterian denominations. Their continued separation seems to perpetuate unnecessary multiplication of ministries with the attendant need for the maintenance of separate properties and finances to sustain such ministries. This does not appear to be good Christian stewardship, to put it mildly. It has also had the unfortunate result of providing ready excuses for people not to take the smaller churches seriously, seeing them, perhaps unfairly, as being more interested in scrapping than putting on a united front in the face of dire declension.

The smaller conservative Reformed churches should have a concern for consolidation rather than continuing fragmentation.

To be continued.



All Age Holiday

Derick Gillies

Booking the next All Age Holiday is usually done two weeks after the previous one finishes. However when I attempted to book last year I was told that the dates we had had for the last seven years had now been given to another group. I offered to change the dates but was told no other date around that time would be available due to the Commonwealth Games and Celtic Connections. I enquired about July/August 2015 but was

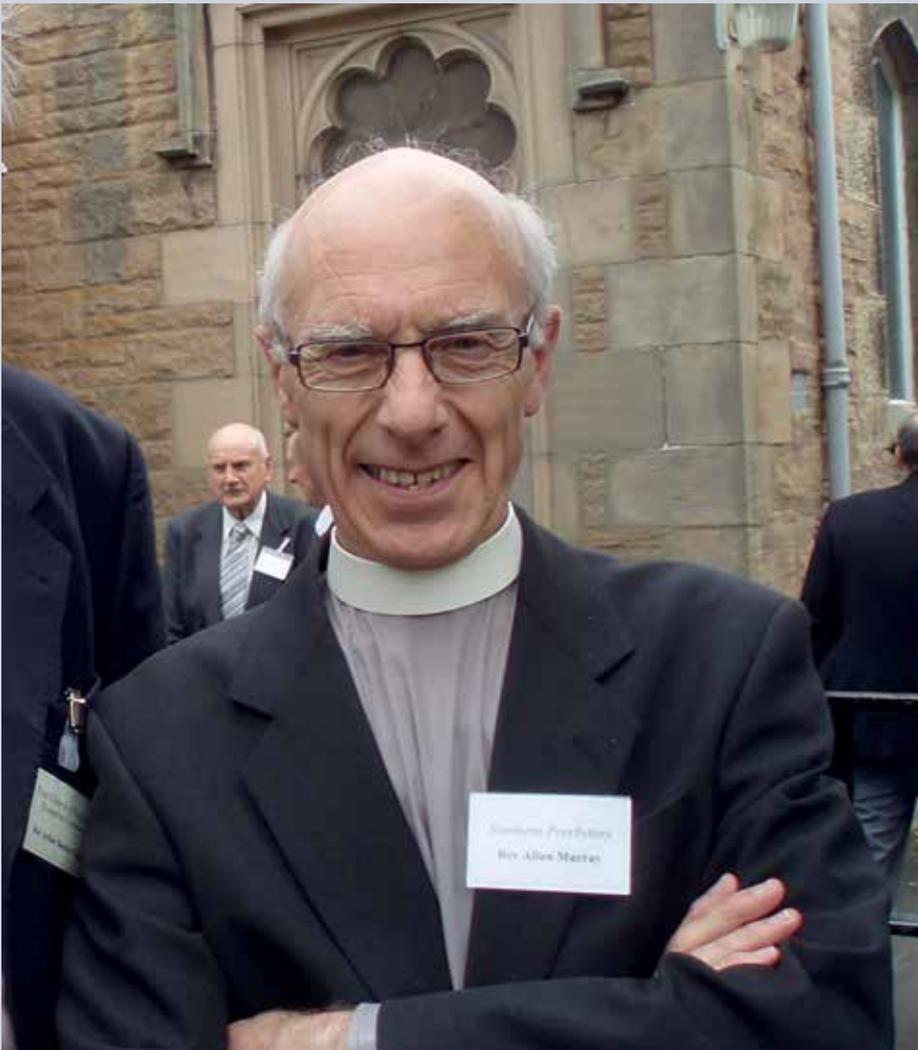
surprisingly told that they decide bookings in March of the same year, so could not tell me, and this after having already decided a year in advance that we could not get a booking for July/August 2014.

A lot of time has gone into searching for an alternative place. In January I got an email saying that due to a cancelation, dates had become available at the Christian Windmill Centre in Arbroath. It will fit our needs. Mrs I McQueer & Mrs D Allan have kindly agreed to take care of the catering. Rev Alasdair Macleod has agreed to give talks on 'Daniel: The Believer in a Pagan Society'. The dates are Monday 21st July to Friday 26th July. For booking and further details please contact myself, email: derickandmaryanne@hotmail.co.uk or phone Maryanne: 07795110743.

Also I would like to make a correction to the January Witness. Mr Sam Semmens (Edinburgh) wrote the article on the 2013 All Age Holiday. When I sent it to Mr Macleod, the editor, I omitted his name and he inserted mine.



News



New Moderator: Rev Allan Murray

Report by Rev John MacLeod

The Moderator-designate for the 2014 General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing) is Rev Allan Murray, until recently the minister of the Free Church Continuing congregation of Brora.

