

# starters for Sunday

## *Second Sunday after Epiphany*

**19 January 2014**

Rev Scott McKenna, Minister of Mayfield Salisbury, Edinburgh, offers his thoughts on the second Sunday after Epiphany.

### **Contents**

Introduction .....	2
Isaiah 49: 1 – 7 .....	2
Psalms 40: 1 – 11 .....	3
1 Corinthians 1: 1 – 9 .....	4
St John 1: 29 – 42.....	5
Prayers.....	8
Time with Children.....	13
Sermon Illustrations/Comment.....	14
Musical Suggestions .....	18
Additional Resources.....	19



## Introduction

What is striking about these four passages of Scripture is their power to ignite and fuel the flame of faith within the reader. I say 'reader' but it is best to approach Scripture with a meditative mind; in other words, with an open heart and in the expectation that we will encounter God in the written Word. These four passages easily lend themselves to 'seeing with the heart'. We do not so much 'read' Scripture as an external exercise, as if holding it at arm's length, but let the words, images and stories enter our soul, become part of our consciousness and, ultimately, touch and change us. Our aim is to let Scripture soak into the soul letting the Holy Spirit within it unite with the Holy Spirit dwelling in us.

In reading Scripture in public worship it is important that the words first pass through the heart of the 'reader'. The text becomes a lived experience.

### [Isaiah 49: 1 – 7](#)

The opening verses promise the salvation of God, of God's in-breaking into the life of Israel and the world. These verses can be applied to the prophet, Israel or, in a Christian context, to Jesus.

Out of darkness, from the womb or 'matrix of the mother', the Servant has been called. The Servant has lived in the *shadow* of God's hand and been *hidden* in the quiver. It may be that Israel, having been in exile in Babylon, is here being referred to. Equally, we can see these words apply to the prophet (the author of Second Isaiah) or Jesus. As in Psalm 139, God is in the darkness and it is from the darkness God's plan unfolds. 'Darkness' is a fertile image in our exploration of spirituality.

The Servant's declaration is that God is his strength and work. It is as such that the Servant is enabled to become *a* light to the Gentiles. Like any community of faith, Israel needs to meet its own needs but, at the same time, it can be a light to the wider community.

God's faithfulness is a powerful note in this context. Israel has been in exile for decades but the Persian king, Cyrus, delivers the Israelites from their captivity to the Babylonians. Cyrus, a non-Jew, is Israel's messiah. God's help, God's plan, is not limited to Israel and neither is God's plan limited to the Church.



At verse 5, it is acknowledged that Israel 'failed' to be faithful to God, but God's faithfulness is the rock upon which Israel depends. It is not different for us and for the Church.

### [Psalm 40: 1 – 11](#)

Some scholars suggest that this psalm is, in fact, two psalms merged together: thanksgiving (1 – 10) and lament (11 – 17). The lectionary lesson is mostly the 'first' psalm. However, originally, it may have been one psalm because it is often true that faith (hence thanksgiving) leads to questioning, doubt and lament.

The 'I' of the writer may be the king or it may be an unidentified individual. It is a song or poem which speaks powerfully of personal crisis, perhaps a serious illness or other traumatic, life-changing experience. Whatever has been the cause, the 'spiritual' experience which accompanied it has taken the person to the very edge of faith, sanity and meaning.

The psalmist said, 'I waited patiently.' This phrase is best understood as being imbued with hope and expectation; it is not the waiting of resignation. It is filled with confidence, faith and hope, even though the experience has taken the psalmist into her or his deepest darkness. That darkness is a 'horrible pit' and 'miry clay'. This 'desolate' or 'roaring' pit and the miry bog are images of the underworld. The psalmist has been rescued by God and now stands on a rock or crag.

There is no indication how long the psalmist suffered in the pit and clay, but we can assume it to have been a place of such darkness to the psalmist that it at least seemed to have been for an extended time. The 'fear' of verse 3 is 'reverence' for the LORD and reverence based on trust.

The 'proud' of verse 4 are those who place their trust in false gods, in falsehood. By contrast, trusting in God, the psalmist pours forth the wonders of God and, of course, God's faithfulness. There is no sense in these words that the darkness was diminished by the psalmist's hopeful waiting, but that in the terrible darkness the psalmist hoped nevertheless.

