

Free Church **Witness**



FEBRUARY 2013 ISSUE

Fighting the Good Fight

Rev Maurice Roberts



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The **ERROR** of Not Baptising Children



Our title this month is somewhat controversial. The one distinctive doctrine of Baptists is that they do not baptise infants. Now we have many good friends among the Baptists. We have preached in their pulpits and they have preached in ours. We have so much in common with some of them. Yet if it is God's will that we baptise infants, as we believe it is, then obviously it is a sin not to do so.

History

At the time of the Reformation a minority of the reformers were Baptist and were known as the Anabaptists (re-baptisers). Some Baptists are critical of the mainline Reformers saying that they simply accepted the Roman Catholic tradition of baptising children. However men like Calvin and Knox accepted nothing from Rome without checking first if it was biblical. In the days of the Puritans, the sixteenth century, again a minority were Baptist, among whom was to be found John Bunyan. In the eighteenth century here in Scotland the Baptist Haldane brothers had a blessed ministry. The nineteenth century produced perhaps the greatest Baptist of all, Charles Haddon Spurgeon. The most rapid expansion of Baptist numbers came in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The Southern Baptist Church in America is reckoned to be the largest Protestant denomination in the world.

Immersion

Along with a refusal to baptise children almost all Baptists demand that baptism be by immersion. Non-Baptists see the mode as irrelevant and so accept sprinkling or pouring as well as immersion. The Baptist argument is based on the word used in the Greek *baptizo* which they say always means 'to immerse'. But this is factually wrong. A careful look at all the occurrences of the word and its derivatives in the New Testament and also in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament done in 250BC, will show that the word sometimes should be translated 'to wash'. For example, in Mark 7:3-4 the word is used in that way: 'For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders. And when they come from the market, except they wash (*baptizo*), they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing (*baptizo*) of cups, and pots, brasen vessels, and of tables'. We cannot imagine that every time the Pharisees came in from the market they immersed themselves. From parallel passages the meaning is obviously that they washed their hands. The many kinds of 'washings' (*baptiso*) of Hebrews 9:10 would include sprinkling with blood.

It is also worth noting that there is not one case of baptism in the New Testament which can be proved to be by immersion.

When Jesus is baptised by John and comes out of the water it is far more likely that He simply stood in the water and that John sprinkled or poured water over Him. It seems very unlikely that He walked away with drenched clothes. Similarly, in Acts 8:38, we are told that Philip and the Ethiopian went down both of them into the water. Again the likelihood is that Philip sprinkled or poured water over the Ethiopian. When the Philippian jailer was converted, that very night he was baptised, but it is highly unlikely that they would have a place for immersions in the prison or that they would nip out of the prison with the whole family for a baptism down by the river. The physical arrangements required in a place like Jerusalem to baptise 3000 by immersion make it hard to imagine that this took place. There is no river, lake or sea in or near Jerusalem.

Who are to be baptised?

Many are tempted to argue from tradition. They have been born Presbyterians or converted in a Presbyterian church so they baptise not just believers but also their children. Alternatively they have been born Baptists or born again through a Baptist church so they only baptise adults. Scripture, however, is the only rule. The King and Head of the church has given us His Word and it must be our law.

Generally Baptists quote two or three New Testament verses, taken in isolation, and think they have proved their case. For example Peter in his Pentecost sermon states, 'Repent and be baptised'. Baptists argue that repentance comes first and then baptism. We agree that in evangelism this is the case. In instituting baptism Christ said, 'Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost' (Mt.28:19). Teach first and then baptise. There is nothing here about children. The reason is of course that Jesus is dealing with a mission situation.

The problem with many Baptists is that they forget that the Old Testament exists. Many are Dispensational and think that the way of salvation in the OT was different – people then were saved by works and ritual. But Paul makes plain that by works none can be justified: 'But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith' (Gal.3:11). The law instead of justifying only condemns. Nicodemus was under the old dispensation yet Jesus said to him, 'Ye must be born again'. (Jn.3:7). The way of salvation was essentially the same under the Old Testament as it is in the New. There is only one Saviour who is able to save and there is essentially only one covenant of grace. Further the Old Testament is just as authoritative as the New. Paul's words to Timothy are very important: 'All scripture is given by

Ezekiel prophesies that God will make a new covenant with His people: 'Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.'



inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works' (2Tim.3:16-17). If all we had was the New Testament we might well all be Baptists.

God's dealings with man have always been by covenants. I would like us to go through the Scriptures, seeing what we can learn about these covenants, what place children have in them and who were to receive the mark or token of the covenant.

1. First Covenant

When God created man He entered into a covenant with him and this covenant is usually known as the covenant of works. Obedience was required and there was a promise of life and a threat of death. This first covenant included not just Adam but his children. Adam sinned and fell and the descendants of Adam sinned and fell with him. Baptists tend to be too individualistic. God deals with us as families. The second commandment which condemns idols is interesting here: 'Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments' (Ex.20:5-6). God's wrath reaches the third and fourth generations of the idolaters.. His mercy reaches to thousands and this could also be understood as thousands of generations. 'He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations' (Ps.105:8).

2. First Gospel

Man having broken the covenant of works, God made a covenant of grace with His people. The first statement of it is spoken to the serpent in the hearing of Adam and Eve while they were still in the Garden of Eden: 'And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel' (Gen.3:15). Here, too, children (seed) are important and have their place in this covenant. There will be hatred between the woman's children and the devil's children. We see that worked out in the history of Cain and Abel. In Genesis 6 the sons of God are the seed of Seth and the daughters of men are the children of Cain. The great Seed referred to is of course the Lord Jesus.

3 Covenant with Noah

Every covenant is a covenant with people and their children. God destroyed the ancient world with a flood because of its wickedness. He saved Noah and his family. After coming out of the ark Noah offered to God a burnt offering. God smelled the sweet perfume of His Son in it and made a covenant with Noah and his children after him never again to destroy the world with a flood. 'And the Lord smelled a sweet savour; and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done. While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease. And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth' (Gen.8:21-9:1).

4. Covenant with Abraham

There is a fullness in the revelation of the covenant of grace to Abraham. God calls Abraham out of Ur (Gen.12), and promises to multiply him as the stars (Gen.15). He says, 'I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee' (Gen.17:7). The children were clearly included as in all God's covenants. But this one goes a step further in that a mark of the covenant was to be placed on children. 'This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; every man child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you' (Gen.17:10-11). What great privileges the children of Abraham enjoyed! But there was also a serious warning: 'And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant' (v.14). Not to circumcise their children was seen as a serious sin. Similarly if we as God's covenant people do not baptise our children, it is a serious sin. Remember there is essentially only one covenant of grace.

5. Covenant with Moses

The Scripture books from Exodus to Deuteronomy contain God's covenant of grace with Moses and with Israel. There are many types - sacrifices, priests, tabernacle and altar - all pointing towards Christ the Messiah. There were many burdens laid upon the Israelites and yet salvation was by grace alone. The covenant included the children and they were to be

circumcised as a sign of their inclusion in the covenant.

6 Covenant with David

God made a special covenant with David and with his family and it is spelled out in 2Samuel 7 and Psalm 89. David's children would be kings and it looked forward to the coming of David's greatest Son. Notice how children were included in this covenant of grace.

7 New Covenant

Ezekiel prophesies that God will make a new covenant with His people: 'Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them' (Ezek.36:25-27). The New Testament explains this new dispensation of the covenant of grace more fully.

All God's covenants in the Old Testament included children, so why should children be excluded from the New Testament covenant, especially when there is no specific command to exclude them? The children under the older covenant (Abraham and Moses) were marked with the tokens of that covenant, so why not under the new covenant? Baptists make much of the fact that there is no New Testament command to baptise children. Actually, what is much more significant in the light of the whole Old Testament, is the fact that there is no command *not* to baptise children. The covenant of grace is essentially one in both the Old Testament and the New Testament. Since children were included in the covenant of grace in the Old Testament they must be included in that of the New Testament also unless specifically excluded.