Mr Murray was born in the village of Shawbost in the Isle of Lewis in 1938. He was educated in Shawbost, Stornoway and Glasgow University, where he graduated in Dentistry. He worked for a short time in Bathgate, West Lothian, where he

attended Bathgate Baptist Church where the Gospel was preached in simple, plain terms and with much urgency. There, Mr Murray came under strong convictions through the influence of the Spirit of God and was enabled to close in with Christ. This meant massive changes in lifestyle and worldview, and he is thankful to God for bringing him from such darkness to the light of the gospel.

After moving to Glasgow he met his wife, Maureen. They have five of a family, now mostly spread around the world. Having spent twenty-three enjoyable years in general dental practice, Mr Murray felt called to study for the ministry. He sold his practice and studied at the Free Church College, Edinburgh for three years and then in 1988 accepted a call to the charge of Rogart and Scourie.

When the division took place in the Free Church in January 2000, Mr Murray adhered to the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing) and ministered to a congregation meeting in Brora, and, until 2008, to two other small groups meeting in Scourie and Lochinver. Mr Murray retired from the charge of Brora in November 2013, but continues to live in Brora, and still worships with the Brora congregation.

Same-sex 'Marriage' Approved

Rev David Blunt

The vote in the Scottish Parliament on the Marriage and Civil

Desk



Partnership Bill was no surprise. At Stage I last November the vote was 98 to 15 in favour and at the third and final stage on 4th February it was little different at 105 to 18. Various attempts to amend the legislation by strengthening safeguards for those who cannot in good conscience agree with same-sex 'marriage' were heavily defeated. There was applause in the chamber as the result was announced (surely inappropriate for any legislature) and celebrations of a distasteful kind took place outside the Parliament building.

There is no point in hiding from the sad reality which led to this outcome. The vote reflects the fact that our elected representatives, almost without exception, are not Christians in any meaningful sense of the term. They do not believe the Bible and they do not love the Lord Jesus Christ. Many of them do not even acknowledge the existence of God. In their liberal attitudes and enthusiasm for 'progressive' ideas they are doubtless ahead of society as a whole but perhaps not by so much as we would like to think: Scotland is changing and not for the better.

It is certainly a remarkable thing that a nation to which God has granted such a wonderful gospel heritage should appear so determined to forsake it. For many years now Scotland has been like profane Esau, desiring a carnal portion rather than a spiritual one (Heb. 12:16). Now she has gone a step further, embracing sin of a gross kind and rejoicing over

it. In passing this legislation Scotland is attempting to do the impossible: to dignify a relationship based on vile affections by placing it on the same level as the union of marriage. She is attempting to do this despite the clear teaching and solemn warnings of Holy Scripture.

In apportioning blame for the tragedy of same-sex marriage we must add to our politicians those craven churchmen who rather than make a stand for the Lord have gone out of their way to appease the homosexual lobby for fear of being labelled 'homophobic'. The national Church in particular has compromised itself with its 'facing-both-ways' stance – affirming the historic doctrine and practice on sexuality but permitting Kirk Sessions to depart from it. If the Church of Scotland can allow individuals who are in same-sex relationships into the ranks of her ministry then how can it maintain that such relationships are wrong for the rest of the population? There is no point in trying to meet the homosexual lobby halfway by supporting civil partnerships but not same-sex marriage: that lobby will not be placated until, in league with others, it has abolished our Christian culture. We are saying to the Lord as a people, 'Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways' (Job 21:14).

We agree with a Free Presbyterian minister who wrote to all MSPs: 'The Marriage and Civil Partnership (Scotland) Bill is highly immoral, entirely unnatural, constitutionally

illegal, and absurdly irrational.... This legislation will certainly bring spiritual if not temporal judgments on Scotland if passed'. Let us remember that the worst judgment is not when gales and floods are sent upon us; it is when God simply *leaves us to ourselves*.

Can this wicked legislation be overturned? Yes, of course! Not by man but by the Lord, for whom nothing is too hard. We must continue raising our voice and plead more earnestly with God to help us in all our national sinfulness – before it is too late for our land. Let us not fail in our holy calling.

Church of England forbid blessing gay Marriage

Bishops in the Church of England have issued new guidance warning clergy they should not bless couples in same-sex marriages, after the idea was recommended in an internal report last year. The House of Bishops on 15th February was clarifying the Church's response to new legislation allowing gay marriage in England and Wales. 'Services of blessing should not be provided. Clergy should respond pastorally and sensitively in other ways', said the guidance, according to the AFP news agency.

The same-sex marriage law bans the established Churches of England and Wales - which believe marriage can only officially take place between a man and a woman - from conducting ceremonies. But a report last year on the Church's policy on sexuality,

commissioned by the House of Bishops, said that in some circumstances a priest 'should be free to mark the formation of a permanent same-sex relationship in a public service', without any obligation to do so. In their guidance, the bishops also said that people in a same-sex marriage should not be ordained as bishops, priests and deacons, nor should those in the ministry enter gay marriage.

We are glad that the Church of England has taken this stand while sadly the Church of Scotland has not.

