

Subscriptions & Renewals for APC News

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EDITORIAL

The Holy Spirit

THE HOLY SPIRIT is a Person. He is not simply an influence or a force as the Mormons, Jews, and many cults would teach. The Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Trinity.

When Jesus told His disciples that he was leaving them, they were naturally discouraged. To strengthen them, Jesus told them that in His place, He would send them, not a Book (although he did that as well), but a Person, the Holy Spirit and He would dwell with them **forever** "I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you **forever**" [John 14:16].

The Holy Spirit, unlike Jesus in His humanity, would reside in their hearts **forever**, and would never leave them as Jesus was just about to do. They were to understand that they would not be losers when Christ left them to enter into His glory. In fact they were to see even greater things [John 1:50] and enjoy greater power [Luke 24:49]

We are in danger of neglecting the work of the Holy Spirit and relegating Him to the sidelines. We sometimes give the impression that the Holy Spirit

only works when we read the Bible, that His only function is to illuminate the Word. But the Holy Spirit is omnipresent and active everywhere all of the time. He was present and active in the Old Testament but He is even more active and present now.

He was present at creation, "the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters" [Gen 1:2]. The Spirit was also active at that time on the souls of men "And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man" [Gen 6:3].

The Holy Spirit was also active in bestowing common gifts. God told Moses about Bezalel "I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with ability and intelligence, with knowledge and all craftsman-ship, to devise artistic designs, to work in gold, silver, and bronze, in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, to work in every craft" [Ex 31:3-5]. All the talents and skills of mankind everywhere are gifts of the Holy Spirit.

During the time of the Judges the Holy "Spirit of the Lord came upon" many of the judges [Jud 3:10, 6:34]. The Holy Spirit 'inspired' and encouraged

and led and guided the saints of old. He is no less active today.

In our rightful concern over the extremes of the charismatic movement, we are in danger of downgrading His Person and His work today. It is a serious matter to deny the presence and work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts and lives of God's people today.

Our neglect of His presence and power in the world today may well be the reason that there is so little fruit among some denominations who downplay the work of the Spirit. It is possible that such denominations are grieving the Holy Spirit.

In the Old Testament when the Spirit was not fully poured out, He enabled the prophets to perform wonderful works. It was the power of the Holy Spirit upon them that gave the prophets their credibility among the public and brought a godly fear among all the people.

When Obadiah suddenly met Elijah, and was instructed to go to Ahab and say that Elijah was here, Obadiah was afraid to do so. Why? Because he knew that the Spirit of God could suddenly come and take Elijah away somewhere else " ...as soon as I have gone from you, the Spirit of the Lord will carry you I know not where, . And so when I come and tell Ahab and he cannot find you he will kill me" [1 Kin 18:112].

The Spirit of God operated very much in the Old Testament—much more than we realise. Moses

wished and prayed "that all the Lord's people were prophets, that the Lord would put his Spirit on them!" Moses wanted the people to have the same leadership Eldad and Medad had for "the Spirit rested on them" [Num 11:26,29].

We need to be aware of the constant presence of the Lord in our daily lives. The Psalmist has this awareness. He could not escape from the presence of God "Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there! If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me" [Psa 139:7-10]. The Holy Spirit upheld and led the saints in the Old Testament. He does not do less now.

David was always conscious of being in the 'presence' of God. This is true holiness. He was so much a part of their lives that David said "I bless the Lord who gives me counsel, in the night also my heart instructs me. I have set the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices" [Psa 16: 7-9].

The awareness of God was the beginning of Jacob's spiritual life at Bethel when he said "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it" [Gen 28:16].

Since Pentecost there is a

Prayer for Revival

"Do it again, Lord."

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The Christian church has experienced revival and very much needs another such visit from God.

To interest, and hopefully inspire people, a series of meetings will be held at Kingsview as listed here.

May holy anointing from Heaven come down even before this series of Talks.

If the Speakers agree, we may put these talks on the Kingsview web for a wider audience.

Reviews of Revival. (Wednesdays once per month)

October 29: Revivals of the Bible (*W.MacKenzie*)

November 26: Cambuslang Revival (*C.MacInnes*)

December 17: The Welsh Revival 1904 (*Geoff Thomas*)

January 28: Lewis Revival (*R.McCrimmon*)

February 18: A Forgotten Revival (*John Lister*)

March 25: The Ulster Revival 1859 (*Les Dowey*)

April 29: Skye Revival (*Steve Taylor*)

Presbytery Reporting Back

WHEN THE SCOTTISH Presbytery of the APC met on 14th May it decided to report back regularly to congregations via the APC News. This is the first such report. Others will follow.

The main responsibility of presbytery is the care of its congregations. Although each congregation is the responsibility of its own Kirk Session there are many ways in which congregations can help each other, and be helped by their collective leadership.

Accordingly we discussed the needs of certain areas of the country, and the life of our congregations in those places. Edinburgh is one place where there is obvious cause for thanksgiving in view of the nature of the community and the fact that the congregation is growing from nothing. Presbytery also made suggestions to Kirk Sessions about promoting certain aspects of church life.

