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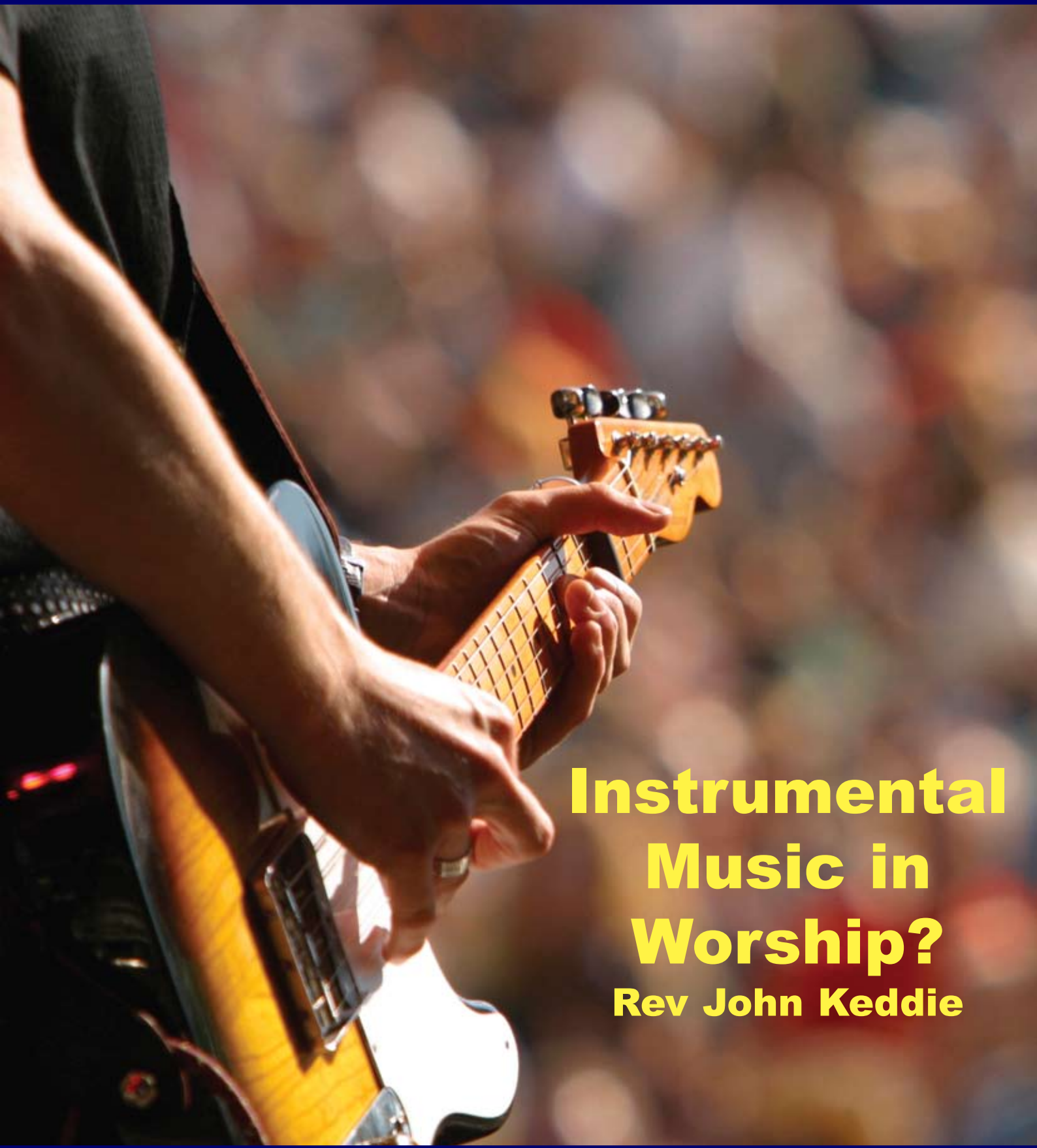

Instrumental Music in Worship?

Rev John Keddie

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CONTENTS

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Page

THE ROLE OF THE BIBLE IN THE LIFE OF A CHRISTIAN 3
INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN WORSHIP 5
COVENANTER'S HIDING PLACE 8
THE ANTICHRIST 9
NEWS DESK 10
SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE 13
BOOKS 14
JAMES MCINNES (CLACHAN, KINTYRE) 16
REMITTANCES - JANUARY 2010 18
LETTER FROM ZAMBIA 18

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The Role of the Bible in the Life of the Christian

Many religions have holy books. Islam, for example, has the Koran. It must be studied in Arabic and is supposed to lack its authority and power when translated into other languages. Prayers are offered in Arabic which Pakistani and Iranian Muslims would not generally understand. Similarly Medieval Roman Catholicism had the Bible in Latin. William Tyndale was burnt at the stake for translating it into English, to make it accessible to the ploughman. Services were in Latin which the common man could not understand. However, in proper Christianity, the Bible loses nothing of its power and authority when translated into the language of the people and prayers are as readily heard by God in English as in Latin. We need no priest or mullah in order to approach God or hear His voice. The Bible is to be made as accessible as possible to all and so will be to their eternal benefit.

How to understand the Bible

A certain perspicuity or clarity belongs to the Scriptures. They are not dark mysterious writings which require a secret code to unravel, or some specially initiated holy man to explain. The central message is clear. The more difficult parts are explained by the simpler ones. The Holy Spirit illuminates the page of Scripture enabling us to grasp what it says and to appreciate its relevance for us.

Never were there more aids than today in studying the Bible. First we must seek to understand what the passage meant to those who first heard it, or rather what it was meant to convey to them. The Old Testament gradually and historically unfolds the message of salvation. With the Old Testament we must consider what new light we can obtain on the passage by considering it in the light of the New Testament. Jesus said: 'Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me' (Jn.5:39). To the two on the road to Emmaus it is said of Jesus, 'beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself' (Lk.24:27). So it is important to relate all the Scriptures to Him. He is the centre. In the Old Testament there was a looking forward to Christ in whom alone is salvation. In the Gospels His life and death are presented and then in the Epistles His person and work are explained.

While translations truly communicate the Word of God, we must remember that the Old Testament was written in Hebrew (and Aramaic) and the New Testament in Greek. To grasp the nuances of meaning we should study the text in the original languages. However if this is not possible then we can look at commentaries which deal carefully with the text. Modern conservative commentaries are usually best as they are able to draw on the riches of past commentators. They take the Bible as God's Word, treating the message with respect. Lexicons and dictionaries will help with the actual meaning of the words used. Sometimes it is helpful to look at different translations. Some commentaries will also fill in the geography, history, date of writing, authorship and background of the passage. There are also books of introduction to the Old and New Testaments which explain these matters more fully. The passage must be thought of in its immediate context and in the context of the book in which it is written and in its place overall in the Bible and in the history of redemption. Difficult passages should be seen in the light of simpler ones and thus Scripture interprets Scripture. There are excellent commentaries available, for example Ralph Davis' commentaries on the Old Testament and William Hendriksen's commentaries on the New Testament. Some commentaries bog one down in dealing with liberal theories. Others are practical but very superficial and so do not wrestle with the text and leave you with the same questions that you had before. We should choose commentaries which explain the passage.

The Role of the Bible

Revelation

First and foremost the Bible is revelation. It reveals to us the truths we need to know for our salvation. In the Bible we are taught what God is really like. While by nature we have some consciousness of a supreme Being, in the Bible we are taught that He is Trinity – one divine essence but three Persons. The Father is revealed as the one who eternally begets the Son, and the Spirit as eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son. God created the world – the Father planning, the Son speaking the creative word and the Spirit perfecting and beautifying. Man was made in the image of God. The Fall of man brought the curse of God for disobedience upon the world. Sin, pain and death entered human experience. But the Scriptures also reveal God as the merciful One. In His great love He plans salvation: 'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life' (Jn.3:16). The Son came and died on the cross as a sacrifice for sinners. He rose victorious over death and the grave. He sent out His disciples to preach the Gospel. The Holy Spirit was granted on the day of Pentecost and accompanies the church in its mission, applying the redemption purchased by Christ to the lost. We learn about our own sin and guilt,

about Heaven and Hell and the fact that we are all by nature on the way to Hell. The Gospel announces that Christ died for sinners, suffering the punishment which was due to them for their sins, and that all who repent and believe on Him will be saved. We are invited, indeed commanded to repent of our sins and believe in Jesus. He is freely offered to us as the Saviour. All who trust in Him are saved.

The Bible also sets before us the way we should live. The law of God is given there to us. First it convicts us of our sin and guilt because we are unable to keep it and thus acts as a schoolmaster (or probation officer) to bring us as helpless lost sinners to Christ (Gal.3:24). Having become Christians and our sins having been pardoned, the law sets before us the rule by which we should live. It is not a matter of us keeping the law to get to heaven, to earn salvation. That is impossible. Rather we show that we have been saved by our keeping of the law. Enjoying God's mercy we show our thankfulness by living a God-pleasing life.

The Bible instructs us with regard to worship, prayer, charity, organising churches, witnessing and evangelism and much more. We must study the Bible to know how to live in this world, how to relate to God and to one another.