No Smacking ban in Wales

Christian Institute

An amendment to ban smacking was rejected by the Welsh Assembly by 39 votes to 14. The defeat means that the defence of 'reasonable punishment' will still stand in law. Deputy Minister Gwenda Thomas argued that the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Bill was not the 'correct Bill for this matter'. During the debate Thomas said the Welsh Government would, however, consider the issue again before the 2016 Assembly election.

Critics of the amendment argue a ban would criminalise loving parents simply seeking to discipline their children. Assembly Members (AMs) from the Labour, Conservative and Lib Dem parties voted against the ban. Tory AM Darren Millar said there was 'an obvious difference between discipline and abuse'.

Two years ago a *Mail on Sunday* public survey showed that nearly two thirds of the British public supported a parent's right to smack.

Burma (Myanmar) – Ethnic Cleansing of Christian Kachin

E Kendal

Behind a smokescreen of political 'reform', the Burmese Army is continuing its campaign of ethnic cleansing in Kachin State. The Christian Kachin have long resisted the Burman Buddhist regime's brutal dictatorship. Whilst the Kachin seek autonomy so they can freely maintain their culture, the regime wants full control so it can exploit the Kachin's resource-rich lands. The extreme military violence meted out against the Kachin is motivated by greed and fuelled by State-sanctioned racial and religious hatred. Fighting rages in south Kachin State where the Burma Army is attacking village after village, employing heavy artillery, rape and torture, kidnapping villagers and looting. The Kachin are traumatised, the regime controls the aid supplies and the West appears to have abandoned them for economic gain. Please pray for Burma and its Church.

Scottish Reformed Conference

The 25th Scottish Reformed Conference will be held in Hamilton College School, Bothwell Road, Hamilton on Saturday the 10th of May. Registration opens at 9.15am, with cost of entry being £5 for adults/ £4 for students / free for 17s and under (It is possible to book

in advance on-line at www.scottishreformedconference.org). Tea or coffee is available at registration time. People are expected to bring with them their own packed lunch. Tea, coffee and biscuits are provided free at morning break and lunchtime.

The programme is as follows: Session 1 begins 10am-11.15am, Dr Sinclair Ferguson, Break (11.15am - 12 noon), Session 2 begins 12 noon - 1.15pm, Rev David Carmichael, Lunch (1.15-2.15pm) and Session 3 begins 2.15-3.30pm, Dr Sinclair Ferguson. On the day there will be an excellent book stall available offering good prices and special deals. Children are welcome at the conference and will have their own fun and stimulating programme. This programme caters for an age range of baby/toddler - 11 years of age.

The Scottish Reformed Conference is an inter-denominational gathering committed to the promoting of quality, Reformed Biblical exposition and to the fostering and encouraging of rich, spiritual fellowship among Bible believing men and women of Scotland.

Fuller details relating to the conference are available at www.scottishreformedconference.org.

North Korea Persecution

E Kendal

The Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea released its Report on 17 February. It documents 'a wide array of crimes against humanity' and details 'unspeakable atrocities' and concludes: 'The gravity, scale and nature of these violations reveal a State that does not have any parallel in the contemporary world'. As noted in the report: 'The State considers the spread of Christianity a particularly serious threat, since it challenges ideologically the official personality cult and provides a platform for social and political organisation and interaction outside the realm of the State'. Apart from the few organised State-controlled churches, Christians are prohibited from practising their religion and are persecuted. Tens of thousands of Christians struggle to survive in labour camps where they endure starvation, hard labour and unparalleled systematic cruelty.



Groomed to rule, Kim Jong-un assumed power after his father ('Dear Leader' Kim Jong-il) died in December 2011. At his father's funeral, Kim Jong-un accompanied his father's casket along with the 'Gang of Seven' - an inner circle of elites tasked with guiding and mentoring the young ruler. By the end of 2013, four of the seven had been purged and one demoted. Kim Jong-un is consolidating power and establishing a new order that he hopes will have a better chance of holding on to power through the challenging times ahead.

Kim, who did his secondary schooling in Switzerland, and his younger clique know that the information seeping in will generate anger and dissent as North Korea's impoverished masses become aware of their plight relative to the outside world. So in a race against time the regime is implementing agricultural and economic reforms designed to raise the living standards of ordinary Koreans. The regime is also easing the way for foreign investment and undertaking major infrastructure projects - highways, theme parks and resorts - designed to make North Korea more attractive to North Koreans as well as to Chinese tourists. It is a delicate balancing act, for Kim knows that while things have to change, change is incredibly risky.

It is commendable that the UN report is shining a spotlight on the horrific situation inside North Korea. However, the situation needs to be handled with great care and wisdom rather than belligerently. For example, if too much pressure is applied or if 'hostile forces' use the report to fan the flames of revolution for their own political, economic and geo-strategic ends, then repression could escalate to unprecedented levels or the state descend into a widespread bloodbath. Neither would benefit the church in North Korea.

Please pray that God will hear the prayers and cries of his people and bring deliverance and freedom to his long-suffering church in North Korea: 'Lord, in thy mercy give wisdom to fools and patience to hot heads; repentance to persecutors and grace to victims; so that thy church might be spared further calamity and delivered from her adversity to rise as light to overcome darkness'.

Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill

Christian Institute

SNP ministers are to face legal action over their controversial 'named person' plans which were passed at Holyrood in a final vote on 19th February. The Christian Institute says the legislation contravenes human rights laws by interfering with family life, and has announced plans to launch a judicial review against it. Colin Hart, Director of the Institute, said: 'We have no option but to challenge this illegal law all the way. This is a dreadful extension of the state's tentacles into family life. It is clear this bill breaches European rules through its attack on the family. This is Big Brother politics writ large. Ordinary Scots should be very afraid'.



Liz Smith MSP

Under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill, the NHS would appoint a health worker to be the named person for every child up to the age of five, after which responsibility passes to local councils, with teachers likely to take over the role. The state-employed named person would be able to share information with a wide range of public authorities and may intervene without parental consent.

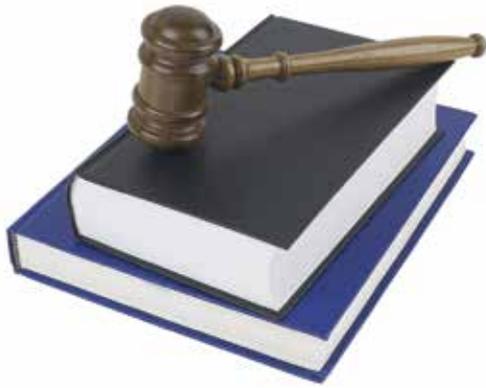
The Christian Institute received a legal opinion from Aidan O'Neill QC which will form the basis of the appeal. Mr O'Neill said the named person would have powers that 'cut across' the rights of parents. He warned that the plans may not be compatible with the European Convention on Human Rights, which says the state should respect 'private and family life'.

Conservative MSP Liz Smith tabled amendments to the Bill in order to reduce the scope of the named person plans - these were defeated by MSPs. Smith said: 'Forcing all young people to have a named person will, inevitably, dilute the resources available for our most vulnerable children'.

The Royal College of Nursing has raised concerns about the scheme, as it would require the recruitment and training of 450 new health visitors. The group warned that without extra funding the government 'will be setting health visitors up to fail', as there are not enough health visitors currently in place 'to meet even the needs of their existing caseloads'.

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill was passed by 103 votes to 0, with 15 abstentions after the final debate.

It is shocking that not one member of parliament voted against this Bill.



Books

Prepared by Grace for Grace **The Puritans on God's ordinary way of leading sinners to Christ**

Joel Beeke and Paul M Smalley
Reformed Heritage Books
pbk, 297pp, £15.10

I believe that this is a very useful and helpful book. Indeed I would say it is the most important book that I have read for a long time. It was so good that when I finished reading it for the first time I immediately started reading it again, which is very unusual for me.

Forty years ago when I studied for my Masters degree at Westminster Theological Seminary I did a course that covered 'Preparationism' in the Puritans. At that time the received truth was that some of the Puritans erred by teaching that you had to prepare yourself for conversion before you could be saved and that this was something you could do yourself. The course drew heavily from the writings of Perry Miller and Norman Pettit, both liberal scholars but regarded as experts on the Puritans. My teacher was Dr Clair Davis. Interestingly this same Dr Davis is quoted on the back cover of the book to the following effect: 'Prepared by Grace for Grace is a truly remarkable book. Many have referred to the Puritan "preparation for grace", but hardly at all with the serious scholarly attention given to the original sermons and writings. But here is finally a study that is both thorough and fair'. It seems that Dr Davis' understanding of the Puritans has changed.

The problem was that Miller and Pettit read some Puritan writers condemning preparation for conversion and others

commending it and thought that the Puritans were divided on the issue. Beeke and Smalley by careful study of many Puritan works show that the preparation which the Puritans condemned was Roman Catholic preparation which teaches that a man can prepare in such a way as to earn God's grace and to obtain his own salvation. Beeke and Smalley show that all the Puritans condemned this as heresy. God's saving grace cannot be earned or merited. However all Puritans also believed that God by His grace prepares all the sinners He is saving for salvation. Indeed the book shows that all orthodox writers from Augustine to the Reformers, Luther and Calvin, and on through the Puritan times in Britain, on the Continent and in New England, on till the days of Jonathan Edwards taught that preparation was God's way of working. But the important point to notice is that it is preparation by grace and not by human works or generated by the decision of the unregenerate heart. Man by nature is dead in trespasses and sins and can do nothing to make himself acceptable to God.

The fascinating thing about this book is the way it traces the work of God in the soul of man. Sibbes writes for example that a sound and lasting conversion to Christ requires 'the lash of the law'. Rogers writes that most people are no more moved by the law than birds are frightened by a familiar scarecrow, but some hear God's 'thundering voice, by His law arraiging men for their sins: which is no less fearful to them than the roaring of a lion'.