We made arrangements for a minister to be inducted to the Tain and Fearn congregation. John van Eyk is an American with Dutch roots who planted a church in Ontario twelve years ago and has been its pastor since then. Almost two years ago he spent a considerable time with the people in Tain and Fearn. They gave him a call, but it is only now that he is

free to come. God willing, that will take place on 19th September DV.

We have another link with Canada through the Canadian Presbytery of the APC. They have asked us to make arrangements for their divinity student to become ready for a call to the ministry. We will take Bob Hackett on trial for license in September, and expect him to be eligible for a call after that.

Some of the work is done by committees. The Evangelism and Youth Committee reported on preparations for youth camps and for the annual conference on 13th September. The Business Committee kept us up to date with financial matters, and reported on efforts to find a replacement for Kenny MacLean as treasurer – he continues his work, but retirement cannot be long delayed.

Like most churches the APC has links with other bodies. The plight of the people of Burma led us to make a donation to the Barnabas Fund. John Ross represents us on the Scottish Churches Housing Association. We also appointed members to represent the denomination in the government sponsored “Scottish National Conversation”, and the annual meeting of churches with the First Minister.

The next ordinary meeting will be on 12th September DV. **Ω**

fullness of the Spirit’s presence and work that was not there in the Old Testament. Peter immediately recognised when the promised pouring out of the Spirit had arrived. Such was excitement of those who enjoyed it, that they were mistaken as being drunk! *“these men are not drunk as you suppose ...this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel... ‘I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh’ ”* [Acts 2:15cf].

It is because of the Spirit’s presence and work that believers today are always ‘God-conscious’. Throughout the whole day, the true believer is breathing prayers to God through the Spirit. It is not through the flesh or carnal consciousness that believers are aware of the omnipresence of God, but through the indwelling and work of the Holy Spirit in and on their hearts.

We must not reduce the work of the Holy Spirit to a moment when we read the Bible and get ‘light’ on it, as if this was His only role in life. We serve a **living** God. Not a God who was alive but has now left us. He has also given us His Spirit who communes with His people each day.

It is God’s Spirit who takes care of us every day. In His Providence towards us, He is active and is ‘speaking’ to us daily. Notice what the writer to the Hebrews says *“See that you do not refuse Him who **is speaking**”* and *“who **warns** from heaven”*

[Heb 12:25], not ‘who has spoken’ or ‘who has warned’. The verbs are in the present tense. We need to realise more than we do, that God is alive and still communicates with His people by His Spirit. The Holy Spirit replaces Jesus.

In the final book of Scripture we have the ascended Lord Jesus communicating with His Church saying to each of the seven congregations *“He who has ears let him hear what the **Spirit says** to the churches”* [Rev 2 and 3]. The Spirit still ‘says’ things to us—in His Word, in His Providence, in His judgments. God’s voice is not confined to the Bible, albeit an infallible Book. His voice is heard throughout the habitable world.

Every time we go out doors, the whole creation speaks to us *“The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard”* [Psa 191-3]. Yes, the canon of Scripture is closed and shut forever, but God’s voice is not. He still speaks to us by His Spirit opening our eyes to see the spiritual realities of life.

Paul asked God that the Ephesians would have *“the spirit of wisdom and revelation...the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which He has called you”* [Eph 1:18cf]. The Holy Spirit opens eyes. **Ω**

The Way of Salvation

[Numbers 21:4-9]

By Wayne Pearce

THE INCIDENT of the fiery serpent in the wilderness anticipates and points forward to God's glorious plan of salvation for His chosen people through the sacrificial and substitutionary death of Jesus Christ on the Cross at Calvary.

The Lord Jesus in the third chapter of John's gospel draws our attention to this particular event and says: "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." [John 3:14-15]. Just as the serpent was lifted up on a wooden pole, so Christ was lifted up on the cross. Just as the Israelites were to look at the fiery serpent to have their health restored, so every man, woman, and child must look to Jesus Christ and Him alone, for salvation.

Just as God provided no other remedy for the Israelites struck by the deadly bites of these venomous snakes in the wilderness, so God the Father has provided no other way of salvation than through faith in the vicarious sacrifice of his Son. Just as each individual who looked to the

bronze serpent was cured and lived, so that everyone who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ shall not perish but have eternal life.

Now please note that it was not the man-made serpent *per se* but the invisible power of Almighty God that healed the stricken people in the wilderness. Similarly it is neither the cross of Christ, nor his crucifixion in themselves that redeems individuals but the pardon that He bought through His life, death and resurrection that saves all those for whom he died.

Also, such benefits are only appropriated through the work and power of the Holy Spirit who must work in and through us if we are to receive and rest in Jesus Christ alone for salvation. We must also see and understand that the intercessory role of God's servant Moses in Numbers 21:7 as anticipatory of the True Intercessor and Mediator, who is the Lord Jesus Christ. For He not only gave Himself as that perfect, sin-free, once-for-all sacrifice to redeem His people, but He sits at the right-hand of God the Father making continuous and perpetual intercession on His people's

tense) as a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" - those who were dead have been quickened, have been made alive.

One of the commentators states: "Believers are living stones in His building. Each time someone trusts in Christ, another stone is quarried out of the pit of sin and cemented by grace into the building." The Lord Jesus, by His Holy Spirit, dwells in the hearts of all those who have trusted in Him. Paul reminds the believers in Corinth about that, saying: "Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit."