Food for souls

Our bodies need a daily intake of food to be healthy and to have the energy for work. So the soul needs food too. The soul feeds on the 'sincere milk of the word' (1Pet.2:2). Contemplating God and His glory, Christ and His finished work, our hearts are filled with good things. As we read of the promises of God and believe them, we are strengthened for the Christian race. God's people in the past have experienced many trials and troubles and these are recorded in the Scriptures for our profit. Out of every trial God has taken them as gold purified in the fire, encouraged and blessed. So, reading the Scriptures, we are encouraged to persevere. We are given hope as an anchor for our souls in the storms of life, that there is a wonderful future ahead of us and that the best is yet to be. Beginning on the Christian road we need milk but as we progress we should be feeding on strong meat (Heb.5:11-14).

Guidance

In our day-to-day lives we need God's guidance and the most important way He does this is through the Scriptures. How does it work? We pray to Him and He directs us through the principles laid down in His Word. We must never pray against the clear teaching of God's Word. For example it is clear in the Bible that a Christian should not marry someone who is not a true Christian. Marriage should only be in the Lord (1Cor.7:39). Also the Apostle states, 'Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?' (2Cor.6:14). Perhaps you feel drawn to a member of the opposite sex but if they are not true Christians you must reject any such thought. The principles of God's Word guide us. But what if the other person is a Christian too? You must still pray for guidance. Marriage is one of the most important decisions in life. A good marriage partner can be a great blessing. As you submissively read the Scriptures, praying for direction, God will lead your thoughts in these and other difficult decisions.

Equipping for service

We must read the Scriptures in order to have spiritual knowledge which is vital to equip us to helpfully minister to our fellow-Christians. The more we know of God's Word the more we will be in a position to instruct, encourage or rebuke our fellow-believers.

We want to be used by God in the conversion of sinners. Again it is vital that we spend much time studying the Scriptures because a good knowledge of God's Word will enable us to communicate that Word to the unconverted. The more we know the Bible the easier it will be to witness. They raise questions and we will require Bible knowledge to be able to answer these. Whatever their difficulty is, we, with God's help, will have the answers.

Paul's words to Timothy summarise the role of the Bible: 'All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works' (2Tim.3:16).

Language for prayer

One final great reason for studying the Bible is to help us to pray and to praise. We have many examples of prayer in the Scriptures and we have a duty to learn from them the pattern for prayer. The Lord's Prayer is of course the supreme example but there are also many others eg Ezra 9:5ff, Daniel 9:4ff, John 17, Ephesians 1:17ff. We find in Scripture the language we can properly use for supplication. Also in the Bible we have the promises which we must plead in our prayers. In the Book of Psalms, God has given to us the best hymnbook ever written. He has given us 150 songs of which He Himself is the author and which praise Him more appropriately than any others.

"The Bible instructs us with regard to worship, prayer, charity, organising churches, witnessing and evangelism and much more."

Instrumental Music in Worship?

Rev John W Keddie

Very little thought is given these days to the question of the propriety of using instrumental music in public worship services. It is not questioned. The fact that instrumental accompaniment was more or less unknown in the Presbyterian Church in Scotland up to the end of the 19th Century comes as a surprise to people, as does the knowledge that the great Baptist preacher of the Victorian era, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, never used instrumental accompaniment in the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London. To this day the Eastern (Orthodox) Church eschews the use of instruments. In the Scottish context only a few of the more-conservative Presbyterian bodies maintain the practice of unaccompanied praise in their services, though the prohibition of instruments in worship has recently been questioned in the majority Free Church of Scotland. The question is: is there a principle here? Is there a sound argument for the exclusion of instrumental accompaniment in public worship services? It has been and is still a principle in the smaller conservative Presbyterian churches. The majority Free Church of Scotland, and the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing) require this statement to be made at all ordinations of new ministers:

'It is my duty to explain to you, and also to the Congregation here present, with reference to that part of the question which will be put to you as to 'Purity of worship as presently practised in this Church' that, in 1910, the General Assembly reaffirmed the legislation of the Church as to uniformity in public worship going back to the year 1707; and that in accordance with that legislation, it is the present practice of the Free Church to avoid the use, in public worship, of uninspired materials of praise, as also of instrumental music. Such present practice determines the purity of worship to the maintenance of which the Ordinand pledges himself'.

The matter of unaccompanied praise is therefore seen to be part of the Church's principles on purity of worship. The burden of this article is to provide some basis in Scripture for this position.

1. The Basic Approach

For all elements of worship – as argued elsewhere, with reference to the singing of Psalms – it is necessary for any church to establish that its practice derives from divine appointment and not merely the wit and wisdom of men. In connection with instrumental music there are certain things, superficially, that appear to be in its favour, and these have to be addressed:

(1) Instrumental music was used and appointed to be used in Old Testament times. Why should that not apply also for the New Testament?

(2) Instrumental accompaniment greatly aids the singing by keeping the pace up and providing a perfect pitch

(3) The use of an instrument provides the potential for a wider variety of musical forms for the songs that may be sung

(4) In any case the use of a mere instrument, or instruments, doesn't encourage or spread error, as the words of songs admittedly might do. Is it not a thing 'indifferent'?

The most ardent advocate of the no instrumental accompaniment in public worship position has no bone of contention with instrumental music *per se*. Musical *appreciation* is not the issue. The potential of instrumental music for example to stir emotions is not questioned, nor are the God-given talents of those who compose music or play instruments. But the question is: Is instrumental accompaniment to praise warranted positively in the New Testament and are there sound reasons for *not* employing such accompaniment *in public worship services*?

2. The Old Testament position

1. The earliest references to instruments in relation to praise are found in connection with the Exodus from Egypt under Moses. In Exodus 15 after the Red Sea deliverance we have the instance of Moses' sister, of whom we read: 'Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances. And Miriam answered them, Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea' (Ex.15:20-21). There is here, however, no specific reference to public worship, but simply spontaneous or 'patriotic' praise from among the women. After all, it was men alone (Levites) who were appointed to lead the entire worship of the Tabernacle service (Num.3:5-10). It was only later, indeed, that the whole form of worship that the Lord required of His people in the wilderness was revealed to Moses at Sinai (Ex.25:40; Heb.8:5).

2. In Psalm 81 it is doubtless a call to celebrate the Passover or Feast of Tabernacles that is spoken of. The Psalm refers back to the Exodus period but clearly relates the praise to what God Himself appointed: 'Sing aloud unto God our strength: make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob. Take a psalm, and bring hither the timbrel, the pleasant harp with the psaltery. Blow up the trumpet in the new moon, in the time appointed, on our solemn feast day. For this was a statute for Israel, and a law of the God of Jacob. This he ordained in Joseph for a testimony, when he went out through the land of Egypt: where I heard a language that I understood not' (1-5). However, the actual reference to the instruments was contemporary Temple worship.

3. It was by the command of God that Moses appointed trumpets to be blown in certain circumstances, such as at times of burnt offerings and other sacrifices, and special occasions (Num.10:1-10). These were to be blown by the sons of Aaron (Num.10:8; 1Chron.15:24). In the nature of the case the trumpets, whether straight (silver) or curved (rams), would be monotonal and were not intended to accompany sung praise. Other instruments were introduced also (2Chron.7:6; 29:25-

26) and these too were played by the Levites. They were not used for the accompaniment of Psalm-singing at the morning and evening sacrifices.

4. In the period of the Exodus and subsequently before settlement in the land of Canaan the centre of worship was the Tabernacle. It had no fixed place of residence until some time after the conquest of Canaan. In Solomon's time it was replaced by the Temple. In both cases the specifications for the structures and their functions and services were specifically appointed and determined by the Lord, in great detail. There is no evidence that instrumental music was common in the Tabernacle when it was not fixed in one position. When the Levites were no longer required for moving the Tabernacle they were deployed to various duties, including 4,000 to praise the Lord with stringed instruments (1Chron.23:4-5; see also 1Chron.25 for further details). The arrangements latterly in the Tabernacle clearly carried over subsequently to the Temple worship. The following should be noted of the use of instrumental music in the Tabernacle and Temple:

1. The instrumental music employed in the Tabernacle was divinely ordained and not just a whim of King David (or any of the priests or Levites) (1Chron.28:11-13, 19).

2. When the Temple was built and the order of services instituted, it was also a matter of divine commandment (2Chron.29:24-26).

3. Instrumental music would not have constituted an element in Temple worship without the express authority of God (2Chron.5:13-14; 8:14).

4. We read: 'when the burnt offering began, the song of the Lord began also with the trumpets, and with the instruments ordained by David king of Israel. And all the congregation worshipped, and the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded; and all this continued until the burnt offering was finished. And when they had made an end of offering, the king and all that were present with him bowed themselves, and worshipped. Moreover Hezekiah the king and the princes commanded the Levites to sing praise unto the Lord with the words of David, and of Asaph the seer. And they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed their heads and worshipped' (2Chron.29:27-30). The musical accompaniment lasted as long as the burnt offering, and so what we read in verses 29 and 30 in relation to sung praise was unaccompanied. We can understand therefore that all the elements associated with the offerings, including the instrumental music, were typical or symbolic.