Perkins is dealt with at length. He argues that it is wrong to say that sinners can do nothing at all to prepare



for conversion. 'He said the natural and corrupt will could still move people to intellectual study, civic virtue, morality, and outward religious actions such as listening to the Scriptures and discussing them. After all, humanity still possess a conscience by which they could apply God's law to themselves and experience guilt'... Perkins said that just as the body of the infant develops in stages within a mother's womb, so the Holy Spirit works faith in the soul "not suddenly but by certain steps and degrees". He begins by enlightening the mind, first "with a further knowledge of the law than nature can afford", and, second, "to understand and consider seriously" Christ and His grace. Then the Holy Spirit inflames the will to "hunger after Christ" and to pray for reconciliation with God. This weak faith then grows and develops into the sealing of the heart with "a lively and plentiful assurance".

I could go on at length quoting from this fascinating book but I will leave you to read it yourself. It is not the easiest book to read but I believe ministers and intelligent lay people will find much profit from it as they seek to understand how God works in the soul of man. Many Puritan writers are studied in depth as are the writings of Jonathan Edwards on the subject. This book will help you in experimental preaching.

I will close this review by quoting the views of Edwards, who carefully distinguishes between common preparatory operations of the Spirit and His saving operations. 'The convictions of natural men come when the Spirit assists the natural principles of conscience and self-love in them, whereas saving grace infuses and then excites supernatural principles. In the regenerate alone the Spirit shares His own nature of "divine love"'.
Rev William Macleod

Scottish Reformation Society Historical Journal, vol. 4

Douglas Somerset (ed.)

Scottish Reformation Society, pbk, 369pp, £9.95

The latest number of the Historical Journal opens with two substantial papers by Douglas Somerset giving a detailed account of the progress of the Reformation in Aberdeen during the crucial years 1559 and 1560. These are serious pieces of historical research, revealing in the footnotes a remarkably thorough acquaintance with the primary and secondary literature and in the text a careful sifting of the evidence to build a robust argument. This argument contends that, contrary to the claims of many professional academics, (though in agreement with my own former history professor, James Kirk of Glasgow University) the Reformation did not have to be forcibly imposed on the city of Aberdeen but rather was

founded on substantial indigenous support and faced little in the way of Romanist opposition.

Somerset marshals evidence that there was solid public support for the cause of Reformation, broadly considered: seen, for example, in the election of a new council of bailies in October 1559, all of whom were Protestants. Though there was much controversy, he shows that there is very little evidence of robust defence of Romanism in Aberdeen and, in fact, on the rare occasion when this was undertaken, as against the forcible reforming of the institutions of Old Aberdeen by a small number of staff and students of King's College, the resistance was successful in preventing the destruction of idolatrous images. This suggests that much could have been done to protect the buildings and institutions of Romanism, had there only been the popular support for this position. Somerset draws a refreshingly realistic conclusion: that Aberdeen in 1559-60 was, in fact, made up not of Protestant and Romanist parties, but mainly of notional Protestants, both zealous and nominal, wrestling with the practicalities of Reformation, rather than questioning its necessity, wrangling more over property and power than over doctrine.

The third chapter is drawn from the massive researches of Jeffrey Stephen into the post-Revolution Settlement Church of Scotland. It addresses particularly the work of the two Commissions for Visitations that oversaw the restoration of Presbyterian polity and dealt with the extant Episcopal clergy. Stephen contends, on the basis of a careful and well-researched account, that criticisms of these Commissions for pursuing a supposedly vindictive policy of persecution against the Episcopalians are entirely misplaced. In fact, the Commissions were very ready to admit as Presbyterian ministers those willing to conform to Presbyterianism and to the Confession, and to leave in possession of their privileges those, still committed to Episcopal principles, who would swear the Oath of Allegiance to William and Mary. If anything, given subsequent history, the Commissions may even have been somewhat lax in their policy, appearing to accept professions of conversion to Presbyterian principle on the part of Episcopal curates largely at face value.

Roy Middleton addresses the difficult case of Jonathan Ranken Anderson, a Free Church minister in Glasgow who was eventually disciplined in 1852 after a protracted dispute with the majority of his kirk session. Anderson's significance for Middleton lies in the fact that the independent congregation that he set up after leaving the Free Church would, many years later, join the incipient Free Presbyterian Church, eventually being amalgamated into St Jude's. Consequently, Anderson has come to be highly regarded as something of an FP forebear. Middleton stresses that his approach is 'impartial' and indeed he goes out of his way to place the most sympathetic construction possible on Anderson's

actions, but this is still unmistakably a debunking exercise. Anderson's dispute is shown to originate in his animus against John Milne of Perth, a minister 'of the Bonar-McCheyne school', and one still regarded to this day as emblematic of godliness (his biography, for example, still being in print from the Banner of Truth). It is hard to understand the basis for Anderson's conviction that Milne, and his friends Arnot and Somerville, were unregenerate false teachers, and it is to be hoped that the promised follow-up article on Anderson's career after leaving the Free Church will provide more analysis of this crucial point.

As it is, the article painstakingly follows the course of events as Anderson abuses his pulpit privileges, his management of the employment of catechists, and his kirk session minutes to excoriate those of his elders who disagree with his assessment of Milne, apparently regarding them as also unregenerate men in consequence. The article acquires a hideous fascination as Anderson's hubris develops further and further. Middleton has access both to Anderson's diary as well as to the case documents, and so is able to piece together the whole story, not least in showing what a tendentious account Anderson himself wrote of each successive development. All possibility of sympathy with Anderson would seem to be removed by a final twist, where once the case has at last reached Assembly level, Anderson proceeds to denounce the entire Committee that met with him to try to resolve the issue, including such giants

as Cunningham, Candlish and Moncrieff, as 'men of the world' (ie unconverted), and consequently announces his resignation from the Free Church.