8. Two Sacraments

The two sacraments of the Old Testament were circumcision and the passover. These are replaced by the two sacraments of the New Testament, baptism and the Lord's supper. The supper was instituted by Christ at the close of the last proper passover, indicating that communion was taking over from passover. Similarly Paul indicates that baptism takes over from circumcision when he writes the following: 'In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead' (Col.2:11-12). In circumcision there is an outward cutting off of the sins of the flesh, but only those who experience inward circumcision will truly be saved. Similarly baptism involved a cutting off and burial of the sins of the flesh, but only those who experience inward regeneration will be saved. Peter makes a similar parallel between baptism and circumcision when he writes: 'The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ' (1Pet.3:21). There is one difference between the Lord's supper and the passover. There is with communion a requirement that individuals must examine themselves before they eat: 'But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily,

eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep' (1Cor.11:28-30). This self-examination and conscious understanding of what happens would exclude very young children. There is no such restriction with regard to baptism. Baptism is administered once and can be profited from by reflection years after it took place. Those baptised as infants are unable to remember what took place yet, when told by parents, they are still able to consider that they have been baptised into Jesus Christ and must therefore live for Him. They are encouraged to seek the blessings of the covenant of grace for themselves and that their baptism should be an inner reality.

9. Any hints of children being included in the covenant?

One would expect that if children are included in the covenant there would be some indications of this special relationship and indeed that is the case. In preaching the gospel on the day of Pentecost, Peter exhorts: 'Repent, and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call' (Acts 2:38-39). Children get a special mention as a class in their own right. In telling the way of salvation to the Philippian jailor, Paul states: 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house' (Acts 16:31). The jailor's house or family will benefit from his faith. Paul makes plain that the children of true Christians are special in God's sight: 'For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy' (1Cor.7:14).

10. Any cases of children being baptised in the New Testament?

The New Testament church is in a missionary situation where the Gospel is being preached to Jews and Gentiles, requiring of them repentance, faith and baptism. Adults listen, believe and are baptised. However we also have cases of household baptisms. When Lydia believed she and her household were baptised (Acts 16:15). Similarly the conversion of the Philippian jailor was marked by the baptism that very night, not only of himself, but of his family (Acts 16:33). Paul tells us that he also baptised the household of Stephanas (1Cor.1:16). There is every likelihood that children were included in these households.

Jesus said, 'Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God' (Mark 10:14). Jesus had a special interest in children and commanded His blessing upon them. They have a high place in His kingdom. The disciples are rebuked for pushing them away. It was a serious sin under the old covenant of grace not to circumcise children and similarly we believe that it is a sin today not to baptise children. Baptising them we claim God's covenant blessings upon them, we seek to bring them up for the Lord, are encouraged in doing that and look for them to be saved. Children who are baptised are to be told that they belong to God and must seek a personal relationship with Him themselves. If they turn away, their situation in eternity will be worse than the heathen.

The Big Country

Rev William Macleod

On the 14th of November I left Glasgow for a nine-day trip to China. My visit was organised by Hudson Taylor Ministries, a group based in the Netherlands and having Dutch American support. They have been involved for several years in translating and printing good theological books in China, training pastors, doing relief work and children's education.

China is a fascinating country. 57% of the world's cement is used there. Everywhere you look multi-storey buildings are springing up. The streets and motorways are full of expensive cars. The prosperity is obvious. I visited in mid-November when the party congress was taking place and the new leadership was being elected. Tiananmen Square, which is enormous, was closed off. Security police and army personnel were everywhere. However, apart from that, I was surprised to see how relaxed a country it was. People appeared to live just as they do in the West. The clothes and fashions were the same as here, indicating the widespread influence of television.

My trip began in Beijing, a city with a population of 20 million – four times the population of Scotland in one city. I visited a week-long training conference for house church leaders and shared for several days with a Dutch pastor from New Zealand in giving lectures to them. On the Sabbath I had the joy of worshipping in and addressing one of the house churches. At the end of the service, which was attended by



Teaching a Class in Kunming

around 70-80, the leader asked for anyone new to stand. Seven or eight stood. I at first thought that they had been worshippers from other churches but it turned out that they were totally new to church. How different from the situation in Scotland!

The second part of my week there was spent in the south, in Kunming, a city of 3 million inhabitants. It is over 2000km from Beijing (as far as Russia is from Britain). This gives some idea of the immense size of China. The climate was noticeably warmer, but the high altitude kept it from becoming oppressively hot. Here I visited a small college which trains pastors. It is called Cornerstone Bible School and we have the opportunity to help and encourage it. The principal, Barnabas (a given Christian name, not his Chinese name), is a fine dedicated man, converted from atheism at the age of 17 and preaching

by the time he was 18 years old. He is now around forty years old. He is the pastor of a village church, has started a new church in Kunming and does a considerable amount of the teaching in the Bible school. He obtained an M.Div. in a Seminary in California but unfortunately did not learn English. It was a Chinese medium school. All our conversations had to be through an interpreter. There are 37 students registered in the college.

Remember this work in your prayers and that we as a Seminary might be able to be a blessing and an encouragement to it.



Eating with Chopsticks

Obituary

Norman Macdonald, Elder, Knightswood

We heard with sadness of the sudden passing of Norman Madonald on 10th November 2012. He is in a better place but we in the church on earth are the poorer. Though he had been housebound for many years, apart from the pain in his legs, his general health was relatively good and his mind clear. When I last visited him on 29th October he was very bright and cheerful. However, pneumonia struck. He was taken into hospital on the Friday and died on the Saturday morning.

Norman belonged to North Uist and was of crofting stock. His folk came from Heisker, a group of islands west of North Uist. He experienced early spiritual influences under the ministry of Rev James Morrison for whom he retained a great love and respect. When Norman came to Glasgow in the early 1950s

Mr Morrison contacted Rev Murdo Macaulay who was then the Free Church minister in Govan and Norman attended there. It seemed that he had a proneness to accidents and this landed him in the Royal Infirmary. One of the nurses attending him there was a bright Brethren girl, Jenny Blair, from Gourrock. She spoke to him about his soul and encouraged him in the ways of the Lord. They fell in love and got married. When the children were born Norman and Jenny moved to Govanhill as Govan was a mainly Gaelic congregation.

He became an elder in Govanhill and when the outreach to East Kilbride began in 1956 Norman was appointed an assessor elder. Eventually Norman and the family moved there and he became an elder of the congregation. He was active in the Presbytery and other duties and was not afraid to speak up for what he thought was the truth. He worked at the National Engineering Laboratory. Like his mentor Rev James Morrison he enjoyed working in his garden and took great pride in it.

When the Division of 2000 took place he sided with the Free Church (Continuing) and travelled in to Thornwood to worship there. In 2002 he suffered from a very serious illness which left him in a coma for months. His dear wife was tireless in nursing him and she was rewarded in the remarkable recovery which he made. It was a great blow to him when she died in November 2010, two years prior to himself.

He was a man of God who loved the Lord, loved his Bible and good books and was warm and passionate in prayer. We will miss his prayers.

We extend our sympathy to the family, Iain and Catriona.



Same-Sex Marriage and the Scriptures

Statement issued by the Public Questions, Religion & Morals Committee of the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing) on 12th December 2012



Following the decision of the Scottish Government in July to legalise same-sex marriage the Westminster Government has decided to do the same, with a Bill to be brought forward in January. As with the consultation held by the Scottish Government the UK Government's consultation seems to have been managed so as to disregard the opinion of those who expressed their opposition to same-sex marriage through petitions. This is unjust and creates the impression that government is not really interested in what people think, having made up its mind already. Such an attitude can only create public resentment and disenchantment with the political process, which is unhealthy in a democracy.

This latest decision is a further demonstration of how government in our land has wilfully departed from its proper role as the servant of God. The problem goes much deeper than the current administrations in Edinburgh and London for it is evident that the leaders of all the political parties represented in the Scottish Parliament are in favour of same-sex marriage and likewise the leader of the main Opposition party at Westminster.

These developments indicate a *national departure from righteousness*. If our country continues on its present course we will further provoke the Lord and multiply the judgments which the Almighty is already visiting upon us. It is therefore time for those who would be faithful to the Lord to give a clear lead and to speak up before even greater calamities come.

The reasoning used by the Prime Minister when speaking about the Government's plans to permit same-sex marriage reveals our national malaise. He said: 'I'm in favour of gay marriage because I'm a massive supporter of marriage and I don't want gay people to be excluded from a great institution'.