There is no evidence for instrumental music accompanying praise outside the Tabernacle/Temple worship. And all the worship of the Tabernacle and Temple was necessarily in types, symbols and shadows, pointing forward to fulfilment in the later work of Christ and the Holy Spirit. This is clear from Hebrews. The priests simply 'serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things' (8:5). The worship was 'a figure for the time then present' (9:9). The sacrifices were limited and merely pointed forward to a once-for-all perfect sacrifice offered by Christ: 'For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? Because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins' (10:1-4). What takes away sin? The sacrificial work of Jesus: 'But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God' (10:12).

5. All this indicates that instrumental music, being appointed and ordained for the typical, symbolical and shadowy worship of the Old Testament, would also be an element, like the priesthood and the sacrifices, which would be fulfilled in the New Testament and therefore serve no further purpose.

6. Mention is often made of the content of Psalms such as Psalm 150 which make references to all sorts of musical instruments. These references may be understood, however, perfectly well in relation to the elements of the instrumental music which were typical or symbolical of their New Testament fulfilment. Thus, on the supposition that the use of musical instruments pointed forward to the work of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament era (principally), then such Psalms in fact become far clearer to the Christian church than they would have been even to the Old Testament church.

3. The New Testament position

1. We have spoken already of the passing of the Old Testament ceremonies, types, symbols and shadows with the work of Christ and pouring out of the Holy Spirit. It stands to reason – and is agreeable with Biblical revelation – that those things which anticipated the New Testament era must of necessity be abolished (Mt.27:51). It also stands to reason, however, that there will be an element of continuity or at least evident replacement of elements of the Old Testament services. This applied, for example, to the sacraments, baptism replacing circumcision as a sign of the covenant (Mt.28:19-20), and the Lord's Supper replacing the Passover (Mt.26:17-30; 1Cor.11:23-34).

2. Thus, the positive sanction for the instruments in the Tabernacle or Temple does not carry over to the New Testament any more than the priesthood or sacrifices did. That is not to say that there will not be aspects of the Temple services which will have their analogy in New Testament worship. We have that, for example, with the singing of Psalms (Eph.5:19; Col.3:16) and the offerings (2Cor.8). But it is the fruit of the lips that praises Him, not the sounds of instruments in His worship: 'By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name' (Heb.13:15).

3. The principal question is whether or not there is any direct and express warrant in the New Testament for the accompaniment of sung praise. If the Temple and its services must be recognised as fulfilled and therefore obsolete; and if the instrumental music was expressly appointed as a type or symbol of something fulfilled in the New Testament age, then it is unwarranted simply to adopt such instrumental music without having a clear warrant to do so from the Lord's Word in the newer Testament.

4. Whatever may have been the origins of the local Synagogues as meeting places for the worshippers under the older Testament, they were clearly consistent with the application of the 2nd and 4th commandments and the basic need of people to devote time on the weekly Sabbath to public praise, as exemplified by the Lord Himself (Lk.4:16). There is every reason to believe that there were no instruments in the Synagogues. There appear to be the simple elements of prayer and praise and preaching. This much is suggested by the several instances in the gospel and Acts in which we have glimpses into the worship patterns within the Synagogues. It is clear from the Acts that Synagogues became the first centres for collective Christian congregational worship (Acts 17:10-12).

5. There is no question that the Old Testament with its elaborate system of ritual and sacrifices presented a more carnal, outward aspect of religion than what we find in the New Testament. It is clear that in the New Testament a veil was lifted (2Cor.3:14-15) and the worship was more simple, spiritual and experiential than visual. This is understandable, given the uniqueness of the giving of the Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2). Jesus Himself indicated this contrast in speaking to the woman at the well in Samaria: 'Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth' (Jn.4:21-24).

6. In a sense this answers an obvious question: If all the worship that was adopted in the Tabernacle/Temple was typical or figurative of a fulfilment in the New Testament era, what was it specifically of which the instrumental music was typical? We can understand all the sacrifices and the priesthood as being fulfilled in Christ and His work. This much seems very clear in the letter to the Hebrews. But what in the Old Testament points forward to the Holy Spirit's work, conjointly with Christ's? We read in Hebrews: 'For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?' (Heb.9:13-14). There seems good reason for affirming that it is precisely the instrumental music element of the Temple worship that pre-figured the work of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament era.

4. Conclusion

1. It must come as no surprise that churches of the Reformed and Presbyterian tradition, conscientiously seeking express commandment and appointment, directly and by good and necessary consequence from Scripture, generally came to the conviction that instrumental music was inappropriate and without divine warrant for New Testament worship. The adoption of instruments, mostly organs, but more recently a whole range of instruments and styles of music, derives for the greater part from the mid-to-late 19th century, certainly in Scotland. Typically legislation was passed of a permissive sort. Thereafter in local congregations its introduction and development depended largely upon mere supportive majorities. The Free Church of Scotland allowed instrumental music in 1883 though after little or no discussion of the principle. The legislation that allowed instrumental accompaniment was repealed and repudiated by the post-1900 continuing Free Church between 1905 and 1910.

2. Initially the motive for the adoption of instrumental music lay in the desire to improve praise. The preference was for organs, the so-called 'queen of instruments'. However, as we have argued, Biblical warrant for such a thing is weak in the extreme. What is more, once it is admitted there is little prospect of restricting the types or numbers of instruments used. There are simply no Biblical criteria to say what instruments may – or may not – be adopted. It may be said to be retrogressive in worship in that the use of instrumental music radically shifts the focus of worship from the individual engaged in praise from his own heart and lips to the 'music' as that which drives it all along and may so readily become an element in itself as a 'performance' or merely producing ambient noise before, during or after services. This is not to excuse poor singing or carelessness about the leading of the unaccompanied praise. Nor does it involve accusations of heresy. But there is an argument for eschewing musical instruments in New Testament worship because of the evident lack of direct warrant and the concern there ought to be to avoid that which smacks of being essentially 'after the commandments and doctrines of men' (Col.2:22).

"The use of instrumental music radically shifts the focus of worship from the individual engaged in praise from his own heart and lips to the 'music' as that which drives it all along."

The Covenanter's Hiding Place

Friendly Companion: September 2009

Upon a lonely hillside, in a place sheltered between two high rocks, a man had been lying all night, a pile of dry grass for his bed, a few branches laid across from rock to rock his only roof. I think he had slept sweetly, for he had peace in his conscience. But at the same time, his sleep had been light, for whenever the wind had made more noise than usual among the trees, or the owl had hooted in the woods below, he lifted his head to listen. In the morning he looked anxiously all around. Nothing was in sight to harm him. He gazed down to that fair quiet home of his, nestling in the valley below, that home where his wife and children lived.

John Paterson

But why was he a wanderer? John Paterson was one of those godly Covenanters of whom we Scots are so thankful: one of those men who loved the will of God far better than house or lands, wife or children, aye, better than life itself. Because he would not join himself to a church that he thought corrupt, because he was resolved to worship the Lord as he believed the Lord had bid him worship Him, therefore the rulers of the land were set to do him all the evil they could. Bands of soldiers had been sent out to take him prisoner, or to shoot him down like a wild beast. To save his life he had been obliged to leave his home – like so many hundreds of his brethren – and to seek a hiding place in the dark woods, on the lonely hillsides, in the dens and caves of the earth.

For many weeks he had lived in this little hole, on the top of Benbeoch crags, never going down to see his wife and children except in the early morning, or through the dark night, when he sometimes ventured to step into his own house for an hour, an hour spent in fear and trembling, listening for the clang of horses' hooves. Such a hurried visit he was going to make this morning. As soon as he made sure that no enemy was in sight, he began to go swiftly down the hill, keeping his eye constantly upon the road that led to his farmhouse: that road by which the soldiers had come so often to search for him.

It was a lovely morning. Poor Paterson's heart swelled with joy at the thought of holding his wife and children in his arms again. Already he was so near to the house as to see the blind of the little bedroom drawn back, and his wife looking anxiously up the hill towards his resting place, when suddenly his ear caught the sound of a flock of sheep scudding over the moor, and, looking round to find out what had startled them, he saw a whole troop of soldiers coming, not along the high road, but straight across the country towards him.

The Chase

Instantly he turned to flee to his hiding place. But already the troopers had seen him, and with fierce whoop urged their horses across the moor. A dry stone wall girded Benbeoch crags. Paterson had to get over it, and paused for a minute on the top to look round and see where his pursuers were. Ah! How fast were they gaining ground on him! Almost he seemed within their clutches, and gave himself up for lost. He sprang down from the wall, and tried to clamber as best as he could among the large blocks of granite that lay strewed all over the surface of the hill. He fought on, stumbling, climbing among the stones, and tearing his way through the tangled thorns and briers, but with little hope in his heart of escaping altogether. For already the dragoons had leaped over the wall, and, some on foot, some still on horseback, were close after him, keeping him full in view.