Is this building perfect, or will it be? No, it is not, **but it will be**. Mr Spurgeon, to whom we have already referred, was asked one day by a lady if he could tell her where the perfect church was. He said that he couldn't. But then he called after her and said: "If you find it, don't join it; you'll spoil it!"

On what is your hope built? On what is mine built? Can you say, and can I say: "My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus blood and righteousness" and "On Christ the solid rock I stand; all other ground is sinking sand"?

A BODY with Christ as the Head [Eph 4:15-16] - In this chapter, and in the context of spiritual gifts and the use of these gifts, we read these words: "...**but speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into him who**

is the head - Christ - from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love."

The key phrase there seems to be 'Speaking the truth in love' - in other words: "Live the truth and speak the truth" and it is in the context of edifying - under Christ's direction. So we're talking about being 'connected' to the Lord Jesus Christ, if we could use that term, or better, as the Bible puts it, being "in Him".

We know the importance of the head in the natural body. In the body of the church it is crucial. Remarking on "the body is one", in 1 Corinthians 12:12, one commentator says: "We must never forget this though we are living in an age of ecclesiastical confusion. Every true child of God is part of the body of Christ, and to say or do anything which denies our need of Him is to do despite to the church and to Christ its Head." Just as the natural body needs to grow and to mature, so it is with the spiritual body as is highlighted in verses 13 and 14 here - pastors and teachers encouraging each other and their fellow believers, to grow towards spiritual maturity, gathering together in worship, blending together, encouraging each other until that day when there will be perfection and all His saints are gathered in.

(to be continued)

"...to those to whom He (God) is a Father, the Church must also be a mother" - [Calvin, Inst 4.1.1]

been established saying "...having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone in whom the whole building being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a habitation of God in the Spirit."

With regard to a building, we all have some idea of the importance of a foundation, and not only that, but of a proper foundation. Back in the Old Testament [Isaiah 28:16ff] we have the foundation of the church prophesied - The Lord God speaking through the prophet: "Behold I lay in Zion (the church) a stone for a foundation, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation"; then, in the following verse, there's a warning about the standards God requires.

He will check what and how we are building and on what we are building; and, in this, we are told, His measuring line will be 'justice' and the plummet line 'righteousness'. If we understand these terms, then we will understand what His standards are. In the New Testament, Paul [1 Corinthians 3:1] writes: "For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus". The standard required is high. For buildings constructed with stones it is crucial that there is not only a proper foundation, but also a suitable, reliable **corner-stone**, properly placed, the purpose of this stone being to knit all the other stones together. The selection of the corner-stone took time and patience - not only the size, but also the

shape, was important, and the placing of it doubly important.

I have been told that if you tapped a corner-stone with a hammer, if that stone was properly placed, the ring of that tap would be felt in every other stone in the foundation or perhaps the building.

In the church, His church, all believers are linked to the corner-stone. The foundation of the church, described in Ephesians as that of the apostles and prophets - truth - was designed in a past eternity and the corner-stone selected there too. We read in 1 Peter chapter 2 about that One who was chosen by God and precious. No one else, no other corner-stone, would do. Last Lord's Day I attended a communion service at which the preacher made reference to the discussion on the Mount of Transfiguration regarding the death of the Lord Jesus Christ which was to be **accomplished**: a sense of mastery rather than defeat. This accomplishment - His death and resurrection - was necessary so that He could be our chief corner-stone. Nothing else would do. **The foundation and the corner-stone!**

What about the walls? The walls are being built, and this great work of the Master Builder will go on until the end of time. What wonderful assurance we have from His own lips when He says: "I will build **my** church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it." Peter reminds the church in his day about this ongoing work saying to them, and it's in the context of the corner-stone, "...you also, as living stones are being built up (present

behalf. While it is therefore necessary that we accept and reflect briefly on the historicity of this particular incident of the fiery serpent in the wilderness, it is vitally important that we recognise the true prophetic nature of this passage and apply its message to ourselves.

The Book of Numbers takes its name from two censuses taken of the children of Israel: the first at Mount Sinai and the second on the plains of Moab. Numbers records the experience of Israel during her forty years wandering in the wilderness. What should have been an eleven-day journey from Mount Sinai to the Promised Land became a forty-year agony as a direct result of Israel's unbelief and apostasy. And there is a lesson here for the church in our day!

Unbelief, lack of faith, disobedience; these are the things that keep us from possessing the kingdom of God. And yet the solution to our problems lies with the church: "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land" [2 Chron 7:14].

There is a lesson here for the individual too. We must each face the question 'Am I similarly lingering, am I stumbling and dehydrated for want of the bread and water of Life in that same wilderness of doubt, despair and

unbelief?' This portion of Scripture clearly testifies to God's abhorrence of sin, and that His absolute and infinite holiness and justice demand that sin be punished. Gloriously however, this passage also bears the good news that in His grace, love and mercy God does and indeed has provided a remedy for sinners that repent and place their faith and trust in Him. There are three things I want to draw your attention to.

Firstly the cause of man's woes is sin: and the father of all sin is unbelief. "And they journeyed from mount Hor by the way of the Red sea, to compass the land of Edom: and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way. And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread" [4-5].