As a Christian church we too give our strong support to marriage and recognise it as 'a great institution'. But *whose* institution? Does marriage belong to man, to define as he will, or does God own marriage, as something which He has been pleased to establish for His own glory and the good of mankind? The answer is clearly the latter for in the opening chapters of the Bible we read how God made the first man, the first woman and the first marriage.

A year ago, in a speech to mark the 400th anniversary of the

Authorised Version of the Bible, the Prime Minister said: 'the Bible has helped to give Britain a set of values and morals which make Britain what it is today'. We agree with this statement but we also suggest that only a wilful rejection of the Bible and the timeless moral code it contains can account for the situation we now have where governments north and south of the border seem to be in a competition with each other to see which can be the first to legalise same-sex 'marriage'.

In the end it is the Bible – not a popular or parliamentary vote – that decides what is right and what is wrong in moral matters. According to the Bible same-sex 'marriage' is a perversion of the divine order and therefore wrong. The following points need to be made:

Scripture teaches that marriage was instituted by God between one man and one woman. After creating the first man God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him' (Genesis 2:18). He then made the woman for the man, bringing them together and making them one flesh. This is God's pattern for marriage.

Scripture teaches that marriage reflects the union between Christ and His church. Christ is the heavenly Bridegroom and the church is His bride (Ephesians 5:31,32; Revelation 19:7,8). It is impossible for a same-sex marriage, in which there is either no bride or no bridegroom, to reflect that union.

Scripture teaches that same-sex unions are inherently sinful. This is taught in both Testaments: 'Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination' (Leviticus 18:22); 'For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet' (Romans 1:26-27).

Underlying the seeming inability or unwillingness of government to resist calls for same-sex marriage is the idea that homosexuality is an acceptable lifestyle. From this flows the belief that homosexuals must not be discriminated against in any way and therefore on the grounds of 'equality' they should be entitled to 'marry'. But do those who

approve homosexuality realise what they are approving? The homosexual lifestyle is plainly unnatural and harmful to the body and the soul. The place which gave its name to this way of life stands as a permanent and solemn warning against it: 'Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire' (Jude 7).

The false tolerance which is shown towards homosexuality is not confined to government but is sadly found within the church. This fact is highlighted by the situation in the Church of Scotland which for some years has been wrestling with the question of whether to ordain persons in same-sex relationships. To us it is astounding that a Christian church should need to spend any time on this matter when the teaching of Scripture is so clear. 'Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God' (1 Corinthians 6:9,10). While the gospel of God's grace in Jesus Christ offers forgiveness and salvation to all, including the homosexual, it requires repentance toward God.

In 2011 the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland voted to allow the ordination of people who were in same-sex relationships before 2009 and this has caused great difficulty for ministers and congregations who cannot in conscience agree with the decision. In June of this year the congregation of St. George's Tron in Glasgow decided to leave the Church of

Scotland over this issue and they have recently been deprived of their place of worship by the Church in what appears to have been a most unchristian manner. We commend them for their biblical stand and sympathise with them in their plight, offering them and others who find themselves in a similar situation our prayerful support.

While there may be questions over the property rights of a congregation which leaves a denomination there can be no question over the future of a denomination which endorses homosexuality. It is departing from the Word of God and unless there is a radical change of course it will soon lose its right to be acknowledged as a Christian church.

The legislation proposed for Scotland will permit churches to opt in to conducting same-sex marriages. The legislation proposed for England & Wales will do the same, with the exception that the Church of England and the Church in Wales will be banned from offering same-sex marriages. Yet no form of ceremony or degree of commitment can create a marriage if the union which results is one which God forbids in His Word. Same-sex marriage is a sham and a delusion and an affront to a holy God: it is shameful that any government would seek to introduce it.

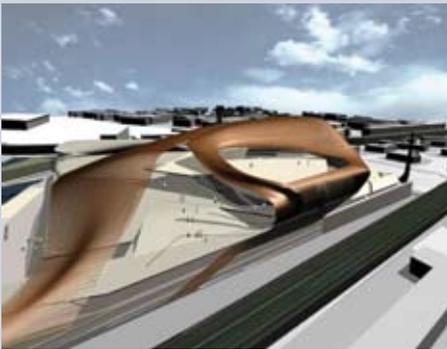
We call upon church and state to return to the Scriptures as the supreme authority in all matters of belief and behaviour. We urge MSPs and MPs, for the sake of our society, to oppose the introduction of same-sex marriage and commend those who have already indicated their opposition. We encourage Christians throughout our land to remain firm in their adherence to the Bible's teaching and to continue in prayer, that the Lord would yet be merciful to us.

Congregational Remittances - December 2012

CENTRAL BUILDING FUND YTD	ORDINARY REMITTANCES			Outer Hebrides Presbytery				
	2012 Dec	2012 Total	2011 Total					
Presbytery of Inverness								
Aberdeen	0	1100	16,327	0	2264	24,784	26,659	
Duthil-Dores	0	1840	20,631	373	1300	17,547	17,434	
Inverness	0	3300	28,000	500	1800	26,294	26,292	
Kilmorack & Strathglass	0	1612	18,000	0	684	16,493	16,418	
Total Inverness	0	7,852	82,958	8,153	14,683	189,632	192,645	
Northern Presbytery								
Assynt & Scourie	690	3500	6,777	2,049	960	14,500	14,500	
Brora	1,475	400	22,094	5,231	7674.68	90,014	91,342	
Kiltearn	615	1500	8,207					
Tarbat	0	7200	19,327					
Total Northern	2,780	12,600	56,405	6,855	16,858	123,430	114,767	
Southern Presbytery								
Arran	851	245	8,708	245	0	10,672	14,000	
Ayr	5,000	950	11,954	485	0	5,500	7,000	
Dumfries	0	0	0	1,001	2600	17,473	18,481	
Edinburgh	250	1500	33,176	500	1150	13,304	9,018	
Glasgow - Partick	1,453	1500	32,000	2,569	2700	14,890	13,114	
Glasgow - Shettleston	794	2000	25,536	0	0	51	102	
Glasgow - Knightswood	955	2248	30,664	0	3958	25,065	25,065	
Rothsay	0	0	260	2,000	4700	26,524	25,752	
Total Southern	9,303	8,443	142,298	55	1750	9,953	2,235	
				Total Skye/Lochcarron	6,855	16,858	123,430	114,767
				Total Congregations	27,091	60,436	594,724	602,503
				Other Donations	4,883	2,988	43,832	28,865
				Legacy	0	0	12114	18,153
				TOTAL	31,974	63,424	650,670	649,521
				Including Gift Aid	909	96,214	98,057	



News



Artist's Impression of the Proposed Mosque

'Mega Mosque' rejected

Christian Concern

An application to build the proposed 'mega mosque' in Stratford, London, has been rejected by Newham Council. The mosque, proposed by fundamentalist group Tablighi Jamaat, would have been three times the size of St Paul's Cathedral and located very close to the Olympic Park. The plans included a prayer hall for around 7,500 men and a separate facility for about 2,000 women. Approximately 3,000 supporters gathered outside the hearing at the council's town hall, with many holding signs saying: '15 years of waiting. Not a day more. Vote yes to the Riverine Centre'.

But the mega mosque, known as the Abbey Mills Mosque or the Riverine Centre, was rejected by councillors following a recommendation by Newham Council officers. A spokesman for the council said: 'Councillors have considered this application at length and with great care before deciding to reject it. There are ... concerns about the size of the proposed buildings and impact on parking and traffic in the local area'.

Alan Craig, campaign director of the 'Mega Mosque No Thanks' campaign criticised the proposal saying: 'The sheer size of the mosque betrays the ambition and arrogance of Tablighi Jamaat. Their

religious ideology is divisive and hostile to non-Muslims, and there is certainly no local demand for something of this magnitude'. Tablighi Jamaat, which has been attempting to build the mosque for over 10 years, has been accused of radicalising young Muslims and has been operating in Britain since 1944.

This is a cause for thanksgiving.

Malawi – The Molenaars

*(formerly missionaries at
Covenant College Zambia)*

It was a blessing to organize a nationwide Missions Conference in October. Eighty church leaders attended, many from areas in Malawi where Christianity is not yet strong. Lectures and testimonies were encouraging for those who serve in very difficult circumstances where the Word of God is being rejected. It is our prayer that these leaders will be able to pass on what they learned and encourage the local evangelists to persevere in the work of the Lord.