Earnest Prayer

'Then', to use Paterson's own words, 'I cried mightily to the Lord, for there was no help in me and no help in man: "Hide me under the shadow of Thy wings, Lord! Oh, save me, for I trust in Thee!" While the words were still in my mouth, while the curses of the foremost dragoons were almost in my very ears – their hot breath seemed almost to touch my cheek – I stumbled over a large block of stone and fell heavily to the earth. To the earth? No, through it. Down into the very depths I fell, away from the daylight, away from the sight of man, away from the wrath of mine enemies. When I ceased falling, I was for a minute stunned, but not at all hurt.

Presently, rising to my feet, I found myself in a large, dry, airy cavern in the heart of the crag, a place that seemed to me a perfect paradise in comparison to my poor little hiding place on the top of the hill. I could hardly believe my senses. It was as if the Lord had commanded the earth to open, and take me down to its loving bosom, to rest there in peace and safety. And while I heard the fierce dragoons overhead, raging and cursing and calling out to each other, I knelt down, and with all my heart gave praise and thanks to the Lord, who had thus directed my steps according to His grace. Never in all my life did I enjoy such a blessed time of communion with my Lord. Was it not as if I could feel the everlasting arms underneath me, His left hand under my head, His right arm embracing my soul. It was as if I were even losing myself in delight at the fullness of His love. That half an hour of such joy in the light of His countenance would have made up for a whole lifetime of persecution, of sorrow and danger'.

His Wife

When Paterson had heard the voices of his persecutors die away in the distance, and when for a long time he had enjoyed that blessed communion with his loving God and Saviour, he began to think of the fears his wife must be suffering on his account, and to devise a way of sending her news of him. He found means to reach the opening of the cavern which he had so unexpectedly entered, and looking out to see if the troopers were really gone, he heard the call of a woman's voice near to him. It was his wife, who, having seen the troopers in such hot pursuit after her husband, and then seeing them ride away in the direction of the county town, was sure that they had found him, and slain him on the hillside.

She was seeking his dead body when Paterson heard her voice, and called to her, and I am sure you can well imagine for yourselves her joy and gratitude in seeing him quite well and safe. With his help she climbed down into the cave, and kneeling together on the bare floor, they consecrated this new home for the wanderer by united prayer and praise to the God

of their help. Afterwards, by degrees, bedding and a little furniture of different kinds were brought to this cave God had so wonderfully pointed out to them. And in a short time it was made a most comfortable and secure hiding place, not only for John Paterson, but for many of the persecuted brethren of the countryside.

The Antichrist: The Reformed Doctrine

Pastor Malcolm H Watts (Emmanuel Church, Salisbury)

Antichrist comes from a Greek word, *'Antichristos'*. The Greek prefix *'anti'* has a two-fold meaning: the first is 'against', the second is 'instead of', and perhaps these two should be combined, suggesting someone who opposes Christ by putting himself in Christ's place. Historically, the Protestant doctrine has been that the Papacy is the 'Antichrist' because the Pope of Rome is Christ's enemy and also his pretended substitute (hence his claim to the title 'Vicar of Christ', or 'Vice-Christ', which means someone who arrogantly assumes the place or position of Christ). In this article we shall look at what some famous theologians have said:

Martin Luther (1483-1546): 'The Pope is (and I cannot believe otherwise) the veritable Antichrist'

'The papacy is truly the kingdom of Babylon and of the very Antichrist. For who is 'the man of sin' and 'the son of perdition' [2Thes.2:3] but he who with his doctrines and laws increases the sins and perdition of souls in the church, while sitting in the church as if he were God? [2:4]. All this the papal tyranny hath fulfilled, and more than fulfilled, these many centuries'.

John Calvin (1509-1564): 'To some we seem slanderers and railers when we call the Roman pontiff 'Antichrist'. But those who think so do not realize they are accusing Paul of intemperate language, after whom we speak, indeed so speak from his very lips. And lest anyone object that we wickedly twist Paul's words (which apply to another) against the Roman pontiff, I shall briefly show that these cannot be understood otherwise than of the papacy…'.

'Paul does not speak of one individual, but of a kingdom, that was to be taken possession by Satan, that he might set up a seat of abomination in the midst of God's temple – which we see accomplished in popery'.

John Knox (1514-1572): [To Dean John Annand] 'As for your Roman Church, as it is now corrupted, and the authority thereof, wherein stands the hope of your victory, I no more doubt that is the synagogue of Satan, and the head thereof, called the Pope, to be that 'man of sin', of whom the apostle speaks, than that I doubt that Jesus Christ suffered by the procurement of the visible church of Jerusalem'.

William Tyndale (1492-1536): 'Kings …were not ordained to fight one against another, or to rise against the emperor to defend the false authority of the pope, that very antichrist… They (the Romanists) … have set up that great idol, the whore of Babylon, antichrist of Rome, whom they call Pope; and have conspired against all commonwealths, and have made them a several Kingdom, wherein it is lawful, unpunished, to work all abomination'.

Hugh Latimer (1470-1555): 'In this we learn to know antichrist, which doth elevate himself in the church, and judgeth at his pleasure before the time. His canonizations, and judging of men before the Lord's judgment, be a manifest token of antichrist'.

Nicholas Ridley (1500-1555): 'I cannot but with St. Gregory, a bishop of Rome also, confess that the bishop of that place [Rome] is the very true Antichrist'.

John Hooper (1495-1555): 'It is a foul and detestable arrogancy, that these ungodly bishops of Rome attribute unto themselves the heads of Christ's church, the more to be lamented. He that considereth their life, and conferreth (compareth) it with the Scripture, will judge by the authority thereof, that they were not for these many years worthy to be accounted any members of God's church, but the members of the devil and the first begotten of antichrist'.

John Bradford (1520-1555): 'I will not grant the antichrist of Rome to be Christ's vicar-general and supreme head of his church here and everywhere upon earth, by God's ordinance'.

Thomas Cranmer (1489-1556): 'As for the pope, I refuse him as Christ's enemy, and antichrist, with all his false doctrine'.

Thomas Cartwright (1535-1603): 'Whatsoever cometh from the pope, which is antichrist, cometh first from the devil'.

Matthew Poole (1624-1679): 'May we not say to the pope concerning antichrist, Art thou he, etc.? I will speak boldly, either there is no antichrist, or the bishop of Rome is he'.

Matthew Henry (1662-1714): 'The antichrist here mentioned is some usurper of God's authority in the Christian Church, who claims divine honours; and to whom can this better apply than to the bishops of Rome, to whom the most blasphemous titles have been given?'

Thomas Manton (1620-1677): 'The first *use* (when applying the teaching of 2 Thessalonians 2) is to give us a clear discovery of where to find Antichrist; every tittle of this is fulfilled in the bishop of Rome.'

Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892): 'It is the bounden duty of every Christian to pray against Antichrist, and as to what Antichrist is no sane person ought to raise a question. If it be not the Popery in the Church of Rome and in the Church of England, there is nothing in the world that can be called by that name … Popery anywhere, whether it be Anglican or Romish, is contrary to Christ's gospel, and is the Antichrist, and we ought to pray against it. It should be the daily prayer of every believer that Antichrist might be hurled like a millstone into the flood and sink to rise no more'.

The Westminster Confession of Faith (1647): 'There is no other head of the church but the Lord Jesus Christ: nor can the Pope of Rome in any sense be head thereof; but is that antichrist, that man of sin, and son of perdition, that exalteth himself in the church against Christ, and all that is called God' (Ch. XXV, sect. VI).

News

Rev William Macleod with the Korean students, Lyons, France

Ministry in France

Early on the 28th of December I left home boarding a plane to Lyons in France. The following morning I gave a one and a half hour lecture to a group of around 120 Koreans – mostly students. The conference was organised by the Jesus Disciple Mission, an organisation which began in Korea about twenty years ago. It works on university and college campuses and is similar to the Christian Union and Navigators. It seeks to disciple young people and so involves them in Bible studies, prayer meetings, one-to-one counselling and evangelism. It has spread from Korea to other parts of Asia, Africa, Europe and North America. The young folk in Lyons were from Germany, France and the UK. They gather annually for the conference called 'G n G' or 'Get up and go'. Next year it is due to be held in the south of England.

The founder and director of the Mission, Pastor Yoon, was present and preached powerfully a series of sermons from the life of Joseph bringing out many challenging applications for the young folk. I had to speak through an interpreter. Only about half the students had English but the common language was Korean. What a barrier, indeed curse, the different languages are! We long for the day when we will be in heaven, and the curse of Babel will be behind us and we will all be able to communicate effortlessly with one another. In the afternoon I answered many searching questions for almost an hour.

The Koreans are an amazing people. Wherever they go in the world they begin a church. There are now over 20,000 Korean missionaries working all over the world. Many Koreans study abroad and so they tend to gravitate towards these churches where their own language is spoken, their culture is appreciated and they can share in their own distinctive food. One highly prized food is Kimchi. I was told Kimchi is to the Koreans what cheese is to the French. No meal is right without it. After I had eaten and enjoyed it I was told it was made from cabbage mixed with fish guts and left to rot for several days. With lots of chilli it was very acceptable!