God does not desire animal sacrifice or, indeed, any such 'external' sacrifice but desires a heart in which God's laws are written. This is about relationship, spiritual intimacy; God desires a love



affair, not the rites of religion. God desires an affair of the heart which manifests itself in union with Him and in living according to His love. This is the meaning of 'obedience'.

The psalmist is infected by the love and mystery of God in the same way the first disciples curiously, hopefully, followed Jesus.

### [1 Corinthians 1: 1 – 9](#)

Paul opens his letter by describing himself as an 'apostle of Jesus Christ.' I take this to mean that Paul is not only called by Jesus and a follower of Him, but that he has the mind of Christ within him. Paul seeks to soak in the Spirit or spirituality of Jesus into his own soul. It is drawing from this inner strength, he is confident in his approach to the church community at Corinth.

Sosthenes is mentioned here and also in Acts 18: 17. He had been the ruler of the synagogue at Corinth but had been beaten for his faith in Jesus.

In his opening words, Paul reminds the Corinthians that they have been sanctified by Jesus and that they are the saints of the church. By saints, Paul means that they have been called to holiness. Like the first disciples, God called the people of Corinth and it is in journeying, on pilgrimage, that we truly become followers and saints. They have been drawn into the 'home' of Jesus, into the life of Jesus, and, once infected by that Personality and vision, they walk the road of holiness.

It is a road of piety as well as love of others, but not a road of perfection. Paul tells the church community that they have been enriched in everything. I take this to mean that Christ is all-pervading. God's faithfulness is stressed, perhaps in contrast to the faithlessness of some within the church but, crucially, God will confirm the saints in the end. These are encouraging words: through life, in all its trials and testing, God will remain faithful. The community's strength rests not on their own strength or merit but on the faithfulness of God.



## [St John 1: 29 – 42](#)

Clement of Alexandria described the Fourth Gospel as the ‘spiritual gospel.’ In iconography, the four evangelists (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) are often depicted in symbols: a winged man or angel for Matthew, a winged lion for Mark, a winged ox or bull for Luke and an eagle for John. In the ancient world, it was believed that an eagle could look directly into the sun. In depicting the Fourth Evangelist as an eagle, the Early Church believed that the writer of the Fourth Gospel saw more deeply into the nature of God; the Fourth Evangelist understood Jesus as the Divine *logos*, the Word of God. It is not a Gospel which can readily be taken at face value. Scripture is the blending of spirituality, liturgy, mythology, theology and fragments of history and this is nowhere more so than in John’s Gospel.

John the Baptist declares, ‘Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.’ In our earliest liturgies, these words lie at the very centre of the Communion service. Calvin wrote:

By taking away the sins of the world by the sacrifice of His death,  
He reconciles men to God. Christ certainly bestows other blessings  
upon us, but the chief one, on which all the others depend, is that  
by appeasing the wrath of God He brings it to pass that we are  
reckoned righteous and pure.

Lesslie Newbigin said, ‘To take away sin is...the purpose of the whole vast apparatus of ritual sacrifice.’ In the Old Testament, in the Book of Exodus, it was the slaying of the lambs and the marking of the doorposts with the blood of the lambs which secured the safety of the Hebrew people; it saved them from the wrath of God. It is a brutal story with a theology which requires to be handled with extreme care. If we *literalise the metaphor*, as Calvin did, we end up with substitutionary atonement, which is immoral.

Behind the word ‘lamb’ we hear the story of Abraham and Isaac (Genesis 22), when the lad asks his father, ‘Where is the lamb?’, Abraham replies, ‘God will provide the lamb.’ The blood of the lambs represents the start of the long walk to the Promised Land. The ‘lamb’ is a metaphor which is also found in Isaiah 53.



By contrast, in Jesus' *Parable of the Forgiving Father* (Luke 15), there is reconciliation without the Father requiring a human or animal sacrifice. The killing of the fatted calf is a thanksgiving, not a sacrifice to appease a vengeful father. Jesus is the One who takes away the sin of the world because He has announced the forgiveness of God; He has spoken of God's tender mercy. God is the Forgiving Father who welcomed His returning son with an embrace. God bears the pain of the wrong within Himself. When we offer forgiveness, we are acknowledging the wrong that has been done but, at the same time, we are seeking to re-establish a relationship. It is a liberating experience.