The Lord brought a wonderful friend on my path; her name is Grace Muhone. Together with her we have started a women's and children's ministry in her area, called Chinsapo. Many children don't go to school because they have no parents, or because parents have no money to buy them a uniform, shoes, exercise book and pencil. These kids are not being raised in Christian homes and have no idea who God is who created them. Every Thursday, when I park my car at Grace's home, hundreds of children come running to me, cheering and eager to help carry the teaching materials. We meet at the Malo (public meeting place of the village), in the shade of the tree. About 30 mothers always attend and listen attentively to the Word of God. Four times a week Grace is teaching reading to the illiterate women. Thousands of women here, in

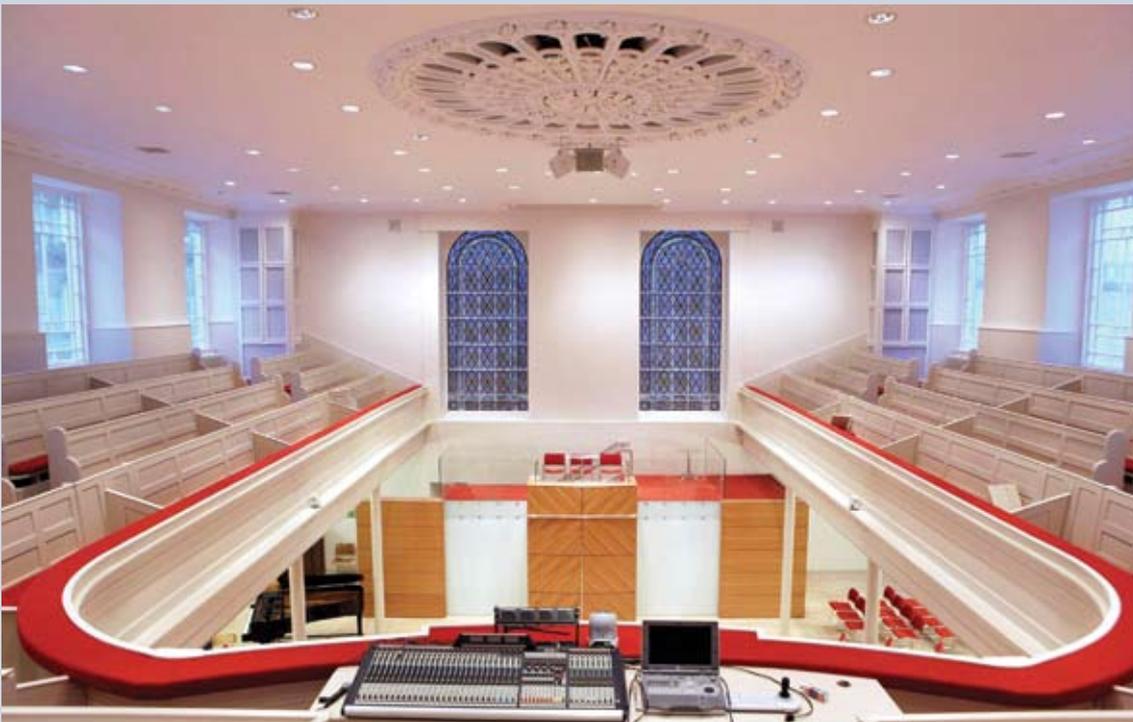


Cees & Mirjam Molenaar

the capital city of Malawi, are illiterate! We start every lesson with a devotion, and incorporate nutrition lessons once a week to help them improve their lives in the midst of poverty. Grace is a key person, a godly woman, willing to serve as a volunteer in her own needy community. I pray for more Graces, more of those key persons, so that we can expand this work. May the Lord use this ministry to open up a new world, the Word of God, so that they can read it and be transformed by it!

By the grace of God we are doing well. The children enjoy school and playtime. We have added the subject Dutch at home so that our kids maintain their mother tongue as well. Obed loves going to school and is making new friends. Moses turned three and is quite a character! It was a joy to attend the Graduation at Covenant College in October and see our brothers being more equipped to serve the Lord in their churches. Joas and Rhoda enjoyed meeting their old friends in Zambia. Thank you for your continuing prayers for the mission fields, missionaries, pastors and the coming of His Kingdom.

Desk



Interior of St George's Tron Church, Buchanan Street, Glasgow, recently refurbished

Tron congregation decide to leave building

The Tron congregation are to leave their famous building following a six-month stand-off with the Kirk. The dispute began when the congregation of St George's Tron agreed to secede from the Church of Scotland over the Kirk's decision to allow ministers to be in homosexual relationships. Sheriff's officers entered the church building on Wednesday evening 5th December to issue Court of Session interim interdicts on behalf of the Kirk, preventing the removal of any 'heritable fixtures and fittings' and claiming ownership to ones already taken. The church's minister, Rev William Philip, agreed to leave the building rather than face a long legal battle with the Kirk. But speaking ahead of his final service on Sunday 9th December,

he accused the Church of Scotland of 'shameful' behaviour in negotiations over the Buchanan Street property, likening it to a 'Soviet dictatorship'. The Kirk has also written to the charities' watchdog OSCR to raise concerns about the actions of members while they were trustees of the Church of Scotland St George's Tron charity. It said that it appeared that many of the assets of the congregation, including large sums of money, may have been transferred to the Epaphras Trust, an organisation which shared a number of trustees with the former congregation. The church is also said by the Kirk to owe almost £1 million in unpaid contributions and an outstanding loan to the Kirk. Mr Philip said: 'The Church of Scotland has chosen confrontation over compromise and persecution over peace. Our lawyers

have told us that they have never come across such aggressive and unreasonable dealings in any dispute, and that whatever such behaviour is, it is anything but Christian'.

Our sympathy goes out to the congregation in this situation. Those who built the Tron Church and contributed to it liberally over the years would be totally appalled to hear that their descendants were forced out of the Church because of their stand for Biblical morality and that the building would henceforth be used by those who approved of

ministers practising homosexuality.

Supreme Court Protects Churches

Christian Institute

Churches have been saved from an avalanche of equality laws following a UK Supreme Court ruling on 12 December 2012. The judges ruled unanimously in *X v Mid Sussex Citizens Advice Bureau* that volunteers are *not* covered by the same discrimination rights as employees. The Christian Institute intervened in the case to protect the religious freedom of churches and other religious bodies. If the "X" case had been successful there would have been serious consequences for the voluntary sector. Church volunteer positions such as leaders or helpers in Sunday Schools,

home groups, children's groups etc could have been made subject to equality law – with all the potential litigation that could cause. The Supreme Court ruled that EU employment discrimination law does not extend to volunteers and said there is no need to refer the issue to the EU Court of Justice in Luxembourg.

This is a cause for thanksgiving.



Struan Free Church (Continuing)

Bracadale & Duirinish Special Appeal

Rev Murdo A N MacLeod

In the history of the Lord's work in the Island of Skye the names of Bracadale and Duirinish are prominent as places of particular blessing and especially favoured ministries. It was at Bracadale that the Rev Roderick Macleod (Maighstir Ruairidh) began his ministerial labours and though his name would naturally become more closely identified with his second, and greatly beloved parish of Snizort, the men of Bracadale would lay some claim to his revered memory. Duirinish saw revival and blessing, not least at the famous Fairy Bridge located just a few miles from our current place of worship at the Free Presbyterian Church at Hallin, Waternish.

Happily we still have in these parts, alongside memories of the past, a continuing Gospel ministry and a people desirous of gathering around the same truths held so dear by their forefathers. With the recent retirement of Rev John Keddie the Parish of Bracadale is vacant and the Commission of Assembly in October took the necessary steps to effect a linkage with Duirinish, itself pastorless since the division of January 2000. The newly linked charges are now looking forward to seeing a minister settled over them and are working prayerfully towards that end.

Recent local negotiations have resulted in a welcome agreement over the use of the churches at Struan and Carbost but the linked charges find themselves without a manse. They have therefore resolved, with the full support of the local Presbytery, to appeal to interested friends who might feel able to help them as they labour to gather funds.