It was good to talk to the young folk and hear of the grace of God in their lives. One young man I spoke to had come to this conference three years ago, high on drugs and was converted and is now studying for the ministry in London. The Koreans lay great emphasis on prayer. Their normal practice is to gather at 5.30am each morning for prayer. Has this got something to do with the blessing they experience?

Desk

Australian Citizenship

Rev James Frew has recently been granted Australian Citizenship. He writes: 'I am sure you will rejoice with us here in celebrating my attaining Australian citizenship. I am now both British and Australian, and above all the Lord's servant in Magill! The Hon Mr Christopher Pyne Federal MP and Shadow Minister for Education welcomed me as an Australian Citizen as well as the local Mayor, Simon Brewer. Mr. Pyne remembered me and his visit to the congregation (at my induction) being struck by unaccompanied Psalm singing in the uncluttered preaching and worship of God'.

Christian Teacher Dismissed

Christian Institute

A Christian teacher has been sacked from her job after offering to pray for a sick pupil during a home-tutoring visit. Olive Jones said she was made to feel like a criminal for sharing her faith, and claims that this is yet another example of Christians being persecuted because of 'political correctness'. The Christian Legal Centre, which is backing Mrs Jones' case, blames the 'heavy-handed so-called equalities agenda that discriminates against Christians'. The 54-year-old mother of two, who taught maths to children too ill to attend school, said she mentioned prayer during a tutoring session with one of her pupils. But just hours later she was hauled before her managers for questioning. She said her bosses had decided her comments about faith could be seen as 'bullying' and dismissed her from her role at Oak Hill Short Stay School and Tuition Service in Somerset. Mrs Jones, a teacher with 20 years' experience, now fears she may never work again. During one session with the pupil, the child said she did not feel well enough for the lesson so she stayed in one of the bedrooms while Mrs Jones chatted with the girl's mother. Mrs Jones raised the topic of her faith, saying she believed God had saved her life after an ordeal as a teenager. Unbeknown to Mrs Jones the girl's mother lodged a complaint, but the authorities did not inform Mrs Jones of any criticism. It was not until after her next visit when she once again referred to her belief in God that she was brought before her bosses for questioning and dismissed from her post.

Mrs Olive Jones

How shocking it is to hear of such things in the United Kingdom! A woman shares her faith and is persecuted because of it. Where will it all end? We are a 'Christian' country and yet we are denied freedom of speech.

Council Moves Against Proposed Megamosque

Christian Voice

The Times is reporting that the plans of an extremist Muslim sect for a 'megamosque' in West Ham, London have collapsed. Tablighi Jamaat have failed to submit a planning application, following a three-year prayer campaign at the site by Christian Voice. The sect, closely linked to Muslim terrorists, has been living on borrowed time since October 2006. That is when temporary planning permission for use of the old chemical plant's offices at Abbey Mills as a place of worship expired. Christian Voice members have prayed at the site every first Saturday in the month since January 2007. Newham Council have now issued an enforcement notice, 'investigating all options, including compulsory purchase'. Much credit is due to Cllr Alan Craig, who has kept up a solid campaign in Newham council since Tablighi Jamaat's ambitions for a 12,000-seater mosque were unveiled. However, Cllr Craig is expecting the sect to appeal. 'This is just a set-back for this group, not the end of the story,' he warned.

Children's Psalm-Singing Day

Isobel Scott

Would parents please note that, DV, there will be a children's Psalm Singing Day on 27th March from 11.00 am till 3.00 pm in the Community Education Centre, Ashgrove, Blackburn, West Lothian. As on previous such days there will be an opportunity for our boys and girls to meet and get to know each other and have fun together. Children can also be tested on their knowledge of the 2009/10 Psalmody Test tunes on the day. Drinks can be provided but it is necessary for everyone to bring their own lunch.

Proposals to Advance Gay Rights

Christian Institute

During an interview with a gay lifestyle magazine Mr Nick Clegg, Leader of the Liberal Democrat party, unveiled a series of proposals to advance 'gay rights' in the UK. When asked if the Liberal Democrats would require all schools, including faith schools, to teach that homosexuality is normal and harmless, Mr Clegg replied: 'Yes'. However, critics have attacked Mr Clegg's proposal. One senior Anglican bishop said: 'I think this will go down badly even among the not overtly evangelical. Instituting something that must be taught, come what may, is frighteningly fascist'. Mr Clegg also called on faith schools to ensure they don't become 'asylums of insular religious identity'. However, a recent report discovered that secondary schools run by faith groups are better at building community cohesion than secular schools. During the interview Mr Clegg also proposed to end the longstanding safeguard which prevents blood donations from men who have engaged in sexual activity with other men. However, last year the National Blood Service warned that overturning the current ban on donations would 'result in a fivefold increase in the risk of HIV-infected blood entering the blood supply'.

All three main parties have been courting the gay vote in recent months ahead of the upcoming General Election. Mr David Cameron has admitted that the Conservatives' tax reforms for married couples would extend to those in civil partnerships. The Prime Minister has also made attempts to encourage homosexual voters to back Labour.

It is sad to see how political parties have been won over to support the so-called 'gay agenda'.

Key Court Case on Marriage in USA

Christian Institute

A landmark legal bid to overturn a public vote and redefine marriage across all 50 states of America began in San Francisco, California, on 11th January. The courtroom trial will centre on a 2008 referendum in which 52 per cent of Californians voted to alter the state constitution to affirm that 'only marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognised'. Homosexual activists are using the federal court system to argue that the amendment is unlawful under the US Constitution. The case looks set to go all the way to the US Supreme Court where any decision would apply to all 50 American states.

Brian Brown, director of the National Organisation for Marriage, said the case is an attempt 'to put the voters of California on trial and it's wrong'. He added: 'Our founding fathers would be rolling over in their graves if they heard that the Constitution guarantees the right to redefine marriage. This is absurd'.

Death of Centenarian Rev Samson Kilolo in Kenya

Christian Observer

Howard Carlson reports that centenarian the Rev Samson Kilolo, a founder of the Independent Presbyterian Church of Kenya (IPC), has died in Mwingi, Kenya, and was buried on 2 January. Carlson describes Kilolo as a man of great energy, who in the 1950s was imprisoned for two years on suspicion of aiding the Mau Mau movement. When Kilolo entered prison, there were no Christians among the prisoners, but when Kilolo was absolved and released, almost all of the prisoners were now believers in Christ. At the prisoners' request, Kilolo stayed an extra two weeks in prison to prepare leaders for the Christian movement there. Samson Kilolo was a great lover of truth. When an issue over pagan tribal practice (concubines) entered the IPC through one of its leaders and the sin was not disciplined, Kilolo wept in Synod. Carlson relates that he was present at the IPC Synod meeting to hear Kilolo tearfully mourn that this leader, whom Kilolo had helped nurture and had blessed as the young man departed for theological studies, had now unrepentantly turned away from the pure walk of the Christian. Kilolo then suspended his own relationships with the IPC Synod as long as the unrepentant man should serve in high office in the IPC.

Carlson concludes: 'Kilolo was a true son of the Reformation. He would have stood out in any church body. His family, church, and we, have lost a great warrior-friend.'

Rev Pat Mahoney Challenges Obama

Christian Observer

In a 30 December 2009 news release, Reformed Presbyterian pastor and Director of the Christian Defence Coalition, the Rev Pat Mahoney, points out that as a presidential candidate Barack Hussein Obama attended church regularly during the 2008 presidential campaign, but since taking office as U S President, has neither attended church on a regular basis nor found a church home in Washington DC.

Mahoney asks whether or not integrity and honesty are demonstrated by a presidential candidate that makes involvement in a local church community with regular church attendance a key component of his campaign, but once elected has no relationship with a local church, and Mahoney says the resultant appearance is that the claimed importance of a church community to Obama's family was not a deeply held core belief, but rather a crass political calculation to curry favour with the faith community.

Mahoney continues by listing Obama's most egregious snubs of Christianity since becoming U S President, and addresses the U S President, saying: 'To portray yourself as a person of deep Christian faith and very involved in the life of the local church during the campaign and then abandon that position after you are elected reduces faith to a commodity

and religion to a political tool ... [I]f your Christian faith and involvement with a local church means as much to you as you say it does, please find a vibrant local community for you and your family to worship Christ'.

1960 Christians Killed by Gunmen in Iraq

Christian Observer

A 26 December 2009 article in Aswat al-Iraq (Voices of Iraq) reports that the head of the Chaldean Cultural Association for Peace, Hawal Ziqiya Masho, told Aswat al-Iraq that 1960 Christians in Iraq have been gunned down since the US-led invasion in 2003. Masho further reports that the number of Iraqi Christians in Iraq since the 2003 invasion has dwindled from 2.1 million to 500,000. In the same time period, 500,000 Iraqi Christians have had their property confiscated, 200,000 Iraqi Christians have been forced to pay extortion money, and dozens of Iraqi Christians have been kidnapped, then released after a ransom is paid. Masho reports too that violence in Iraq against Christians is supported by an unnamed neighbouring country, and concludes that: 'There is a plan to flush all Christians out of Iraq'.