If Anderson's story is a cautionary tale for ministers against spiritual pride, the final substantive paper, Archibald MacWhirter's account of the Anti-Burgher secessionists, serves the same function for denominational pride. These congregations refused to enter the United Original Secession Church in 1842, on the basis that the union did not embody their testimony of 1747 that swearing the burgh oath involved sin. It is hard to sympathise with this stance, given that the burgh oath was abolished in 1819. The subsequent history shows the folly of drawing legitimacy from an historical position, in this case a completely obsolete one, rather than from present evangelistic commitment to propagate Christ's Kingdom. The rhetoric of the Anti-Burghers is more of their 'Testimony' than of their Saviour. MacWhirter traces the tiny groupings through a series of acrimonious splits and long and painful and utterly predictable decline, until the meeting of the last splinter, which had been without a minister and surviving on read sermons since 1912, eventually ceased around 1986. MacWhirter's paper is reprinted from a 1944 publication, supplemented by further research in footnotes and appendices by Norman Campbell and Douglas Somerset. The Journal is well worth attention from those interested in Scottish Church history.

Rev Alasdair Macleod

OBITUARY

Rev Hugh M Ferrier
(11 June 1925 – 5 December 2013)

Hugh M Ferrier was born in Greenock on the 11th of June 1925 to Harris parents. He was the youngest of six children. He grew up under the ministry of the Rev G N M Collins, and professed saving faith in Christ in 1943 during the ministry of the Mr Collins' successor, the Rev John Murdo Macleod, who later became the Free Church of Scotland evangelist. He was converted at the age of seventeen through attending Barnard's Court Mission in Greenock. He was called up to military service in 1943 and served in the Royal Navy as a wireless telegraphist, firstly on a motor torpedo boat, and latterly on a cruiser until 1946. Sensing a call to the ministry, as he had left school early, he now began studying at Skerry's College, to obtain university entrance qualifications. In due course he

graduated from Edinburgh University and completed the Divinity course at the Free Church of Scotland College. He married Georgina (Georet) Cameron, daughter of the late Rev William Cameron, Resolis, in 1953.

He was ordained and inducted to Golspie Free Church in 1952, was called to Knockbain in 1960, to Partick (Crow Road), Glasgow in 1963 and to his final charge in Inverness Free North in 1975. He retired after a spell of ill health in 1990, but continued to preach until 2009. He was Moderator of the Free Church of Scotland Assembly in 1978.

Mr Ferrier's ministry was characterised always by efficiency, courtesy and faithfulness to his Lord and Master Jesus Christ. He was justly esteemed and appreciated as a very fine preacher by the congregations

whom he served lovingly over the many years of his service in the gospel. His gentle yet principled approach to all church issues led him to seek the way of peace where this was consistent with duty. In all his work he sought to lead others by love and kindness and to promote happiness among the dear people of God. His kindness and his affection were visible in his dealings with others on all occasions. When he stood firm it was for principle, and so that he might give an account to his Master with a good conscience. As a consequence Mr Ferrier was to all his colleagues an example of forbearance and good-natured friendliness. Pride and self-advancement were no part of his character. Rather his attitude to all was one of humility and gentleness, appropriate for one whose main task in life was to feed the flock of Christ.

Mr Ferrier suffered a major heart attack in 2009 and was unable to preach after this. As a consequence he suffered from degenerative heart failure till his death. He was cared for till the end by his wife who attended to him devotedly and was able to nurse him, with help from the care profession, right up to the end in their own home.

In the division in the Free Church, January 2000, he was one of the 22 ministers 'suspended' by the majority of the then Free Church and became a minister of the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing). During retirement he was an appreciative attender on the ministry of the Rev John Macleod, Duthil Dores, now retired, and on the ministry of the Rev Gavino Fioretti. Although unable to attend the ministry of the Rev Davide Ratti for reasons of health, he was always appreciative of Mr Ratti's visits and prayers, as he was of the visits and prayers of other brothers in Christ.