All donations will be gratefully received by the Congregational Treasurer, Mr. Peter B Matheson, 25 Geary, Waternish, Dunvegan, Isle of Skye, IV55 8GB.

Subscriptions to the Witness

Rev D Blunt

Subscription forms and Gift Subscriptions Forms for the Church magazines were included in the December issue of the Witness. The forms requested that payments should be made out to 'Free Church Witness'. However it has been pointed out that the separate account bearing this name has been closed and that ideally all payments should now be made out to 'Free Church of Scotland (Continuing)'. It is hoped that payments made out to 'Free Church Witness' will still be accepted by the bank but Congregational Treasurers should now be using 'Free Church of Scotland (Continuing)' when writing cheques for bulk congregational subscriptions to the magazines. My apologies if this lack of up-to-date information causes any problems. If there are any difficulties then please get in touch with the General Treasurer (Angus Macmillan) or the Financial Administrator (Mrs Muriel Smith).

Teacher Required

Rev Greg MacDonald

Lewis Christian Education Association invite applications for the post of primary school teacher at Lewis Independent Christian School, Stornoway, starting in August 2013. This position in a small reformed Christian School offers a warm family atmosphere, full parental support and friendly enthusiastic pupils. The school website can be viewed at lics.org.uk.

Further information and application forms available from (01851) 810037 and greg@nesschurch.co.uk.

Two Ministers go to Kenya

Revs M J Roberts and J W Keddie

In November last year Rev John Keddie and Rev Maurice Roberts flew to Kenya to give lectures in Nairobi to students preparing for ministry and missionary work in various African countries. They had been invited by Korean friends to teach at a fine seminary called Bridgeworld College, located in the Karen district of Nairobi. The College Principal is Dr James Jongdo Lee, also a Korean, who has studied in the USA. Bridgeworld International is a work which includes the College and other ministries in Africa. The recently purpose-built College was started in 2003 and has in the intervening ten years prepared some hundred men and women for Christian service.

The College classes were lively with young men and women from different countries in Africa such as Uganda, Ethiopia, Eritrea, South Sudan, Egypt and Zambia, as well as Kenya itself. They were ready to ask questions and to participate actively in the learning process during class time. There is an excellent campus with fine buildings erected only three years ago through the generous gift of an elderly Korean businessman. The College rooms include a chapel, a library and offices, with a fine staff of African Christians whose shining faces testify to their inward joy. The students have English, although in different degrees of fluency. Most people in that country have three languages: English, Swahili and their own local tribal language.

Our ministers typically receive invitations during their residence there to preach in local churches on the Sabbath. Though the



Rev & Mrs Roberts with students and friends outside Bridgeworld College

church buildings are simple and even primitive in the extreme yet the men and women who gather are full of zeal. They love vigour and volume in their singing. In one church, consisting of some two hundred people, over one half were children.

Mr Keddie's assignment was to teach Church History. Mr Roberts gave lectures on John's Gospel. Both men were encouraged by their experience. Two things which we would wish our beloved African Christians to become stronger in are Systematic Theology and the Principles of Worship. However, it was our conviction that while we could teach them doctrine they could teach us all how to rejoice and to put our whole soul and heart into our worship. Happily we have been able to arrange for some good theological books to be sent to their College library by the Banner of Truth Trust. May God bless these brethren and encourage them greatly in time to come. The prayers of Christians in Scotland would be much appreciated by Principal Lee and the friends of Bridgeworld College.

Visit to Kyrgyzstan

*Dr Young Chul Whang,
former Seminary student*

Last summer, I was invited to a summer camp of the 'Church of Christ's Servant' in Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan. The camp was held near Issyk Kul (meaning hot lake), which is bigger than any lake in the British Isles. Actually, it is the tenth largest lake in the world. Located at an altitude of 5272ft, it reaches 2192 ft in depth. It never freezes in winter (so its name, 'hot lake'). Surrounded as it is by snow-capped peaks, you will never forget its stunning beauty. Water is so clean that the visibility is incredibly high. When you swim there, be careful. It could be very deep even if you see the bottom of the lake clearly.

We stayed at an orphanage which was partly supported by the Korean community in Bishkek. As Kyrgyzstan is the poorest country in Central Asia, the facility was miserable. Still, the beauty of God's creation more than compensated for all the inconvenience endured.

It was a joy to see the church baptising eight new members last summer - seven teens and one adult. All the church members were tearful with joy remembering six years

of misunderstanding and scorn which they endured from other churches and Christians. When they decided to follow the Reformed faith, what they were doing seemed strange to surrounding churches. They stopped singing gospel songs which is unthinkable in the other churches; all the church members, young and old, attended worship together, which was strange for them. Services were quiet and solemn, which is unpopular there. More than that, they began to teach the Westminster Shorter Catechism to all the members, which was never even heard of before (they are Baptist). Recently the Heidelberg Catechism was taught. As a result, some of them thought that the church might have been influenced by heretics.

The eight new members were the first-fruits after they took this new path. During the last six years they did not see any new

members joining. However, as the time passed, the church began to be known by its fruit. First of all, the pastor of the church has faithfully kept the local law, refusing any illegal work including bribery which is a chronic problem in this society, and one in which many missionaries have compromised. As a result their moral credibility has been established to those in the government, which gave them permanent residence. It was one of the tokens that God was helping them. It gave a huge amount of freedom to them.

Secondly, the families of the church have shown a good testimony. There have been no divorces and no sexual scandals in the church. Husbands love their wives and try to raise their children in the way of the Lord, which has given a good impression to the neighbouring people and churches. As a result, cautious people began to show genuine interest in the church. The one adult who was baptized last summer has a wife who is a member of the church. It took more than ten years for him to believe in Jesus Christ and confess his faith. It was moving to witness.

The pastor of the church has begun to appreciate the value of the Reformed faith, even though he is a Baptist minister. As the years go by, his convictions concerning the Reformed faith has been strengthening. Now he begins to feel the importance of having a creedal standard for the church.

I gave a series of lectures on the basic Christian faith last year in an annual conference for the pastors and evangelists from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. I was able to learn the situation of the churches in the area more fully. They have a strong zeal for evangelism, which is good. I was surprised, however, to find that they do not have creedal standards for their denominations, which causes great confusion. They seemed to be 'tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine'. Theological weaknesses are evident in many areas.

We need to pray for the church there, which is young, and also the pastor. He will probably take charge of the Baptist seminary of Central Asia this year. My prayer is that the Reformed Churches will be a constructive and permanent influence for good on the future society and culture of the area as a token and proof of the Kingdom of God growing.



Books

Puritan Reformed Journal

**Volume 4, Number 2
July 2012**

*Editor – Joel Beeke,
pbk, 260pp, \$10.00*

The variety of contributors, subjects and approaches makes this a readable and profitable volume. Some articles are more scholarly and some more practical. I found Gerald Procee's 'Christian Baptism and the Baptism of John: A Comparative Study' very thorough and helpful. He argues that John's baptism was not the same as the Christian sacrament of baptism. The 'Princeton's Pastor: A Reconsideration of Old Princeton's View of the Christian Ministry' by Allen Stanton was helpful in the stress it laid on a seminary training men to be godly pastors. 'A Theology of Corporate Prayer: Preaching, Prayer Meetings and You' by Ryan M McGraw was interesting in the emphasis it laid on the value of corporate prayer as distinct from private prayer. Most useful of all in my estimation however was the excellent article by Joel Beeke on 'Children in the Church'. It was so helpful that I sought Dr Beeke's permission and I intend, DV, to publish it in the Witness. The book reviews are also stimulating and well-worth reading.

Rev William Macleod

Johannes Rebmann

**A Servant of God in Africa before
the Rise of Western Colonialism**

*Steven Paas,
Afem Mission Academics 32,
pbk, 274pp, £29.95*

I first encountered Johannes Rebmann when writing a series of articles for the Explorer magazine on pioneer missionaries. This recent publication which deals with his life and ministry was passed on to me by

someone who knew of my interest in his work in East Africa. Johannes Rebmann was a 19th century German Christian who gave a life-time of labour to the cause of Christ and this biography was written by a great admirer called Steven Paas who himself gave many years of missionary service in Africa.