Instead of keeping faith with God and trusting Him to provide for them and to protect them, the children of Israel very quickly grew impatient, and their impatience swiftly deteriorated into outright rebellion against the Lord and His servant Moses. They quickly became discouraged because of the way and instead of looking unto the author and finisher of their faith they looked to the world, their situation and circumstances! Instead of looking to themselves and examining their

ways they blamed God for their situation! God's word says: "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" [2 Cor 13:5]. Just like their fathers before them however they contemptuously disobeyed the Word of God and started to doubt in His providential care and plan for them.

The fact that they were His covenant people whom He had rescued from bondage in Egypt meant little to them when trials and troubles came their way. Like disobedient, petulant and ungrateful children they quickly forgot that the Lord had given them the Law on Mount Sinai to make them a holy people – a special people, set aside with a peculiar role in God's redemptive purpose to all the nations.

The Lord, in His steadfast-love had provided for them during their wilderness journey and had been compelled to chasten them on more than one occasion just as an earthly parent in love is compelled to discipline a disobedient child. He equipped and empowered them to defeat their enemies in battle.

Nevertheless when Providence prevented them from gaining direct access to the Promised Land via Edom they forsook the One, True and Living God. It was unbelief and disobedience that were the root

cause of the fall of Adam in the Garden of Eden, which fall brought ignominy, suffering and death in its wake to him and all his posterity.

The Bible tells us how God created man, male and female, after His own image, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. However, these divine-like attributes were totally corrupted when Adam sinned. The apostle Paul in his epistle to the Romans tells us that *Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.* Sin is the cause of death. Sin is also the root cause of all the world's ills. We are born sinners, born rebels, born haters of God. Unbelief and disobedience come naturally to us! Each person is by nature born like the baby born to a mother addicted to heroin.

Just as the baby of the drug addict is born with a particular drug addiction, each and every person as a child of Adam is born addicted to sin and is held in bondage to its pervasive and destructive effects. In other words we are each born inherently sinful; sin reigns in our hearts, in our minds and in our souls. Like King David we too must confess before the Lord and to ourselves "*Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.*"

Secondly let us acknowledge that the wages of sin is death: *And the LORD sent fiery serpents*

From the Moderator's Desk

Assembly Sermon

Mr Kenneth MacLean, Gairloch

Address at APC General Assembly 2008 by Kenneth MacLean, Gairloch, retiring Moderator

The Church as portrayed in the Letter to the Ephesians

We are meeting together here as part of the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. I hope that we are all quite clear as to what, or perhaps better **who**, the church is. I have to confess that, for a long time, I did not understand that - and perhaps I did not want to understand it. But some thirty years ago, I heard a minister pray in these words: "Lord, save us from rejecting those whom Thou hast accepted." That, I am certain, was from the Lord to me and resulted in my eyes being opened a little.

There is much confusion in our day as to what the church is, but suffice to say at the moment that the **church is people** - people who have trusted in the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, people who are united in Him. The late Mr Spurgeon, two days before the laying of the first stone of the great Metropolitan Tabernacle, gave a timely reminder to his people that the word "church" is a description of Christian people, not of any building in which they gather.

An evangelical minister, writing in the public press earlier this year, said: "More than one person has asked the question, **'What on earth is the church for?'**" We could, usefully, put the question in a different form and ask whether our communities would be any different, or whether they would even notice, if the church buildings were all closed down tomorrow. Are we performing any function at all? What are we here for?" Good questions!

There are three characteristics or descriptions of the church given in this letter that I would like to refer to.

A BUILDING with Christ as the Chief Corner-stone [Eph 2:19-22]. A BODY with Christ as the Head [Eph 4:15-16]. A BRIDE with Christ as the Bridegroom [Eph 5:25-32)].

In the 2nd chapter of this wonderful letter to the church in Ephesus, Paul reminds the believers there of what they once were and of what they had become, and describes it in the language of 'becoming a building'. He outlines what the Lord Jesus Christ had done for them and proceeds to verse 19, where he commences with these words, "*Now, therefore...*" and goes on to confirm how they had

to Him and a real blessing to our community and that we would be filled with the fullness of God.

LAIRG/ROGART

There is little to report on the congregational front. Things are pretty much as they were the last time I wrote. However we are looking forward to welcoming Rev John Ross to our Lairg Communion in June. I myself had the privilege of ministering at the Oban Communion in May and am looking forward to both the Aultbea and Inverness Communions in June.

The Northern Reformed Fellowship gives cause for optimism in these parts. I

ddressed our first meeting this year in Rogart Community Hall on 16 May on the subject of the Charismatic Movement and the deformation of the church and am greatly encouraged by the response. There were 37 present which is an improvement on last year's attendance. CDs are available of the address, priced £2 (cost). Our next meeting will be on Monday 16 June at Dornoch Academy when Rev John J Murray will address us on the subject of Prof. John Murray. We have also arranged our first day conference which will be held on Saturday 18 October in Copperfield House, Inverness, when the Rev Iain H Murray will give two addresses on the subject of 'Apostasy'. The times of the conference will follow. Ω

among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died" [6]. Just as God had punished the disobedience and unbelief of their predecessors, this generation similarly incurred the wrath and just retribution of the Lord God Almighty. John Calvin, once astutely wrote that, 'Wherever sin is... it is accompanied with the wrath and vengeance of God.'