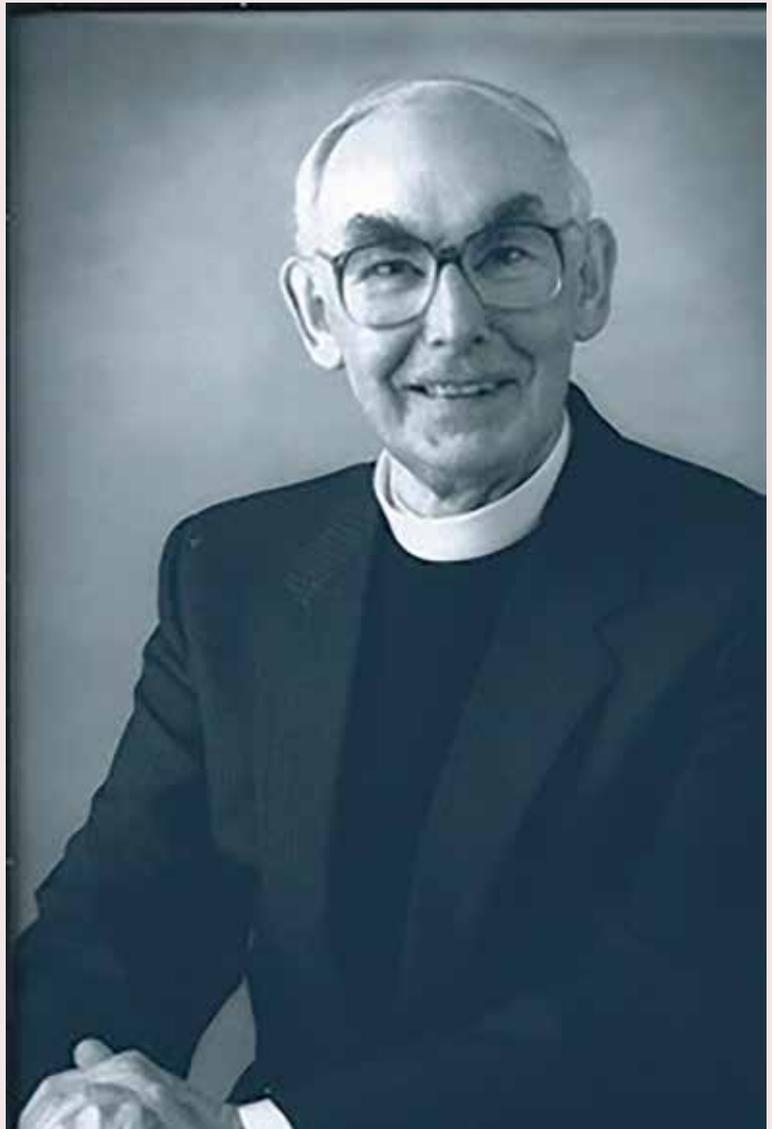
On the morning of the day of his death the Rev Hugh Ferrier found strength to pray at family worship. He asked God to be with us as we came to 'the valley of the shadow of death'. Later that morning the Rev John Angus Gillies visited and prayed with him, as one veteran pilgrim for another, as each was conscious that they were coming close to the Celestial City.

Mr Ferrier's death occurred on 5th December 2013 and the funeral was held in the Free North Church which he had served prior to his retirement.

Our sympathies are expressed to Mrs Ferrier, whose kindness and hospitality always made their home a place of welcome and warm Christian fellowship; and to all the other members of the family.

'Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them' (Revelation 14:13).

Rev Maurice Roberts



Additional Tribute from Mr Ferrier's Pastor

Although I did not know Mr Ferrier during his years as a minister it was a real privilege and encouragement for me to visit him in his own home from time to time. Everything I had heard about him and about his many years in the ministry became so real during those visits. His kind smile, his sincere questions, his wife's constant care for him, his children's and his grandchildren's respect and love for him were all very visible to me when I went to his home.

These features of his home life all pointed to a man who had lived his life faithfully for Christ both in the church and in the family.

I pray that many who will listen in time to come to Mr Ferrier's recorded sermons (which happily are now available) will find benefit from them, and that as they listen they will obey the calling of the Saviour to faith and service in this life.

Rev Davide Ratti (Dores)

Congregational Remittances - February 2014

CENTRAL BUILDING FUND YTD 2014	ORDINARY REMITTANCES			Outer Hebrides Presbytery				
	2014 Feb	2014 To Feb	2013 To Feb					
Presbytery of Inverness								
Aberdeen	0	1,300	2,600	0	1,631	6,492	3,551	
Duthil-Dores	0	1,272	2,491	50	1,200	2,375	2,375	
Inverness	0	2,000	4,000	0	3,800	3,800	3,600	
Kilmorack & Strathglass	0	2,000	3,400	0	790	1,875	1,550	
Total Inverness	0	6,572	12,491	345	600	1,200	2,000	
				786	6,809	13,117	13,148	
				Total Outer Hebrides	1,181	14,830	28,859	26,224
Northern Presbytery				Presbytery of Skye & Lochcarron				
Assynt & Scourie	86	549	549	0	3,358	3,358	1,500	
Brora	0	2,000	2,000	0	0	0	1,000	
Kiltearn	0	1,000	1,000	0	1,900	1,900	2,600	
Tarbat	0	1,500	3,500	80	1,350	2,500	300	
Total Northern	86	5,049	7,049	3,000	92	900	1,520	
				0	0	0	0	
				0	0	1,200	1,400	
				0	1,300	2,600	2,400	
Southern Presbytery				20	250	525	1,345	
Arran	115	282	1,226	Total Skye/Lochcarron	192	8,158	12,983	12,065
Ayr	0	800	1,800					
Dumfries	0	0	0	Total Congregations	1,574	42,891	78,858	68,830
Edinburgh	0	1,500	3,000					
Glasgow - Partick	0	2,000	4,000	Other Donations	207	5,764	8,482	2,625
Glasgow - Shettleston	0	1,800	3,800	Legacy	0	0	0	0
Glasgow - Knightswood	0	1,900	3,650	TOTAL	1,781	48,655	87,340	71,455
Rothsay	0	0	0	Including Gift Aid		0	0	0
Total Southern	115	8,282	17,476					

Update from Sri Lanka Mission

Rev S N Partheepan

Dear friends,

Our Triune God has guided us amazingly in this past year. It is always a pleasure to share what God has been doing in Sri Lanka for the furtherance of His Kingdom. Last year we faced so many, many problems in this part of God's vineyard where He has placed us. But now we can look back and see how the Lord has led us into His ultimate purpose. It is very encouraging to know that the Lord will continue to lead us this year in the same manner.