As one would expect the early chapters recount his early life and give an interesting account of the roots in German Lutheranism from which Rebmann sprang. Paas informs us that the Rebmann household were greatly helped by their pastor, Karl Strange, who preached a 'Christ-centred Pietism against the man-centred Enlightenment that relied on human wisdom and against rigid Lutheranism that had lost its Evangelical zeal'. It is no small encouragement for ministers to be reminded that young people in our congregations may grow up blessed through the message of the gospel and destined for great things in the Lord's service.

We follow Johannes from his birth in 1820 through his early years and studies at the Basler Mission Seminary and later in London at the Islington CMS seminary. From there the young Rebmann set off for the Mombasa region of present-day Kenya. In the midst of great spiritual darkness and devilish opposition he laboured tirelessly to establish a gospel ministry. In the providence of God from these small and, in many ways, discouraging beginnings grew a work that still bears fruit to the glory of our Saviour. For almost three decades he served, at immense personal cost, to establish not only a local congregation but also a bridgehead from which later missionaries would be able to extend further along the coast and deep into the interior. Sometime after going to Africa he married an English lady called Emma Kent. From the snippets Paas gives of her writings she appears to have been a zealous and discerning Christian. Together they faced danger, loneliness and privation and the all-too-frequent sorrow of infant mortality. Emma herself died in 1866 after fifteen years of self-denying mission service.

A decade later, worn out and suffering from chronic ill-health, her husband was also forced to return to Germany. There, until his death a year later, he continued to do what he could to advance the cause of Christ in Africa.

Besides ministering to those around him Rebmann, like many of his fellow pioneers, made a considerable contribution to the development of African geographical knowledge. He was, for instance, the first European to observe Kilimanjaro mountain and spent many long hours painstakingly drawing up maps of the African interior. This work won him many plaudits and not a few awards but in a letter written at the time he stressed that such honours, including a very prestigious one from the French Academy of Sciences, were of no significance in comparison to the great honour of serving his Lord and telling of His grace to a people who until then had sat in darkness.

Johannes Rebmann saw clearly that fundamental to progress in Africa was a faithful translation of the Scriptures and to this end he made it his priority to compile a grammar and dictionary of the native tongue in order to be able to bring them the Word of God in their own language and perhaps his work in this area was his most important and enduring contribution. He was gifted with great linguistic skills and it was from his pen that there came, amongst other works, the first ever dictionary of the main language of Nyasaland, now Malawi.

Unlike many others, even amongst his colleagues, he was an ardent opponent of Roman Catholicism, regarding it as a greater danger than Islam. He also opposed the High Church section of Anglicanism which, in his opinion, was an imitation of Rome. One of his greatest fears was that he might be succeeded in the field by some who would prove less loyal to Biblical doctrine and this was why he remained in Africa despite increasing blindness and other severe health problems. In his own words, 'I cannot trust it (ie the mission) to those who ...regret the Reformation and put it in question. They put the church in between the sinner and Christ. This is a perversion of the gospel'.

This biography provides a valuable portrait of early missionary endeavour in East Africa and is a constant reminder of the sovereignty of God. Humanly speaking Rebmann's task was impossible but what is impossible with men is possible with God. The book comes nicely illustrated and bears evidence of painstaking research by the author. However it seems to fall somewhere between a popular presentation of Rebmann's life and work and a more academic work, with the result that it is neither the one nor the other. It also suffers from a frustrating tendency to repetition and could have benefited from more judicious editing. The volume also includes a great deal of extraneous material which, no doubt, holds academic interest but inhibits the more general reader and obstructs the flow of the narrative. This is particularly true in regard to the very lengthy section detailing the ongoing dispute over the differing contributions of Rebmann and another fellow missionary, Johan Krapf. These aberrations spoil the book and leave me less willing to give it a warmer recommendation than I might otherwise have done.

Rev Murdo A N MacLeod

The Beggar's Prayer

(Matt.8:2; Mark 1:40)

Samuel Medley
(1738-1799)

A beggar poor, at mercy's door,
Lies such a wretch as I;
Thou know'st my need is great indeed,
Lord, hear me when I cry.

With guilt beset, and deep in debt,
For pardon, Lord I pray;
O let thy love sufficient prove
To take my sins away.

A wicked heart is no small part
Of my distress and shame;
Let sovereign grace its crimes efface,
Through Jesus' blessed name.

My darkened mind, I daily find,
Is prone to go astray;
Lord, on it shine, with light divine,
And guide it in thy way.

My stubborn will opposes still
Thy wise and holy hand;
Thy Spirit send to make it bend
To thy supreme command.

Affections wild, by sin defiled,
Oft hurry me away;
Lord, bring them home, nor let them roam
From Christ, the Living Way.

A conscience hard does oft retard
My walk in holy peace;
Let it by thee made tender be,
And all its hardness cease.

My memory bad, but what is sad,
Can folly still retain;
O fill it, Lord, with thy sweet word,
And let it there remain.

Before thy face I've told my case;
Lord, help, and mercy send;
Pity my soul, and make me whole,
And love me to the end.

Fighting the Good Fight (Part I)

Rev Maurice Roberts

The substance of an address given at the School in Theology , Larbert, 2012

I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing
(2 Timothy 4:7-8)

I have fought a good fight', says the Apostle Paul. Three times Paul uses this expression: 'a good fight'. He does so in the first Epistle on two occasions: in the Epistle to Timothy, chapter 1 and again in chapter 6. So this appears to be a standard way in which the Apostle Paul describes the work of the Christian ministry and the Christian church's testimony in this world. It is a 'good fight'. It reminds us that the Christian must look at life as twofold. There is the 'now' and there is the 'henceforth'.

There are two parts then to life as the Christian views it and sees it. There is the 'now' and there is the 'hereafter'. There is the present life and the life which is to come. This is of course so different from the way in which the natural man thinks. The unconverted man thinks only of the here and now and of the present life. That is why his philosophy is 'let us eat and drink for tomorrow we die'. On the other hand the Christian looks at this life as his being only in this world for a short time. He looks at the world to come as the eternity which is to come. He knows that eternity will be long.

This is the Christian way, I say, to look at life. It is taught by the Lord Jesus Christ in His wonderful Sermon on the Mount. I remind you briefly. He said, 'Blessed are the pure in heart'. Why? 'For they shall see God' (Matthew 5:8). The pure in heart is what we are now; our seeing God is what we will have later. 'Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth' (Matthew 5:5). Meekness refers to the present life of the converted and godly person. Inheriting the earth is what we shall have when the new heavens and the new earth appear.

Again, the Lord Jesus Christ says, 'Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted' (Matthew 5:4). The mourning, the sorrow, the tears are of course just for this present short life. The comfort is when we wake up in the morning and see the glory of Christ. This was the beautiful expression used by Dr David Murray in a letter from America to Professor Hugh Cartwright just before he died a year or two ago. The very touching expression that David Murray used at the end of his letter was: 'See you in the morning'.

The Apostle Paul also shares this same attitude to the Christian life. More than once he conveys the same view of our life as believers: 'Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen [this life], but at the things which are not seen [the life which is to come]: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal' (2Cor.4:17-18).

This of course has very practical implications. We have set before us here our duty *now*. We are to fight the good fight of faith here and now in this life. That is the great challenge. But we do so with that certainty that there is another world in which the Lord's people will sit down with the Saviour Himself and also with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of glory. There all fighting, all sorrow and all tears will be at an end.

I am speaking to many of you who are preachers. It is a very great privilege for me to do so. How much I respect you! How much the angels respect you! You are doing the greatest work you could possibly do on earth. I shall say a little more about that in a moment. But when you go back to your congregations be assured, whatever your situation, whatever your circumstances, you are doing a good work, you are fighting a good fight and the angels know very well that you are doing it for the glory of God and the love you have for Christ. So God Himself will certainly be with you.

I am perhaps speaking to one or two also who are active in politics. You are perhaps not engaged in pulpit work so much but in politics for the sake of God and of Christ. Well, I say, may God be with you and help you in your task because we need men to fight in the political arena also to withstand the evil tendencies and godless laws. May God help you in your fight in that arena also.