The word 'Behold' means to see with inner sight. We are to let this Man impress Himself upon us. It is a call to trust in Jesus and enter into a Friendship with Him. Spiritually, we are called to intimacy with Him and this passage encapsulates that journey or pilgrimage. We will see this clearly in the record of the disciples' first encounter with Jesus.

John saw the Spirit descend upon Jesus *like a dove*. It is not clear why the Evangelists use the image of a dove to denote the Presence of the Spirit. When speaking of the Holy we can only ever use analogies, hence the Fourth Evangelist writes 'like a dove'. John's vision may be understood as a fulfilment of the prophecy of Joel (2: 28 – 32) in which the pouring out of God's Spirit will mean that old men will dream dreams and young men will see visions, but there is no mention of a dove. The descent of the Spirit on Israel's leaders is not in itself unusual: we see the Spirit descend a number of times in the Book of Judges, such as Othniel (3: 10), Gideon (6: 34), Jephthah (11: 29) and Samson (14: 6, 19; 15: 14) and, in the First Book of Samuel, on Saul (10:6; 11:6). The descent of the Spirit is also recorded in 1 and 2 Chronicles and the Book of Numbers.

According to all four Gospels and the Book of Acts, the Baptism of Jesus by John marked the beginning of Jesus' public ministry. In the ancient world, Jewish kings (like most kings) were required to be anointed before they could speak or act as a royal figure. There was a rite of purification before the anointing. In the case of Jesus, baptism is that rite and the voice of God from heaven is that anointing. In early Jewish texts, the receiving of the Spirit is the key to receiving wisdom. Solomon received the wisdom of God, a wise and understanding heart able to discern between good and evil, because he had first purged himself of his ego and prayed for God's wisdom.



The insight of John is that Jesus is the 'Son of God'. With the eyes of the heart, John sees the incredible intimacy of Jesus with the Holy One, so much so that he describes Jesus as a son and, in effect, an image of the Father. This is not biology but spiritual union. The Fourth Evangelist wants us to close our eyes, be still and gaze at Jesus the way John the Baptist encouraged his own disciples to do and, in mystery, to enter that union and bliss for ourselves.

The lectionary passage mentions two disciples, one of whom we know to be Andrew. The other is unnamed. It could be that this is the Beloved Disciple, the one who may be the author or source of the Gospel as well as the one in whose home the Last Supper was held, who accompanied Jesus into the courtyard of the High Priest and who stood with Mary at the foot of the Cross.

Jesus asks the disciples, 'What do you seek?' They reply, 'Where is it that you dwell?' Jesus says, 'Come and see.' This exchange is not literal but is the language of spiritual journey and pilgrimage. The two disciples had already started to follow Jesus before He asks them what they seek. Only when we are open are we willing to enquire and follow. It is our spiritual hunger which compels us to search for new possibilities. It is our dissatisfaction with where we are in our life and in our spiritual life which forces us to go in search of something new.

The dwelling-place of Jesus is with the Father; He abides with the Holy; He is at home with the Sacred. It is to this encounter that the two disciples are drawn. Jesus invites them, 'Come and see.'



## Prayers

### Collect

Almighty God,  
Your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ  
is the light of the world.  
Grant that Your people,  
may shine with the radiance of His glory,  
that He may be known,  
worshipped, and obeyed  
to the ends of the earth;  
who lives and reigns  
with You and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

### Call to Prayer

God has caused His light to shine in our hearts, the light which is knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

### Prayers of Adoration, Confession, Absolution and Supplication

Holy God, elusive, mysterious, transcendent,  
an absence, like a Presence, compelling us,  
at times, immensely intimate,  
lead us to Your dwelling-place,  
that we may know Your peace,  
the peace this world cannot give.

Let us pray.



‘Where are you staying?’ asked the disciples.

‘Come and see,’ said Jesus.

Open the eyes of our hearts,

gently lead us, Holy God,

to the home of Jesus.

May we see in Him the Lamb of God,

hear Your declaration of forgiveness,

Your Word of love,

made once, for eternity.

Draw us ever closer into union with Your Spirit.

May we be one with You,

embraced, at peace.

Heaven is torn apart,

Your love pours over us as tears,

we are embraced in the Father’s open arms,

You are a God of love, tender mercy, compassion.