The Word of God categorically teaches that "*the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness*" [Rom 1:18]. We must never forget or take lightly that sin is an abomination to our infinitely holy and just God.

As for the question often posed by opponents of the Bible as to how a God of love could also be a God of wrath, we must point out that God in His endless and supreme love sacrificed His one and only begotten Son for us sinners, while we were yet enemies and in rebellion against him. It was Jesus who bore the wrath. It was Jesus who bore the curse, guilt, shame and punishment on behalf of all who place their trust in Him.

While believers no longer need fear the wrath of God, those who have yet to place their faith and trust in Christ or who have spurned His gracious offer should indeed fear and tremble in the knowledge that on the Day of

Judgement they will be exposed to His righteous and eternal wrath. Believers by contrast must strive against sin in order to avoid the just chastisements of our loving Father who disciplines us when necessary for our own eternal wellbeing.

Thirdly, it is God alone who provides the remedy for sin: salvation is all of grace but man nevertheless must repent and believe. Note how acknowledgement of sin and thus guilt are the beginning of that process which leads to salvation: "*Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord, and against thee; pray unto the Lord, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people. And the Lord said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live*" [7-8].

There needs to be conviction of sin. **We have sinned.** No sin, no need of the Saviour! We must confess our sins to the Lord. Note too how we must approach God through a mediator: "*Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord, and against thee; pray unto the Lord, that he take away the serpents from us*". Moses is a type of Christ.

Again Scripture makes clear that no man can come unto the Father except through the Son. In

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Jesus Christ alone do we have access to God!

Only when the children of Israel recognised their complete inability to help or save themselves did they confess their sins to God. Scripture provides us with many striking examples of how God expects His people to seek forgiveness through humility and repentance. Like King David, who in desperation and in complete sincerity cried aloud to God, *“Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin”* [Ps.51:1-2] we too must seek His forgiveness.

The apostle Paul movingly reminds us that *“godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death”* [2 Cor 7:10]. The apostle, however, rarely uses the term forgiveness, but instead prefers the legal term, justification. The result of God’s forgiveness or justification is the complete removal of all enmity and alienation between God and man because of sin. This was the wonderful message that was rediscovered and proclaimed by Martin Luther that sparked that amazing revival and renewal of biblical Christianity across Europe in the early sixteenth century. justification by grace alone

through faith alone in Christ alone is the same message we must propagate far and wide in our own day.

The prophet Micah writes *“He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea”* [Mic 7:19]. The Lord himself speaking through the prophet Isaiah assures us: *“I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins”* [Isa 43:25].

Are you yet to recognise that you are a sinner in desperate need of God’s mercy? Do you regularly approach the throne of grace and confess your sins in and through our Mediator and Intercessor, the Lord Jesus Christ? Confession is not optional but essential if you and I are to live to the glory of our God.

It is vitally important that we understand that faith is the alone means whereby sinners can appropriate reconciliation, restoration and salvation: *“And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived”* [9]. This was God’s way – man must trust and obey. There was nothing magical or supernatural in the actual object of the bronze snake on the pole, it was the Israelites faith in the saving power of God that saved them from

appreciated, and we hope that they will come back again, and that the word they preached will bear much fruit.

As reported before, we pray for the ‘hillside’, where so many people have their homes, and we try to reach them with the message of the Gospel. The main effort in that, at the moment, is the distribution of *The King’s View* magazine. We are exploring the possibility of other ways, perhaps by Prayer Requests from the community, and we ask you, the reader, to pray for us as we think through the issues.

The early Sunday morning prayer time, and that preceding the evening service, continue to be refreshing and worthwhile times. We are thankful for evidences here and there, that the Lord is answering our prayers. (It is a sad reflection of our faith, if we have to record answers to prayer as ‘unexpected’ !) The Office-Bearers are starting an *Office-Bearers’ Prayer Meeting* to be held on the last Wednesday of the month, following the mid-week meeting.

The Lunch Club has experienced the loss of a lady who was regular in her attendance. We were all shocked to hear that Mary Munro has passed away, and as the Funeral service would coincide with the Lunch Club meeting, we cancelled it that week, so that we could attend the funeral service. Another reminder to us that the place that we know now and that knows us, will soon not know us

any more. If you trust in Jesus, that will not be a morbid observation.

In the preaching, over recent months, focus has often been on ‘What is the Gospel?’ and ‘Is the Gospel being preached?’ God is very specific in his ‘definition’ of the Gospel, and he is full of promise about the results of such preaching. We look prayerfully to him for the vitality that should characterise the people of God, and the conversions to Jesus that follow the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the hearers. Pray for us.

DUNDEE

We are continuing to enjoy fellowship with one another and with the Lord and are thankful that some of the new people that have come along are still coming.

We ask for prayer that we would be able to maintain the building we are in as the electricians are needing attention and the outside would do with an uplift. There is also the problem of a disability entrance which is now statutory. Although these things might be a ‘secular’ matter they do need attention, especially with the new legislation. We had a Charity Sale in April which proved a great help—many thanks to those who sacrificed their holidays and time to help us.