May I speak a special word also to young men who are on the threshold of your life's work. I know things look bleak in the present church situation in our country but let me remind you of what somebody once said to me when I began my work as a minister, all those years ago. It was a godly lady who said it. With a smile she comforted me as a young man just beginning in the ministry of the gospel, 'In the ministry, the pay is not great, but the reward is out of this world!' That puts a smile on our face of course but it is not only something to smile at. It is something absolutely true. The reward is out of this world.

Were I to think of young men here perhaps who are not engaged in preparing for the ministry I would say, if you feel the call to serve Christ, if you feel a call to the ministry you could not do a better service than to devote your whole life in fighting the good fight of faith for Christ.

We have heard in recent days a good deal about Olympic Games and Paralympic Games - and what a lot of effort goes into preparing for them! Paul commented on the Olympic Games in his own day, you will remember. The athletes, he said, do it to obtain a corruptible crown but we an incorruptible.

That's the difference. Their crown of leaves in the times of the ancient Games in Greece was fresh for a couple of weeks and then it faded. But the crown that Christ will place on your head if you are faithful to Him, will be forever. You will shine like the sun in the kingdom of the heavenly Father, like the brightness of the firmament for ever and for ever. That is the immense difference.

Don't forget, though the day is dark that does not minimise the importance of the service that you do for Christ. We have an old expression: 'The darker the night, the brighter the stars'. Your life will shine more brightly in a generation like this where so much wickedness abounds on every hand.



Accounts of the 1859-60 Revival
Eyemouth, Berwickshire
Rev John Turnbull – 18th April 1860

We had not been without tokens of the Lord's goodness to us in this place for some years past. Drops fell from Heaven and told of the coming of the plentiful shower which was about to descend and refresh the inheritance of God when it was weary.

For many years past, prayer-meetings, in connection with the different congregations in the town, had been established. About two years ago, these meetings seemed to be visited with a new life; not that they were more numerously attended, but that those who attended them seemed to have more of the spirit of prayer - to have more of the wrestling spirit of Jacob - that, like him, they seemed to say to God, 'We will not let Thee go, except thou bless us'. This wrestling spirit was still more openly manifested after the tidings of what God was doing in America and in Ireland reached us. After that time, we used to leave the prayer-meetings, saying to each other, 'The Lord will hear our prayers: He will give us also a time of refreshing from His presence: the revival will yet reach Eyemouth'. About the latter end of August, I went to Ireland and to Glasgow, where I saw the wonderful work of the Lord. After my return, I gave an account of what I had seen to a very large congregation, composed of members of all the churches in Eyemouth, and was struck with the patience with which they listened to a very lengthened address, and by the interest, marked on their countenances, which they felt in the subject brought before them. Other ministers who had been in Ireland and the West of Scotland followed me in giving similar addresses on week-day or Sabbath-day, and told what they had seen of the work of the Lord; and all of them to large and attentive audiences. The last of these addresses was delivered on the 20th of November; and on the following Tuesday an individual was struck down at my ordinary prayer-meeting. During the week, the report of what had happened got abroad; and on the following Tuesday, more than a hundred persons attended our

prayer-meeting; and to that meeting, as well as to a smaller one held on the week preceding, the man gave an account of the way in which he had been affected, and of his experience before and after the period of his prostration. He said that he had been converted more than a year and a half before; that he had never had a doubt of his being called of God. At the moment he was struck, however, he had been visited by such an overpowering sense of the majesty and holiness of the Lord Jehovah, that he could see nothing in himself but sin, and could find no words with which to express his feelings, but the words, 'God be merciful to me a sinner'.

Toward the latter end of the week, I heard that there was a great desire on the part of the people to come together more frequently for prayer. Accordingly, I intimated on Sabbath that the church would be opened that evening for prayer, also on the following evening - Tuesday being the day of our usual prayer-meeting. I was both surprised and pleased to find a pretty large congregation assembled on Sabbath evening. On Monday, the attendance was still larger; on Tuesday, the church was quite full; and by the end of the week numbers could not find seats, but were obliged to stand in the passages - all seemingly impressed, and anxious, and prayerful.

The United Presbyterian and Baptist churches were also opened every night for prayer, and the greater number of the people attended all the three meetings in succession. The Primitive Methodists also opened their chapel every night, and had a large attendance. I may mention that several cases of prostration occurred there.

On proceeding to visit the people in their own houses, which I did on Monday and following days, I found all impressed and anxious. They all seemed to be asking the question, 'What must I do to be saved?' Many were weeping because of their sins; because of the wrath of God, which they found to be a present burden - a burden too heavy for them to bear. And not

a few, even at that early date, were rejoicing in Christ Jesus. The manna was lying all round about the camp; and the whole face of the ground was wet with the dew of heaven. I can truly say that for weeks in succession I went from house to house, and during all that time I did not meet a single individual who was not impressed. Even those who confessed that they had received no saving benefit, did not hesitate to acknowledge that what they saw was the work of the Spirit of God; and sometimes added, they wished He would visit them in the same way that He had visited their brethren and friends. It may give a more distinct impression of the work to mention a few individual cases :

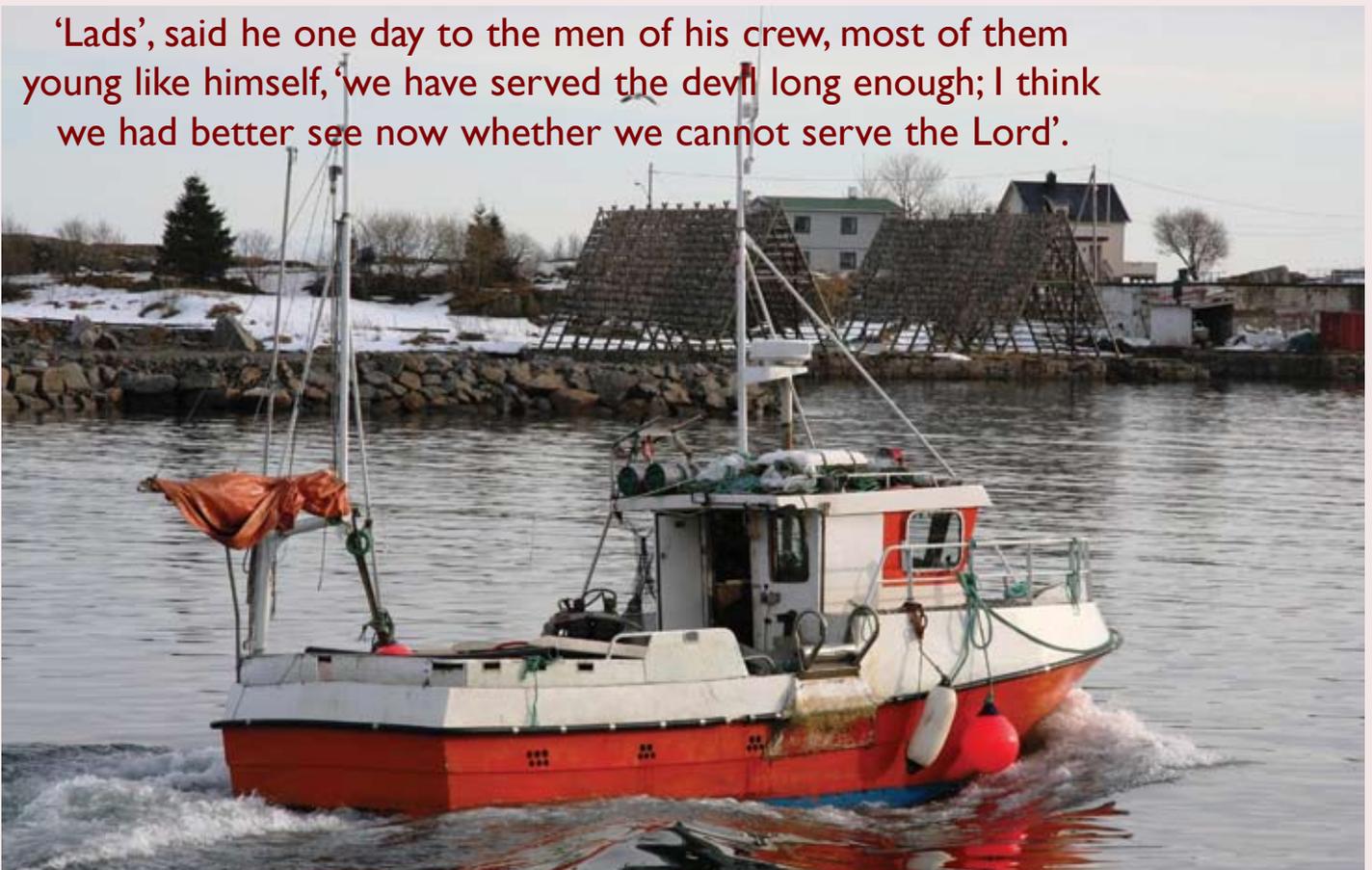
'A' had forsaken the house of God; had ceased to remember the Sabbath-day, which he spent in idleness and dissipation. He had become practically heathen. I was obliged to refuse him baptism for his child. The period of revival came. He feared, or rather felt, that he was lost when he saw what was passing around him. The many he saw weeping for their sins, the many he heard crying out for mercy, awakened him to anxious concern for his soul. He said to himself, 'I must pray' and he went to the rocks, and that in the dark December nights, and cried to God to have mercy on him; and God heard his cry, relieved him of his fears, and made him to hear the voice of joy and gladness. I heard that the Lord had been gracious to him, and went to see him. I did not need to put many questions to him. His face, radiant as the face of an angel, told of the peace and joy that were within – told that he had all joy and peace in believing. He could read but very imperfectly; now he is getting taught to read. He has got through the First Epistle of John, and says, 'I am determined to be able to read my Bible'. He has begun to worship God in his family, and attends the house of