While our servicemen and those of America are losing their lives to provide for the liberty and security of ordinary Iraqis it is very sad that the Christian community is not better protected.

Olivet Correspondence Courses

These courses are designed to occupy interested Christians in valuable study of Christian subjects which will enhance their knowledge of the faith and begin to fulfil their desire to be more useful Christians in the service of their Lord. The courses do not require higher learning but are pitched at the level of the ordinary person. Anyone interested, inside or outside the church, is warmly invited to participate, and should contact Rev David Fraser, 191 Sandyhills Road, Glasgow, G32 9NB, Tel: 0141 573 0912. E-mail: dfraserm@ntlworld.com

Victory in the Lords

Christian Institute

The Government has lost in the House of Lords (25th January) over its attempt in the Equality Bill to alter the law on whom churches and other faith-based groups can employ. Peers voted 216 to 178 in favour of Lady O'Cathain's amendment to keep the current law unchanged. Then in an extraordinary move the Government broke with House of Lords convention in a bid to damage Lady O'Cathain's victory. But in two further votes Lady O'Cathain won by 195 votes to 174 and by 177 votes to 172. In the debate before the votes, the Government claimed its plans would simply 'clarify' the law. But churches said the plans would narrow important safeguards designed to help religious employers defend their ethos. The Government's defeat means no change to the current law, which permits churches and other faith-based employers to protect their ethos by insisting staff live consistently with the religion's doctrine on sexual behaviour. At this stage it is not known whether the Government will try to overturn the defeat in the Commons.

We rejoice in this victory.

Spiritual Experience

Rev James Clark

Spiritual experience refers to all that affects one's spirit, as opposed to that which affects the five natural senses only. It is basically the experience of God in Christ and results in worship, trust and obedience. It carries with it (fluctuating, alas) degrees of love and devotion. This religious experience is a reality, but how do we know if it is genuine? 1 John was written to evaluate professions of religious experience, for example, 'If we say...' (1:6, 8,10)

The evidences set out in Scripture are moral and devotional. There is no forgiveness without confession of sin and no confession of sin is sincere which does not lead to an endeavour to forsake it. Where there is love to Christ there is prayer and Bible-reading; the latter is to direct our devotion into specific channels of obedient service. Spiritual birth will lead to spiritual growth, which can be measured internally and externally (the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5 and the accompaniments of faith in 2 Peter 1). However, if the external works of man do not flow from the internal work of God (Phil.2:12-13), then it means that the actings are without grace and, though they may be outwardly splendid before men, they are displeasing to God (Heb.11:6) as are all works done without grace and faith. The likeness to Christ must be inside and outside, and the image and conformity begin within.

True religious experience is characterised as 'abiding in Christ' (Jn.15:4 and 1Jn.2:24-25) as opposed to emotional 'fits and starts'. That which is spiritual is eternal and unworldly in its origin, expression and goal. It is right to beware of mistaking the expressions of religious profession for the reality of religious experience. Stock phrases may obtain membership of the church on earth, but it takes more than words to get to Heaven! Spiritual experience will indeed be manifested in an open confession of Christ (1Jn.4:15) but only God knows if it is from the heart (Rom.10:9-10). Furthermore, while religious experience is not independent of morality, the latter is no substitute for the former. Spiritual experience is rooted in a contrite heart (Mt.5:3-4 and 1Jn.1:9); this is where God dwells and holds court (Is.57:15).

In his first Epistle the Apostle John sets forth the tests of spiritual life, life in union to Christ. We should be thankful for this and seek to live 'experimentally'. There is only one life and we cannot afford to make a mistake as to whether we have it or not (1Jn.5:12).

Books

The Sovereignty of God

Arthur W Pink

Banner of Truth, pbk, 154pp, £6.25

The sovereignty of God is a tremendous theme. It causes us to worship the Lord, which is the great purpose of our existence. It comforts us in all our trials and troubles. We know that our heavenly Father is in control. It encourages us in our evangelism because there is no heart so hard that the Lord cannot break it, no sinner so wicked but that the Lord can bring him to repentance.

The chapter on God's sovereignty and prayer is particularly helpful. The fact that God has a plan does not render prayer useless. Prayer does not and of course could not change God's plan but prayer itself is planned by God and is the means whereby God carries out His purposes.

The present volume is a resetting of the edition which was first published by the Banner of Truth Trust in 1961. The first edition of the book was published in America in 1919. This volume has down through the years made a considerable impression across the world. No book has been more used to turn Arminians into Calvinists. Pink proves how God's sovereignty in election is biblical and also that Christ died only for the elect. The author writes with clarity, simplicity and conviction. The book is to be highly recommended. It will do your soul good to read it.

There is room only to give one quotation. When things go wrong, where is God? Pink responds:

'Take the case of Job once more. When loss after loss came his way what did he do? Bemoan his "bad luck"? Curse the robbers? Murmur against God? No; he bowed before Him in worship. Ah, dear reader, there is no real rest for your poor heart until you learn to see the hand of God in everything. But for that, *faith* must be in constant exercise. And what is faith? A blind credulity? A fatalistic acquiescence? No, far from it. Faith is a resting on the sure Word of the living God and therefore it says, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Rom.8:28); and therefore faith will give thanks "always for all things". Operative faith will "Rejoice in the Lord alway" (Phil.4:4)'.

William Macleod

Christ is All

The Piety of Horatius Bonar
Reformation Heritage Books,
pbk, 226pp, £6.95

Trading and Thriving in Godliness

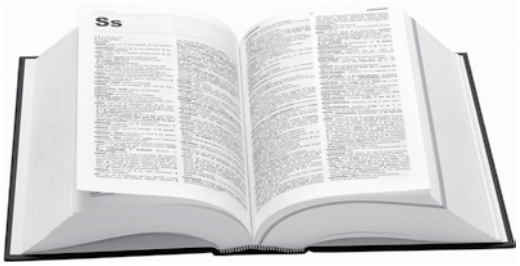
The Piety of George Swinnock
Reformation Heritage Books,
pbk, 213pp, £6.95

The above are two of a series of paperbacks produced by Reformation Heritage Books of Grand Rapids, Michigan. The series is entitled, 'Profiles in Reformed Spirituality'. The authors highlighted are representative of the Reformed Faith from Puritan to more recent times. The volumes include brief biographical introductions of the divines from whose writings the books have been composed. The selections comprise brief extracts from their writings, some not now readily available in printed form. They serve as an insight into Biblical and Reformed piety and devotion.

The volumes reviewed here are from men who lived in different periods of history. Swinnock was an English Puritan of the 17th Century and Bonar a Free Church minister of the 19th Century. The concern for Biblical truth, the glory of Christ and the salvation of souls shines through equally in both volumes.

These beautifully produced books serve well to introduce readers to writings at

Books



once spiritual and heart warming, and challenging of devotion to Christ. Reformation Heritage Books have put us in their debt by producing books which act as 'tasters' for any who are not familiar with the available writings of such men. They are good for giving to younger Christians, and for any laid aside by illness or hospitalised.

Highly recommended, hopefully encouraging readers to go to the larger writings of these authors.

John W Keddie

Study Guide for The Promise of the Future

Cornelis P Venema

Banner of Truth Trust, bklt, 43pp, £2.50

This booklet is designed to accompany the larger and detailed work by the same author. In many ways it is a very good idea. The original work is full of excellent material on what Scripture says about the future, up to and including the return of Christ. It also gives clear reasons for taking on board certain views, accepting others as possible and dismissing some that are unbiblical. While that original work is perhaps the definitive guide to the last things of recent times, it is somewhat unwieldy. It is quite like a textbook in style. This is not really a criticism, but it accounts for it being so detailed. It was extremely useful for me in a recent study.

The *Study Guide* is an excellent tool for small groups to interact with Venema's work. If you would like a thorough and biblical study of the last things, but might be put off by the size of the original work, then this is certainly recommended.

Greg MacDonald

The Gospel Ministry

Thomas Foxcroft

Soli Deo Gloria Publications, hbk, 100pp, £12.00

This publication is the substance of a sermon preached by the author at his ordination to the ministry in Boston, USA in 1717. It is attractively produced, with very good paper quality and a clear uncluttered typeface. As an ordination sermon it is quite remarkable that one so early in his calling should have covered so much ground in a single sermon. It deals at length with the various duties of the Christian Ministry, including a man's preaching, his pastoring, his work amongst his people and his diligence and strenuous labours on their behalf. In conclusion he considers where the minister receives strength for such duties. It is always profitable for a minister to review his calling, to re-learn the essentials of his task, and to that end this book is useful. It is perhaps too narrow a scope. Ministers and those wrestling with a call will find profit in this book, but even then it would probably not be the first place that they would look. Spurgeon's work on *An All Round Ministry*, or Bridges' *The Christian Ministry* are more complete, and perhaps more readable too. M'Cheyne's comments, found in *Memoirs and Remains* are more challenging and stimulating, or at least that was the impression left for this reviewer.