Above all, please ask God to work in the hearts of each of us so that we would be a living witness

Her father was a Methodist preacher in Wales so she was not unfamiliar with the gospel. Thankfully, John has been off the drink for seventeen years now.

John is now Director of Residential Support Services at Bethany Christian Trust and we believe God led us to have him for our outreach service. He has had some exceptionally hard providences since confessing his faith in Christ but comes over as a very joyful Christian. Indeed he explains his strength in the face of great adversity by saying, "The joy of the Lord is my strength. John would appreciate you remembering him in prayer.

Before concluding this article I would like to say a very big thank you to all who support us by their prayers and donations. To avoid any confusion, cheques for the Burdiehouse Southhouse Community Church should be made payable to: Associated Presbyterian Churches, Edinburgh Congregation and sent to Mr Jason Ross, 7 Hill Park Brae, Munloch, IV 8 8PL. Brothers and sisters pray for us. *John Ross.*

HARRIS

The Harris congregation enjoyed the Communion season at the end of April, when Revd A N McPhail from Oban preached so acceptably over the weekend. Please do pray for this congregation as many continue to be unwell and there are so few young families. Isaiah

60:22 would seem to be a suitable prayer: *"A little one shall become a thousand, And a small one a strong nation. I, the Lord, will hasten it in its time."*

STORNOWAY

During the Spring, the congregation has had several special meetings led by Missionary groups working in all parts of the world. European Missionary Fellowship, Slavic Gospel Association, Worldwide Evangelisation for Christ and SASRA, all brought challenging messages regarding the 'need' for the gospel in various continents and in different spheres of life. Although the 'Fellowship Evenings' have finished for the winter, there was a meeting with a young Dr Caitriana Nicholson who hopes to go to Eastern Asia to begin a four-year period as a Closed Access Nation worker. On 25 May, God willing, the congregation hopes to hold an Evangelistic Service entitled: "Mobile Phones & Foolish Virgins". Please pray that this service will be blessed.

DINGWALL/INVERNESS

The congregation has been blessed with faithful Gospel preaching by visiting ministers during the period when Calum MacInnes was in Canada. The ministry of Rev A.I MacDonald, Rev F. Turner, and Rev D.C. Macaskill was much

imminent death.

Similarly whoever believes that Jesus Christ was lifted up will not perish but have eternal life. We must find assurance in God's Word which tells us that we are *"justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood"*. Faith in God's Christ as Saviour is absolutely essential for our eternal redemption. Faith in a Biblical sense, of course, implies so much more than a simple awareness or knowledge of Christ or consent to the message of the Cross. Instead it crucially conveys the most rudimentary and precious truth that we must trust and obey Him as our Lord and Saviour.

John Flavel once so aptly noted that 'there are many graces besides faith, but faith only is the grace that gives us a right to Christ; and there are many acts of faith besides receiving, but this

receiving or embracing Christ is the justifying and saving act. There is no grace more excellent than faith; no sin more execrable and abominable than unbelief. Faith is the saving grace, and unbelief the damning sin.'

That is surely the message that we must take from the account of the fiery serpent in the wilderness. Faith in the saving grace of God saved the repentant Israelites from imminent death. Their unbelief had unquestionably been their damning sin. Have you similarly placed your faith in the saving grace of God made manifest in the supreme sacrifice of the Lamb of God? If not, pray to God this very day; call on Him for saving faith which comes through the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit. Ask others to pray for you and with you. This is the day of God's grace. Seek the Lord while He might be found. Look unto Him and be ye saved all the ends of the earth. Ω

'A Black Hen Can Lay a White Egg'

SO SAID CHARLES SPURGEON. He was meaning that some ungodly people can produce godly children. How encouraging—for us all! We need not feel we have had a bad start to life because of our background or even the environment we have been brought up in.

One of the greatest spiritual giants of all time must surely be Jonathan Edwards who ministered in Northampton in Massachusetts, America in the 1700's. Yet his paternal grandmother was a chronic adulteress who bore another man's child. She was psychotic, often given to fits of rage and threats of violence. Her sister murdered her own child and her brother killed another sister with an axe!! She deserted her family, and Jonathan's grandfather finally divorced her. Jonathan's uncle committed suicide by cutting his own throat. So, as Spurgeon said, out of evil can come good. So, cheer up and look up to God Almighty! Ω

By kind permission we print below an article which appeared in the 'Sword' Magazine, Vol 3 No 2 March/April 2008 .

Fool Britannia!

Oxford's 'towers and dreaming spires' reverberating as Islamic loudspeakers blast the three times daily call to prayer? That's among the latest demands of the creeping Islamisation of Britain. *Watchman* reports...

ON JANUARY 6, The Sunday Telegraph published an article by the Anglican Bishop of Rochester, the Rt. Rev. Michael Nazir-Ali, which stated that Islamic extremists have created 'no-go' areas across Britain where it may be too dangerous for Christians and other non-Muslims to enter.

The Bishop, who also has a seat in the House of Lords, wrote that it is becoming increasingly difficult for Christianity to be the nation's public religion in a multifaith and multicultural society.

He expressed concern that attempts have been made to impose an 'Islamic' character on certain areas in Britain, for example, by insisting on artificial amplification for the Muslim call to prayer.