God regularly.

'B' could read his Bible well, and was what might be termed a good scholar. He had been a church member, but had fallen into careless habits, and at last forsook the house of God altogether. The time came when there was a stirring among the dry bones. He caught the awakening influence. He became thoughtful, and felt ashamed of the course he had been following. 'Lads', said he one day to the men of his crew, most of them young like himself, 'we have served the devil long enough; I think we had better see now whether we cannot serve the Lord'. They agreed with him it would be well to do so. That day John asked a blessing before they partook of their coffee. Shortly after, he was so affected with a sense of sin, that he had to retire to the fore part of the boat, and cry unto the Lord to have mercy upon him; and as they returned from their fishing, he prayed earnestly with his companions. Three of those men were at that time applicants for admission to the Lord's table; they came to me on the evening of that day. We usually read a portion of Thomson's Catechism together. I desired them to open their books and begin to read. When I looked at them I found them weeping. 'What is the matter?' I said to them. 'Are you weeping for your sins?' They said they were. 'And strange it would be, sir, if we had not a thought of our sins. We have had a prayer-meeting in the boat to-day. 'B' has prayed as we believe never man prayed'. Next Sabbath 'B' entered the house of God, where he had not been for twelve months; and now he is never absent. He worships God in his family; he prays at our prayer-meetings; he does all that he can to bring the members of his family, as well as others, to Christ. He has left off swearing and drinking. The lion has been turned into a lamb.

To be continued

'Lads', said he one day to the men of his crew, most of them young like himself, 'we have served the devil long enough; I think we had better see now whether we cannot serve the Lord'.



Mission Update

from the Lachmans, Oct - Dec 2012

Greetings from Leverburgh, South Harris, in the Outer Hebrides. Our family is spending the early winter here while Covenant College is closed from October through January. This is our opportunity to connect with supporting churches and prepare for the upcoming academic year.

GRADUATION – Covenant College held its 10th graduation ceremony on 5th October. Eleven students graduated this year with either a Diploma or Certificate. The graduation ceremony was very well attended and was graced by a number of honoured guests including the District Commissioner and two chiefs. We were also very glad to have Rev David Fraser and his wife Marion with us for this special celebration, as they were serving at Covenant College when it began in 2000. The following week Mr Fraser taught on Ephesians at a conference for our graduates and a few local students. We thank God for sustaining Covenant College through the years and trust that He will continue to provide for and prosper the work of His kingdom in Eastern Province.

COLLEGE NEWS – When the College closed on 5th October our students returned to their homes to prepare and plant their fields in anticipation of the rainy season. Most of our students are subsistence farmers who depend on their crops to feed their families, so the College closes during these crucial months to allow them to maintain their fields. Pastor Lovemore Banda, the Acting Principal of the College, and Rev. Charles Zulu, our other full-time lecturer, are keeping an eye on things and sharing College management responsibilities with David via email. Nelson (the College cook and handyman) is helping with security and maintenance. Please keep the Covenant College Zambia Trust ministries and their staff in your prayers during this break, that everyone would remain safe and healthy and we would all be reunited again in early 2013.

OUR TRAVELS – Our family left Zambia on 18th October en route to Scotland, via Europe. We spent a weekend visiting friends in the Netherlands before traveling across Europe by train to Italy. Here we joined Katie's parents and her four youngest siblings for a refreshing holiday which was a welcome change of pace after the challenges of this year. Then we traveled back across Europe by train to London, where we visited a supporting church in Hemel Hempstead, before heading north through Scotland to the Isle of Harris where we have been settled since 8th November. We are thankful to the Lord for smooth travels through Europe, relaxing family time and special memories!

LEVERBURGH LIFE – We are thankful to our Missions Committee for making the arrangements for us to have a warm and comfortable place to stay. We are staying here in Leverburgh for a total of two months. David is kept busy preparing lecture notes and outlines for the classes he will teach in the upcoming year, as well as keeping up with College administration and correspondence, finances, etc. David has also finalised a regularised curriculum for the College to use in its three-year Diploma course and is working on finalising

a new program for the two-year Certificate course. He also has a full preaching schedule, which means we have enjoyed the opportunity of visiting most of the Free Church (Cont.) congregations on the islands of Lewis and Harris. It is a blessing to meet many who have been faithfully supporting the College by prayer and financial means for years. The warm fellowship has been an encouragement to us as a family. David has also been privileged to have the opportunity to speak about Covenant College, not only in several congregations, but also in the Leverburgh Primary School and the Lewis Independent Christian School.

FAMILY NEWS – Elijah has found the cold and blustery weather here in Scotland a real shock after the Zambian heat, but he has adjusted to it with his typical flexibility. We always struggled to keep any clothes on him in Zambia, but now he insists on having his hat, coat and wellies. He loves watching the daily Leverburgh-Berneray ferry steam by the front window. We no longer have a baby in the house, now that Ketzia is officially a toddler and starting to try to speak! She turned one year old on 18th December and is speed-walking around the house, doing her best to dodge her over-exuberant big brother. Both kids are learning and growing at a tremendous rate. Having two very active little ones can be very challenging, but Katie has appreciated the chance to get out of the house once a week and join the local 'mums and toddlers' group. It is a privilege to train our children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord and we covet your prayers as young parents who wish to see our children 'walking in truth'.

JANUARY 2013 – We plan to leave Leverburgh on 7th January and travel south via Skye, Inverness, and Ayr, reaching Glasgow on the 11th. On 17th January we return to Zambia. Lord willing, we hope to be back at Covenant College on the 21st. This will give us a couple of weeks to prepare for the upcoming term which begins on 5th February.

THANKSGIVING – We thank the Lord for blessing us with safe travels; for a refreshing family holiday; for the opportunity to meet so many new people and speak about the Lord's work at the College; for our Missions Committee which has overseen all the arrangements for our stay in Scotland; for the Leverburgh congregation which has generously provided us with a place to stay; for the generosity of our friend Roy Bartle and his mother who loaned us a vehicle to use while in Leverburgh; and for encouraging fellowship with so many friends and supporters.

PRAYER REQUESTS – Please pray for the staff of Covenant College Zambia Trust, both those who are traveling (Marjanne Hendricksen on furlough in the Netherlands, and Phil Bailey and ourselves on furlough in the UK) and those who remain (Jackson Kasolo, the Farm Manager, Lovemore Banda and Charles Zulu overseeing the College, and the other workers and their families); for an excellent rainy season in Zambia to nourish the maize crops on which the people depend; for the Lord to bring the right men to apply as students; for the Lord to provide an experienced pastor to come and serve as a full-time lecturer and College Principal; and for grace to glorify God in the coming year.

'Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass' (Ps37:4-5).

“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked:
who can know it?
I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins,
even to give every man according to his ways,
and according to the fruit of his doings.”

Jeremiah 17:9-19