Greg MacDonald

Spurgeon's Practical Wisdom

or John Ploughman's Talk & John Ploughman's Pictures – Plain Advice for Plain People

C H Spurgeon

Banner of Truth Trust, hbk, 317pp, £16.00

This book is like a book of proverbs. It is full of common sense and the best of advice. Spurgeon writes as if he was a ploughman with his feet firmly in the soil. There is nothing pretentious here. It is easily read and full of wit. My old copies were rather flimsy paperbacks so it is good to see these two excellent books combined into one volume and produced to the usual high standard that we expect from the Banner of Truth Trust. It is not the sort of book which should be read in two or three sittings but would be most edifying at a chapter at a time. There are 62 short chapters and they give one plenty to think about. A few of his thoughts might helpfully give an idea as to what the book is like.

'Long prayers and loud professions only deceive the simple, and those who seek further than the surface soon spy out the wolf under the sheepskin… Empty sacks can't stand upright in a church any better than in a granary'.

'A true wife is her husband's better half, his lump of delight, his flower of beauty, his guardian angel, and his heart's treasure'.

'No flies will go down your throat if you keep your mouth shut, and no evil speaking will come up. Think much, and say little: be quick at work and slow at talk; and above all, ask the great Lord to set a watch over your lips'.

'Think of the devil, and he will appear; turn your thoughts towards sin, and your hands will soon follow. Snails leave their slime behind and so do vain thoughts … Good thoughts are blessed guests, and should be heartily welcomed, well fed, and much sought after'.

William Macleod

James McInnes (Clachan, Kintyre)
(Part II)

Rev J M McPherson

Last month in Part I we were told of the birth, conversion and illness of young Jamie (1853-1860).

Love for the Lord's People

A godly young man in the neighbourhood (and now we believe, with him in glory), and to whom he was peculiarly attached, had been in the habit of visiting him frequently. These visits were always refreshing to Jamie's soul. During one of his angel visits he said to Jamie, 'I wish to ask you one question before I leave – I do not know whether you can answer it'. 'What is it?' said Jamie. 'Can you tell me what can satisfy the soul?' To his unspeakable surprise and joy, Jamie promptly answered, 'Nothing but God'. Jamie then said to his mother, 'Give Hugh some food'. To test him, his mother replied, 'Why have you so much regard for Hugh Maclean seeing he is no relation of ours?' 'Oh mother', said Jamie, 'do you not know that I have love in my heart to all whom I believe to have grace? And if I were rich, I would leave something to Hugh'. This was Hugh's last interview with Jamie on earth. He left him weeping for joy 'that out of the mouths of babes and sucklings God perfects praise'. About a year afterwards their spirits met in that blessed world for which their Lord had so early prepared them.

An elder of the Free Church, then resident in the village, and who was one of Jamie's frequent and favourite visitors, came to see him for the last time on the Sabbath preceding his death. Jamie conversed with

him about the doctrines and duties of religion more like an aged saint than a young child. His friend having prayed with him, Jamie warmly thanked him for his prayer and for all his kindness towards him during his illness; and after commenting with rare simplicity and sweetness on the suitableness, all-sufficiency, and loveliness of the Saviour, he then said, 'Alexander, it is no wonder that you and I should love Christ'. 'No wonder, dear', said Alexander, 'but can you tell me why we should love Him?' Jamie replied, 'I am sure you know that! He was nailed to the cross for you and for me, and for all who will love Him. There was a crown of thorns put on His head that hurt Him for me. I will love Him forever, for He is worthy of being loved by everyone'. Alexander wept like a child and he has often declared since that in his opinion, considering his extreme youth, Jamie McInnes was one of the most extraordinary instances of the riches of divine grace ever known in this country.

The End Drawing Near

Conscious that his end was near, Jamie said to his mother, 'I will not be long with you now'. She replied, 'Are you going to leave me, Jamie?' He said, 'Yes, but if you continue to walk in the ways of the Lord, neither looking back, nor wearying in well-doing, persevering more and more to the end, I hope there is no fear of you. You and I will soon meet again and spend eternity together with the Lord'.

Knowing also that his mother was very anxious about the state of his father's soul, he said to her, by way of comfort and encouragement, 'Mother, you are greatly concerned for my father but he prays oftener than you know of. If he continues earnest I am sure the Lord will be as good as His word to him, for He says, "Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you". You must always pray for him and counsel him but that is all you can do'.

The last Sabbath he was on earth, feeling that he was entering 'the dark valley' he said to his mother that he was sorry she could not get to church that day. His mother said to him that he never used to keep her at home but as that was likely to be the last Sabbath he would be with her she would on no account leave him. 'No', said Jamie, 'but sit beside me and tell me more about Christ'. His countenance beamed with joy as his mother spoke to him of the wondrous love of Jesus. At length he cried out in great ecstasy, 'I long to get as near and to be made as like Jesus as those in heaven, and to love and serve Him as perfectly as they do. Oh, help me to learn and sing the new song!'

Pleading with Donald

A neighbour called to see Jamie, who was well known to him from his infancy, as a person who although the head of a family had not even the form of godliness. It being now Jamie's uniform practice to say something about the salvation of their souls to all who spoke to him, on observing that this acquaintance was present, he at once proceeded in a most faithful manner to address him as follows: 'Oh Donald is not that a miserable home indeed where there is neither reading of the Word of God nor prayer? Donald, Donald, you have a soul that will live forever either in heaven or in hell! Will you promise me that you will now begin and continue to worship God in your house? And rest assured that you will get Christ before you leave the world, if you now begin earnestly to seek him'. Three times he pressed Donald for a promise that he would worship God daily in his family, adding in the most touching manner, 'Lest you should forget what I tell you, I will give you a book, which I have here beneath the pillow and when you see the book it will remind you of my request after I am dead and in the grave'. He then handed Donald the book saying, 'If you don't set a good example before your children, you may see them on the left hand of Christ at the last day. Oh how awful would that be! Oh Donald if you had Christ as your portion before I leave the world how happy I should feel, and however poor you be while here, if you have a saving interest in Christ, you will be eternally rich'.

The physical effort put forth by Jamie during that soul-melting interview with Donald proved too much for his feeble frame and immediately afterwards he fell into a

swoon. But his warm and convincing entreaties were too much even for Donald for he hastened home quite bathed in tears. May the impression not prove like the morning cloud and as the early dew that goeth away; if so, Jamie will be a swift witness against Donald in the day of judgment.

The first use that Jamie made of his speech after rallying from the fainting fit was to express his great love to his mother but still greater love to Christ, saying several times over with great emphasis, 'My dear mother! Oh, she was a kind mother to me', and then three times, 'My dear, dear, dear Christ. Christ loved me first, and I will love him now and forever'.

None like Christ

All his visitors were invited to go near to him, and he spoke to them with rare unction, urgency and sweetness, of the grace, love, beauty, and desirableness of the blessed Saviour, often repeating, 'There is none like Christ! Oh, will you not all receive and love Him! He would make you so happy, if you would only come to Him. He would pardon all your sins, and Oh, how happy you would then feel. He would also give you new hearts. Then you would hate sin and love God. Oh, would you not like to be with Christ after death? Then seek Him now, and you will be sure to find Him. Remember Christ wishes to save you and to bring you to heaven, so that if you go to hell, it will be your own fault'. He now fell into a second swoon but when all present thought that he was dead, he again unexpectedly rallied, repeating in the strongest and most affectionate terms his love to his dear mother but greater love to Christ.

Several spectators having expressed their sympathy for him in his great sufferings, he instantly checked them, saying that it was as nothing to what he and all others deserved to suffer for their sins against God – nothing to what Christ suffered for the sins of others, and that it was not to be compared to what all who refuse Christ must yet endure in hell. Moreover, that but for his sore leg, he might have remained as careless as anyone then present or in the world, so that instead of repining, both himself and all his well-wishers had cause rather to rejoice and to praise God for his sufferings. How like the spirit of the Apostle when he says, 'We glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us'.

The First Shall be Last

Among those who were privileged to be eye and ear witnesses of Jamie's triumphant entrance into the dark valley and shadow of death, singing with David of old, 'I will fear no evil, for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me', was a young female, well known to him as an inquirer after salvation for a longer period than he had been himself. That girl, as if verifying at that moment in her own experience the Scripture declaration, 'There are first that shall be last, and there are last that shall be first', said to him, 'If you had your choice would you rather live or die?' Jamie said with great solemnity, 'I would twenty times rather depart and be with Christ than to be made heir of the whole world for ever. See that you continue earnest in prayer to God that He would create in you a new heart and renew a right spirit within you; that He would make you a new creature in Christ Jesus, zealous of good works; and that He would prepare you for heaven before you die, and I hope you and I will meet in glory'.