The LORD says,

‘Be still, and know you are held.’

May we discern afresh Your glory in the happiness and turmoil of our lives.

In our tears, may we see the tears of God.

In our failure, may we feel Your reassuring hand upon us.

In our brokenness, may we hear Your word of wholeness.

Almighty God, have mercy upon you; pardon and deliver you from all that hurts and diminishes you, from your sense of shame and regret; and God grant you time for the amendment of life; through Jesus Christ our Lord.



You are a Light to the Gentiles,  
a light to the world.  
All who deeply gaze into Your Portrait  
find strength for the journey,  
healing and the completion which this world cannot give.  
Focus our heart, mind and soul upon You  
that, for this brief time,  
we may be alone with You.

### **Prayers of Thanksgiving, Intercession & Commemoration of the Faithful Departed**

Holy God,  
we thank You above all for the light shining in the face of Jesus,  
for the immense love He brought to the least,  
for the vision of justice He lived in a corrupt world,  
for the healing with which He touched the diseased.  
We thank You for all the apostles, saints and martyrs,  
all who have witnessed to Your Son's beautiful incarnation,  
names known in the world and names known only to You.  
We thank You for Your blessings to us,  
in family, loved ones, friends,  
for the opportunities at work and leisure  
to discern Your Presence,  
follow You  
and live to Your glory.

As followers of Jesus in this place,  
we pray for the Church and the world.  
We pray that You will call forth new spiritual leaders,  
with depth, insight and humility,  
women and men of vision,  
filled with Your Spirit,



dreaming Your dreams,  
eager to follow Christ  
without safety or certainty  
but with a thirst and hunger for the Holy,  
for the Mystery at the centre of all life,  
that entwines all humanity,  
all peoples, of faith and none.  
Inflame each one of us:  
may we hear the words of Jesus, 'Come and see.'

We pray for our leaders,  
for the Queen, her ministers of state,  
all who serve us in parliament or council;  
give to them penitence,  
an understanding heart,  
a wisdom shaped by Your Wisdom.

We pray for the work of charities,  
for those who serve the homeless,  
the mentally ill,  
those destroyed by the poison of poverty.  
Strengthen us in our commitment to help where we can,  
to feed, cloth and visit those in need.  
May we feel for them with the heart of Christ.

We pray for justice,  
for equity,  
for the cessation of violence,  
in places and peoples torn apart by war and conflict.  
We are mindful of the children and families of Syria,  
the evil that is done by governments around the world:



tear open heaven that Your reign may pour into our world.

Bless us in our calling; strengthen us in all that we can do to make a difference.

Holy God,

we give thanks for those whom we have known but who now  
are in Your nearer Presence. May we know them to be blessed,  
made whole in the Mystery of life beyond this life.

May it be that, when our days here are ended,  
we may enter Your fullness grateful for the life we had,  
having lived faithfully, honestly and with love in our hearts.  
We look forward to the moment when Christ will say to us,  
'Come and see.'

*The Lord's Prayer*



## Time with Children

Jesus had twelve disciples. These were people who were trying to learn about Jesus, learn about God, learn about the Holy Spirit in their life, and to live a life of faith, a life inspired by Jesus. A disciple is a learner, someone who is learning to follow.

One of the ways we learn to follow Jesus and be like Jesus is to learn to pray. It is prayer which helps us keep Jesus at the front of our mind. Prayer can take many forms: it can be a careful, slow reading of a Bible story, or gazing into an icon, or it can be lots of words we read or think up...or it can be stillness and silence. Perhaps the simplest and best prayer is...breathing.

### Exercise:

Sit comfortably and as still as you can. Close your eyes. Be still. Be aware of your breathing...in and out. (Repeat as necessary to help create the atmosphere of stillness...without losing the attention of the children.) Concentrate on breathing in and out. Be still. The Spirit of God is like the wind or like breathing. God breathes in our breathing. God breathes life into us. Be aware of your breathing. God breathes in your breathing.

At the end, as you gently bring the children back into the service, remind them that stillness and breathing are prayer. We can do this on the bus, in the park, in church, in bed or wherever.

The next exercise would be to teach them to repeat the name of Jesus in the stillness of prayer, to help them bring His Presence into their present moment.