Bishop Michael added that there is already pressure to relate aspects of the Islamic Shari'a law to civil law in Britain. To some extent this is already true of

arrangements for Shari'a-compliant banking.

The Bishop wrote, 'Much of this has come about because of a 'neutral' secularist approach which refuses to privilege any faith. In fact, secularism has its own agenda and it is certainly not neutral. The multifaith 'mish-mash' is producing a new, de facto, 'establishment' as the Government attempts to bring particular communities on to its agenda for integration and cohesion, an agenda which still lacks the underpinning of a moral and spiritual vision.'

The paper also reported that David Davis MP, the Conservative Shadow Home Secretary, has accused Muslims of promoting a kind of 'voluntary apartheid' by shutting themselves in closed societies and demanding immunity from criticism. The newspaper quoted David Davis as saying, 'Bishop Nazir-Ali has drawn attention to a deeply serious problem. The

and truly a slave to drink so everything else had to take second place. His drinking also got him into endless fights, not least with the police against whom he says he always lost. Such was his addiction that he chose to be homeless and slept in a squat in some disused building in Dunfermline. There was running water and an old mattress on the floor and he could travel to Edinburgh even although he had to beg for the bus fare some mornings.

He managed to hide his predicament from his family and unbelievably from the bank which was in a very prestigious part of Edinburgh. He told his brother that there was no washing machine in his lodgings and so his sister in law would very generously do his washing for him each week. John would arrive at work before anyone else and have a wash and present himself smartly dressed by opening time.

His father's early death, while John was a young man, even although the family had so many problems, caused John very deep mourning and is a very powerful lesson on how strong family bonds are even when a father may fail abysmally in his duties.

Eventually, at work one day, a caring manageress, sensing that there was something far wrong (whether she suspected drink or not John didn't say) asked John how he was doing. He broke down and told her his situation. She put him in touch with the "Bethany

Christian Trust" which caters for the homeless. When John was being registered into the hostel, in response to the question what was his religion, he was very clear, he did not believe "any of that stuff," that was for "fruit cakes". They could not get him to agree that he had any belief whatsoever.

Wonderfully the example, kindness and witness of the people in Bethany eventually led John to make a personal commitment to Christ. The drinking stopped but after a few months he lapsed very badly and fought a losing battle for almost two years. After a huge row with his girlfriend as a result of him telling her they could no longer sleep together because he was a Christian, the end result was that they got married very quickly and are still together. The end of his drinking came when John and his wife were at a Billy Graham rally. The altar call was being given for the unsaved to come forward, John thought that does not include me because I'm meant to be saved. Then Billy Graham said something to the effect that, those that had made a commitment in the past but had not gone on as they should have for whatever reason, could also come forward and renew their commitment to Christ.

John turned to his wife and asked her if she would come forward with him but she refused. He went forward on his own but just as he was nearing the front someone pushed him from behind and to his delight it was his wife.

Congregational News

EDINBURGH

From homeless alcoholic to Executive Manager

SATAN OFTEN tricks us into thinking this or that person will never be converted. They are so unchristian in their outlook and lifestyle, and utterly devoid of any interest in anything resembling true Christianity. We know that with God *"all things are possible,"* but as far as relating this truth to that wild godless character sometimes it simply does not occur to us. This is a sad confession, but it is, we believe, a very common one.

So this month let us read a short account of John Rodger's conversion, as it will renew our confidence in the gospel and our confidence in the power of God.

John told us his personal story at our outreach meeting on May 11th He was the youngest of four and was brought up in Edinburgh. His father was a drinker and a petty criminal who landed in jail many times. John's mother a drinker, had numerous affairs while her husband was in jail. There were many shouting matches in the family and John tried to amuse himself in various ways just to get away from the

constant warring between family members. He thought this chaos was normal family life, although so lacking in love and care.

He tended to join with his older siblings in all their exploits so learnt a lot of destructive things at a younger age than normal. Consequently he bought his first beer in a pub when he was fourteen years old and felt that this was "living".

By the time he was seventeen he was a hard drinker and lost his job in the Gas industry as a result of major absenteeism. Being a hard drinker he had to find money quickly and with his brother's help got himself a job in the bank. The drinking continued, John did not pay his lodging money and fell back on his family for support which they give for a while but his drunkenness made it well nigh impossible for his brother and sisters to fit their "wee brother" in to their various families. John moved from one digs to another always moving on before the lodging money was due and thereby defrauding a stream of landlords and landladies. Inevitably, word got around Edinburgh, and he found it impossible to continue the scam.

Why not pay his way and lead a normal life? He was well

Government's confused and counter-productive approach risks creating a number of closed societies instead of one, open, cohesive one. It generates the risk of encouraging radicalisation and creating home-grown terrorism.'

On January 7 the Daily Telegraph reported that the Liberal Democrat leader, Nick Clegg MP, described Bishop Nazir-Ali's words as 'extraordinarily inflammatory'.

Doorstep threat

Many British politicians are more concerned with appeasing Islam, appearing politically correct and winning Muslim votes than rationally confronting Islamic challenges which are seriously damaging our nation.