The Last Prayer

Then looking round the house he fixed his expressive eyes on all present in succession as if conscious that he would see them no more on earth but that he would see and know them all at the judgment seat of Christ where all must appear to be rewarded according to their works. Jamie now signified that he was beginning to swim in the cold waters of Jordan. And as if seeing the King in His beauty and the land that is far off, he desired his mother to read him some of the promises that they might be his staff to support him safe across to the land of promise. Then he desired all present to engage in prayer that the last enemy might be destroyed; which being done, he prayed himself with such extraordinary unction and earnestness that the whole house was literally 'a Bochim'. He first prayed for his parents that they should be made willing to part with him and prepared in due time to follow him; then for his brothers and sisters that they might be brought to Christ while young, so as to be ready to die when the Lord's time comes and that they might all meet as a family in heaven. He then prayed for his native village, for all present, for sinners everywhere, and for all saints – for the progress and prosperity of the present revival, for all engaged in that glorious work mentioning some ministers by name. He prayed for all who were made subjects of it, that they might be as lights in the world and that others seeing their good works might glorify their Father who is in heaven. He prayed for all who oppose the cause of God, that they might be brought to repentance and thus be prevented from fighting against God to their own destruction. He then repeated the Lord's Prayer with even more than his usual fervour and sweetness of tone. Soon afterwards he began to lose the power of speech and it was with considerable difficulty his words could be understood, yet as if to prove that he was conscious to the end, when he finished he said, 'Mother, have I spoken properly?' His mother answered, 'I hope the Lord has taught you what to speak', which seemed to satisfy him. His last words were, 'Sing a psalm', and while engaged in that heavenly exercise he gradually sank and calmly fell asleep in the arms of Jesus, his ransomed spirit took its flight to join the choir of the redeemed that surrounded the Throne of Glory, there to sing the eternal song that will be ever new, leaving the tabernacle of clay about half-past two in the morning of the 27th March l860.

Bring up Your Children for God

We believe that such bright examples of early piety would be more frequent if, like Jamie's mother, who travailed in birth again for him until Christ was formed in him, our Christian parents would be persuaded to do likewise. Like David she comforted herself with the thought that while he will return no more to her, to share in her sorrows and sufferings, she will assuredly go to him and be partaker of the joy that is

full of glory where sorrow, suffering, and sighing shall for ever flee away and where the pangs of separation shall never be known.

But who can sufficiently estimate the guilt, or anticipate the awful reckoning of those parents who fail to instruct them from infancy upwards both by precept and example 'to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and that all other things shall be added thereto?' Every parent, on presenting his child for baptism, virtually takes heaven and earth to record that, in the strength of divine grace, he will faithfully perform his vows, namely, 'that he will pray with and for his child', which implies that he will practise secret and social worship; 'that if God spare him and his child, he will train it up in His fear and admonition' which involves the proper exercise of Christian discipline both to restrain from evil and to direct towards that which is good. All this and much more is included in the solemn profession made by every parent who assumes baptismal vows – and all this and much more will doubtless be found recorded in the reckoning of the great day.

But, alas! over how many of the houses of hypocritical professors might be heard the thundering voice of a sin-avenging God pronouncing their awful doom, while without a moment's warning He may answer that awful prayer, and execute upon them that direful sentence, long recorded against them, 'Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen that have not known thee, and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon thy name', for 'God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap'.

Oh with what unspeakable horror of soul shall such parents hear their lost children beseeching the Judge of the quick and the dead on the day of judgment to lay the damnation of their souls and bodies at their door! On the other hand, it is quite impossible adequately to conceive of 'the joy unspeakable and full of glory' with which godly parents shall then present their grace-born children singing in strains of eternal hallelujah, 'Lord, here are we, and all the children thou hast graciously given us', as they shall enter together into the joy of their Lord.

My dear young reader, Jamie McInnes being dead, yet 'speaketh' to you. His affecting history teaches you that young people, as well as old, are liable to die. If you die without believing in Christ, you will as surely perish as any soul already in hell. You must be 'born again'. The Holy Ghost is able to make the youngest of you new creatures in Christ Jesus and to make you useful in the world and happy throughout eternity. My dear young friends, I hope all of you would wish to die as happy as Jamie McInnes died. Then remember that you must first live as holy as he did. Remember that unless you make good use of the great blessings you enjoy, if you die unsaved, Jamie McInnes will rise at the last day to condemn you; for it is written, 'Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required'.

Remittances - January 2010

	2010 Jan	2010 Total	2009 Total to Jan
Presbytery of Inverness			
Aberdeen	800	800	1,832
Duthil-Dores	1,876	1,876	0
Inverness	2,000	2,000	2,000
Kilmorack & Strathglass	1,400	1,400	1,300
Total Inverness	**6,076**	**6,076**	**5,132**
Northern Presbytery			
Assynt & Scourie	0	0	0
Brora	0	0	1,200
Kiltearn	1,800	1,800	1,800
Tarbat	0	0	0
Total Northern	**1,800**	**1,800**	**3,000**
Southern Presbytery			
Arran	703	703	641
Ayr	0	0	0
Dumfries	0	0	0
Edinburgh	0	0	4,179
Glasgow - Partick	2,000	2,000	2,000
Glasgow - Shettleston	0	0	0
Glasgow - Knightswood	1,700	1,700	1,344
Rothesay	0	0	0
Total Southern	**4,403**	**4,403**	**8,164**

Outer Hebrides Presbytery			
Cross	1,781	1,781	1,775
Harris - Leverburgh	1,000	1,000	1,000
Harris - Scalpay	1,700	1,700	1,585
Knock & Point	1,000	1,000	900
North Uist	1,000	1,000	800
Stornoway	5,681	5,681	4,670
Total Outer Hebrides	**12,162**	**12,162**	**10,730**
Presbytery of Skye & Lochcarron			
Bracadale	1,000	1,000	1,000
Duirinish (Waternish)	400	400	400
Glenelg & Arnisdale	153	153	113
Kilmuir & Stenscholl	1,300	1,300	1,300
Lochalsh & Glenshiel	550	550	1,101
Poolewe & Aultbea	525	525	850
Portree	1,200	1,200	1,200
Snizort	1,200	1,200	0
Strath	0	0	410
Total Skye & Lochcarron	**6,328**	**6,328**	**6,374**
Total Congregations	**30,769**	**30,769**	**33,401**
Other Donations	679	679	920
Legacy		0	0
TOTAL	**31,447**	**31,447**	**34,321**
Including Gift Aid		0	0

Deo Volente

My Visit to Scotland

Heinrich Zwemstra

Dear Friends,

In correspondence and minutes of meetings we always use the abbreviation D.V., meaning *Deo Volente*. These words come from James 4:15 in the Vulgate (Latin translation of the Bible) and mean '*if the Lord will*'. During my visit to Scotland from 21 – 28 November 2009 I have realised the truth of these words. We as humans make plans, but God has the final decision.

My flight from Istanbul to Heathrow was delayed for about 15 hours due to fog. Because of the delay I couldn't preach in Edinburgh on the Sunday morning, but that was the will of the Lord. On the Tuesday morning we took a ferry from Harris to Skye, but because of the rough sea we couldn not get off at Skye and we had to turn back to Harris. I missed the presentation in Snizort church hall, but that was the will of the Lord.

But I could do all the other presentations and also preach in Glasgow. It was my first visit to the UK, especially Scotland, and despite the delays and cancellations I am very thankful that it was God's will to visit you. Thank you for receiving me and your hospitality on every occasion. I have been encouraged a lot. Thank you also for supporting the work at Covenant College. When the students are here we start every day with morning devotion and I can assure you of their prayers for you. Just as you asked me I will give your greetings to our students when we start term again (actually already begun in February).

I would like to give a special thanks to brother Cammy and sister Chrissie Macleay. They have put an effort in the planning of my visit, and during my visit they were a great help.

We are back safely at Covenant College and over a few weeks we will start the teaching. In the meantime we are preparing ourselves for the first term. It was encouraging to see to the Molenaar family when we arrived. Last year they went back to Holland because Mirjam got Malaria during her pregnancy. But the delivery went well and it was a great joy to see to them, together with their new family member – Moses. Thank you for praying them.

Let us continue to seek and build our lives on God's revealed will. Let us make our plans according to what he teaches us in the Bible. And when it comes to God's unrevealed will we know 'that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose' (Rom. 8:28).

Please continue to pray for the work at Covenant College, and that the Lord will use the training at Covenant College for the spreading of the gospel in Zambia. D.V. our family will go back to South Africa in April for the birth of our third child. Please pray for good health and safe journeys.

Your brother in Christ,

Heinrich Zwemstra

The Zwemstra Family

Seeking the Beloved

To those who love the Lord I speak;
Is my Beloved near?
The Bridegroom of my soul I seek,
Oh! When will He appear?

Though once a man of grief and shame,
Yet now He fills a throne,
And bears the greatest, sweetest name,
That earth or heaven have known.

Grace flies before, and love attends
His steps where'er He goes;
Though none can see Him but His friends,
And they were once His foes.

He speaks; – obedient to His call
Our warm affections move:
Did He but shine alike on all,
Then all alike would love.

Then love in every heart would reign,
And war would cease to roar;
And cruel and bloodthirsty men
Would thirst for blood no more.

Such Jesus is, and such His grace;
Oh, may He shine on you!
And tell Him, when you see His face,
I long to see Him, too.

William Cowper

Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion:
for the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come.
For thy servants take pleasure in her stones,
and favour the dust thereof.
So the heathen shall fear the name of the Lord,
and all the kings of the earth thy glory.

Psalm 102:13-15

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