Congratulate on their praying and discipleship!



## Sermon Illustrations/Comment

### 1. The Baptism of Christ



Piero della Francesca's painting, *The Baptism of Christ*, is spiritually beautiful because of the intense concentration on the face of Jesus during His baptism. Piero paints the water withdrawn from the feet of Jesus. He is reflecting a belief that the Jordan itself felt unworthy in the presence of Jesus.

Jesus' hands are clasped in prayer and He is utterly focused on the Mystery, the Holy One. Jesus is wholly aware of the Father, the Father's Presence through all things, through this rite of purification and, supremely, He is aware of the Father's love for Him, a love we declare to every child in baptism. At its best, prayer is that singular focus.

2. In the Gospel narrative, we are listening to the dialogue of spiritual searching (Jn. 1: 38 – 39). In the end, Andrew declares Jesus to be the Messiah, though that term is not here defined. At a deep level, this dialogue is humanity's story, our search for meaning in this material world. We may become disillusioned by the competition, rivalry, greed, consumption, aggression, violence and sin of our material world, or we may be damaged by others thus experiencing a pain we'd never thought we'd feel, or we may be plagued by self-doubt, angst or spiritual restlessness. We may become disillusioned by church hierarchy. Whatever our starting point may be, whatever our place of darkness, we have the impetus to search for something deeper than this world can ever give. Like Andrew and the other disciple, we see a true experience of God.

3. In meditation, these verses invite us into a relationship with Jesus, to be with Him, live with Him. He invites us gently, 'Come and see.' John saw the Spirit 'dwell' upon Jesus. We are invited into that mutual indwelling. The disciples remained with Jesus for the remainder of that day. We are not told what they did. Did they pray together? What did the disciples see, hear or feel in that secret meeting with God? Many people have secret, intimate memories or moments of encounter with the Holy, experiences too personal or too vague and so beyond all expression but which they treasure for their whole life. Whatever happened that night, the two disciples followed Jesus from that time.



4. This Scripture passage is about the human encounter with the Divine. That is what the first disciples felt. Jean Vanier of the l'Arche community writes:

I lived something similar with Père Thomas Philippe, a Dominican priest with whom I started l'Arche. When I left the navy in 1950, I went to a small community founded by him near Paris. His presence changed my life – or rather orientated my life in a new way. By his very presence, Père Thomas seemed to communicate a presence of God that filled me with inner peace and silence and drew new life from within me. I knew very quickly that I was called to be his disciple, or spiritual son.

*(Drawn into the Mystery of Jesus through the Gospel of John, p41)*

5. Pilgrimage and retreat are deliberate ways of seeking God in our lives. Of one retreat with members of my congregation, one pilgrim wrote:

While walking at the Bield, I experienced a heightened awareness of the physicality of my personal space. I ran my hands through the soft new leaves of a beech hedge, ruffling them. My fingers explored the dry, cracked, irregular bark of a pine. I grasped the top of a low wall. The stones were rough, scratchy, undulating, but between were cushions of cool, damp, velvety moss. Beneath my feet were pebbles. I picked one up. It was smooth, warm from the sun. Quite suddenly, I became acutely aware of an enveloping wholeness beyond the tactile. I was held. I was safe. The moment passed, but the certainty remained.

Of pilgrimage more generally, members wrote:

Practising [the] presence of God turns [a] taxi ride to a holy place or garden or church hall into a pilgrim journey... Silences in God's presence together seemed to deepen.



Made aware of my own frailty and being stripped of my “church mask” meant that encounters with the Garden pilgrims felt more tender and embracing.

I have felt enriched by the various pilgrimages – journeying with others, being quiet together, feeling part of the long line of silence-seekers in what is now a very noisy world.

Altogether a most enjoyable year and one that has increased my meditative qualities and ability to be quiet and thoughtful alone in the presence of God.

The passage in John invites us to enter into friendship with Jesus, spiritual intimacy through time spent with Him and moving beyond what this material world can offer and beyond the certainties of doctrine and tradition.