The journalist, Leo McKinstry, wrote the following comments in The Daily Express on January 7, 'At last a trumpet blast has been sounded against the creeping Islamisation of Britain. For too long our ruling elite has been in denial about the consequences of this insidious process, pretending the assertiveness of Muslim culture is just another element in the rich diversity of British society... there is no more graphic symbol of the change sweeping Britain than the demand from Muslims in Oxford that the city council give mosques the right to broadcast the call to prayers over loudspeakers at least three times a day. The noisy

summons to Muslim prayers smacks of ideological and cultural supremacy rather than spiritual concern... one Birmingham woman, Gina Khan, who turned against Islam after running away from an arranged marriage, said in an interview last year: "There are mosques on every street corner. It is all happening on your doorstep and Britain is still blind to the real threat that is embedded here now".'

The interdenominational Christian community, the Maranatha Community, have been documenting information about Muslim no-go areas in the UK. To find out more about this issue or to share information you have about Muslim no-go areas, phone Maranatha Community on: 0161 748 4858.

Councillor Alan Craig, leader of the Christian Peoples Alliance group on Newham Council in East London commended the Bishop of Rochester for his courage in highlighting the deliberate creation of Muslim enclaves by radical Islamists in Britain.

'Of course the Bishop will get attacked by ostriches who hide their heads in the sand and hope the problem will go away,' said Cllr Craig, who has been leading the campaign against the proposal to build a huge mega-mosque at West Ham in East London for the Olympics. To support his crucial campaign you can call Alan on 020 -7476-5381 or log on to

www.MegaMosqueNoThanks.com

Pray that: a) All Muslim no-go areas in the UK are exposed and opened up to non-Muslims. b) British politicians will stop appeasing Islam and take firm and effective action to end the ongoing Islamisation of the U.K. c) The proposed mega-mosque in West Ham is not built.

On 5th December 2007 a debate was initiated in the House of Commons by Conservative MP, Mark Pritchard, regarding 'Christianophobia'. Mr. Pritchard warned the Government not to 'surrender' the UK's Christian heritage. He said Christianity in the UK is being undermined 'mostly by stealth'.

He pointed out that, 'Most Christians feel they are not getting a fair hearing.' He also said that the importance of Christianity was being undermined by the 'politically correct brigade' and that it was 'time for the dragon of political correctness to be slain.'

Responding on the Government's behalf, Community Cohesion Minister, Parmjit Dhanda, said the UK should celebrate the role of Christianity in the country's heritage and culture. Mr. Dhanda, a Sikh, said the Government admired the work of faith-based groups, which had made a 'huge difference' to regional regeneration and charity work in the UK and abroad. He added that Christian campaigners had worked hard in the past to secure freedom of speech and

religion.

While Mr. Dhanda's statements are to be welcomed, unfortunately the Labour Government he represents has done more in practice than any other modern British Government to threaten the religious liberty of Christians and pass laws undermining Christian values.

We need more than just Government lip service but practical action to support our Christian inheritance or at the very least for the Government to refrain from undermining Christian values and religious liberty. Pray that this will happen.

Fear God... and nothing else

Islam's challenge to the U.K will never be defeated without strong commitment to Jesus, courage, boldness and concern for the truth being placed far above any fear of causing offence. If we fear God as we ought to, we will never fear Islam. Jesus Christ Himself paid little heed to causing offence when he had important truths to proclaim. [see Matthew 15:13-14].

All religions which deny Jesus Christ's Divinity and Lordship are at best competitors with the truth of Christianity, leading people away from salvation, or at worst the instigators of anti-Christian persecution. In the UK the presence of other faiths is used to try and undermine the uniqueness of Jesus Christ and the nation's

Christian heritage. 1 John 2:22-23 states, "*Who is the liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a man is the antichrist – he denies the Father and the Son. No-one who denies the Son has the Father; whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also.*" More than ever, we Christians need to stand firm on this truth.

Especially in this age of

selling out to non-Christian faiths, we need to firmly reassert the old Gospel principle that there is only ONE truth and ONE way to God and that is through Jesus Christ [John 14:6, John 3:16 to 18, 36]. When we Christians do not take God's teachings in the scriptures seriously and when we fail to live deeply committed Christian lives, we simply hasten the de-Christianising of our nation. Ω

AN APPEAL

In the December issue of APC News, there was an article 'A Jungle Preacher' giving an outline of the ministry of Boon Chu Pongdamromgsap in Thailand. He is a missionary in Thailand and our minister Revd George Macaskill in Stornoway, went out there last October to assist Boon Chu in his work. Photos of the mission work were published in that issue of The APC News, No 126 Nov/Dec 2007.

The people in Thailand are hungry for the gospel. They want to know more and more about Jesus Christ.

But the work is in great need of financial help. Ministry teams are available but there is little funding to send them out. We have therefore opened a temporary account for any of our people to help in this work.

Money goes a long way in Thailand—
£60 pays for a student's food & lodgings for a year.

Any donations will be most gratefully received.

Details for donations are as follows:

Name:	KAREN ACCOUNT
Sort Code:	83-27-12
A/c No:	00680736
Bank:	Royal Bank of Scotland
Address:	17 North Beach Street STORNOWAY Isle of Lewis HS1 2XH
Telephone	01851 705252