I. Ministry

We are very thankful for the way in which the Lord has helped us to grow in the knowledge of Himself. Our ministry has not grown numerically, but we trust it has spiritually. As you will all be aware, we now have a congregation of twenty who worship together with us in the morning service. Similarly, in the evening we have twenty adults but along with them we have fifty-five children attending. Out of this number, there are ten adults who attend faithfully both services and the

midweek prayer meeting. We also continue to hold a youth meeting where six young people come along. I am very happy with the way they are coming to understand the Word of God.

Overall our spiritual ministry is growing by the grace of God. But we need more of His grace to grow until He comes. In the morning I am preaching through the 'Lord's prayer', whilst in the evening I preach a simple gospel message. I have been teaching on the 'Regulative Principle' in the prayer meeting and have found it to be a really blessed time.

As many of you will be aware, we started Bible classes for local ministers in order to help teach them the doctrines of the Word of God (of which in Sri Lanka there is a gross ignorance). Currently we have twelve students who are studying with us. I personally go and visit them after classes in order to get feedback from them. It seems that they are very much enjoying the classes and appreciate our work. Glory to God alone!

I mentioned in previous newsletters that we rented land which also had a house for worship. However, the building was not of sufficient size to accommodate the twenty adults and fifty-five children. We therefore made a proposal to Ceylon Christian Care (CCC) and requested that they help us financially build a temporary worship hall on the area of land which we are leasing. I believe the Lord must have laid the work upon their heart as they were willing to help. This temporary structure

can accommodate around 120 people very comfortably. We are very thankful to CCC. Our Sabbath school ministry is also going well, and those who teach the children are very willing and committed to the task. We have also appointed an evangelist on a contract basis. His name is Piratheepan, and he is also willing to study with us. One of our dear friends from an FCC congregation financially supports this evangelist and his work. He is distributing tracts, magazines and Christian books. He also hopes to complete our Bible study course. He is married with three children. His son is sixteen and his two daughters are twelve and ten years old. Please do remember them in your prayers. We are also very thankful to another of our friends in the FCC who helped fund the purchase of a second-hand motorbike for his work.

2. Practical ministry

The preschool work is going well and we now have a good reputation amongst the village and the surrounding area. Indeed, a preschool which is already in place has approached us and requested that we take over the administration of the running of their preschool.

We are helping where we can in a practical way to provide much needed nutrition to pregnant women, babies and elderly people where the need is greatest. This is proving to be a great opening to witness for Christ. As a result of this ministry one new family has started attending our evening service. Our prayer is they will inherit eternal life. Maran continues to administer all the charitable work and he is doing a good job for us.

We might think that CCC is only interested in aid work, but this is not the case as they are helping to pay for the running costs of our mission. I have found that CCC is acting almost like a deacons' court. We are very thankful to CCC. They have been very open, spiritual and supportive to our mission in Vavuniya. They certainly have been a gift from God for our mission.

3. My personal note of thanks

Again, I do not know how to say thank you, as there are no words in the world to express my appreciation to those who support God's work in Sri Lanka - mainly the FCC and CCC. I would like to mention individuals but they would not like me to, and therefore I again make a general note of thanks.

More specifically I would like to mention:

- Our friends who keep in contact with us by telephone or Skype.
- We have heard from those who are in contact with us that others are remembering us in prayer although not directly in contact with us.



- Those who have willingly supported us in practical ways.
- CCC as they have been full of encouragement.
- The FCC Home & Foreign Missions Committee as they have been very supportive of us.
- We continue to receive lots of encouragements from the land of Scotland.

4. Prayer requests

- Pray for our families – for the conversion of souls and the personal holiness of our families.
- Pray for the outreach work – that lost, needy sheep may be found.
- Pray for our worship services – that we continue to grow in the knowledge of Jesus Christ.
- Pray for the Bible classes – that the pure Gospel is proclaimed through this ministry.
- Pray for our children and young people.
- Pray for God's continued guidance and protection.
- Pray for CCC and the FCC Home and Foreign Missions Committee.
- Pray that Dino and I can obtain without any problem our Visas for our visit to Scotland this May.
- Pray for me – that I can continue to work for the Lord in the face of any discouragement.

'Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen'.

In His service,

Parthee

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'My soul doth magnify the Lord and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour'.

“Then Job answered the Lord, and said,
Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee?
I will lay mine hand upon my mouth.
Once have I spoken; but I will not answer:
yea, twice; but I will proceed no further.”

Job 40:3-5