6. In life, we can experience moments of immense Presence while at other times we feel dry and barren, without God. With the spirit of adventure, encountering the elusiveness of God, the poet R S Thomas wrote:

It is this great absence  
 that is like a presence, that compels  
 me to address it without hope  
 of a reply. It is a room I enter  
 from which someone has just  
 gone, the vestibule for the arrival  
 of one who has not yet come.  
 I modernise the anachronism  
 of my language, but he is no more here  
 than before. Genes and molecules  
 have no more power to call  
 him up than the incense of the Hebrews



at their altars. My equations fail  
 as my words do. What resource have I  
 other than the emptiness without him of my whole  
 being, a vacuum he may not abhor?

## 7. The Lamb

As a metaphor, the 'lamb' may be interpreted in different ways. Perhaps one way is to think of the lamb's vulnerability and fragility, yet also of its innocence and beauty. Somehow, it speaks of God to us. Jean Vanier writes:

In l'Arche and in Faith and Light,  
 we are called to witness in a special way  
 to the gift of people with disabilities.  
 So often they are looked down upon, cast aside,  
 seen as being without value.  
 In 'Arche and in Faith and Light we see their value and their beauty  
 and can bear witness not only are they fully human,  
 but also they are loved by God in a special way.  
 We want to be witnesses not only through our words,  
 but through the life we share with them.  
 Witnesses, then, are there to tell us where to find  
 inner healing and liberation,  
 what is the road to God,  
 and how God is hidden in love, not power.

Often, people with learning difficulties bring joy, healing and humanity to those around them. Without the hang ups of 'normal' society, they show kindness, love and honesty without calculating it. Discipleship is not an intellectual assent, though the faith of the Church must be intellectually rigorous; discipleship is a way of living like Jesus, loving like Jesus and refracting the glory of the God of love like Jesus. Often, people with learning difficulties do just that...naturally.



## Musical Suggestions

CH4 120	God, we praise you. God, we bless you.
CH4 153	Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father
CH4 30	I waited for the Lord my God
CH4 31	I waited patiently for God (alt. tune: Amazing Grace)
CH4 319	Of the Father's love begotten
CH4 339	Sing of Andrew, John's disciple
CH4 489	Come down, O Love Divine
CH4 320	Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
CH4 336	Christ is our light! the bright and morning star
CH4 490	Jesu, lover of my soul
CH4 495	Spirit of God, descend upon my heart
CH4 552	Oh, for a closer walk with God
CH4 553	Just as I am, without one plea
CH4 668	According to thy gracious word (if Communion is to be celebrated)
CH4 497	Almighty Father of all things that be
CH4 500	Lord of creation, to you be all praise!
CH4 533	Will you come and follow me
CH4 535	Who would true valour see
<b>Songs of God's People 12</b>	Behold the Lamb of God
CH4 532	Lord, you have come to the seashore
<b>Junior Praise 16</b>	Big man standing by the blue waterside
CH4 550	As a deer pants for the water



## Additional Resources

### Resourcing Mission



[Resourcing Mission](#) is host to Starters for Sunday and other key mission resources for download and purchase. Online booking is available for [Mission & Discipleship events](#). Please check back regularly, as new items are being added all the time. If there is something you'd like to see on this new site, please [contact us](#) via the website.

### Prayer Resources

These materials are designed to be a starting point for what you might look for in prayers. [Pray Now 2013](#) is available now from [St Andrew Press](#). [Revealing Love](#) will be available to purchase from November 2013.



### Music Resources

The hymns mentioned in this material are ideas of specific hymns you might choose for this week's themes. However, for some excellent articles on church music and ideas for new music resources, please check out our online music magazine [Different Voices](#).

### Preaching Resources



These materials are designed to be a starting point for what you might preach this Sunday. [Preachers Perspectives](#) is a resource where we have asked twelve preachers to share the insights they have gathered through their experiences of writing and delivering sermons regularly.

### Scots Worship Resources

[The Kirk's Ear](#) - Scots in the Kirk series for Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, Pentecost and other times of the year

[Wurship Ouk bi Ouk](#) - Metrical psalms, hymns, prayers and words for worship

[Scots Sacraments](#) may give you helpful material if you are celebrating Communion or have a Baptism.

*The Mission and Discipleship Council would like to express its thanks to the Rev Scott Mckenna for providing us with this Sunday's material.*

*Please note that the views expressed in these materials are those of the individual writer and not necessarily the official view of the Church of Scotland, which can be laid down only by the General Assembly.*

