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Jonathan Edwards
A Biographical Sketch

JONATHAN EDWARDS, saint, metaphysician and theologian, stands out as the one figure of real greatness in the intellectual life of colonial America. Born, bred, passing his whole life on the verge of civilization, he has made his voice heard wherever men have busied themselves with those two greatest topics which can engage human thought – God and the soul.

He was distinctly a great man. He did not merely express the thought of his time, or meet it simply in the spirit of his traditions. He stemmed it and moulded it. New England thought was already making toward that colourless theology which marked it later. That he checked. It was decidedly Arminian. He made it Calvinistic. Edwards had a remarkable philosophical bent; but he had an even more remarkable sense and taste for divine things. And, therefore, “we remember him, not as the greatest of American philosophers, but as the greatest of American Calvinists.”

It was a very decadent New England into which Edwards was born, on 5th October 1703. The religious fervour which the Puritan immigrants had brought with them into the New World had not been able to propagate itself unimpaired to the third and fourth generation. Already in 1678, Increase Mather had bewailed that “the body of the rising generation is a poor, perishing, unconverted, and (except the Lord pour down His Spirit) an undone generation.”

The home into which Edwards was born, however, not only protected him from much of the evil which was pervading the community, but powerfully stimulated his religious and intellectual life. He began the study of Latin at the age of six, and by thirteen had acquired a respectable knowledge of “the three learned languages” which at the time formed part of the curricula of the colleges: Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. He then entered the “Collegiate School of Connecticut” (afterwards Yale College).

He graduated at the head of his class in 1720, when he was just short of

seventeen years of age, but remained at college two years longer for the study of Divinity. In the summer of 1722 he was "approbated" to preach, and he supplied the pulpit of a little knot of Presbyterians in New York City. Returning home, he was appointed tutor at Yale in June 1724, and filled this post with distinguished ability for the next two years. His resignation of his tutorship was occasioned by an invitation to become the colleague and successor of his grandfather, Solomon Stoddard, in the pastorate of the church at Northampton, Massachusetts, where, accordingly, he was ordained and installed on 15th February 1727.

By his installation at Northampton, Edward's period of preparation was brought to a close. His preparation had been remarkable. Born with a drop of ink in his veins, Edwards had almost from infancy held a pen in his hand. From his earliest youth he had been accustomed to trace out on paper to its last consequence every fertile thought which came to him. A number of the early products of his observation and reflection have been preserved, revealing a precocity which is almost beyond belief.

Throughout all these formative years he remained first of all a man of religion. He had been the subject of deep religious impressions from his earliest boyhood, and he gave himself, during this period of preparation, to the most assiduous and intense cultivation of his religious nature. "I made seeking my salvation," he himself tells us, "the main business of my life." But about the time of his graduation (1720) a change came over him, which relieved the strain of his inward distress. From his childhood, his mind had revolted against the sovereignty of God: "It used to appear like a horrible doctrine to me." Now all this passed unobservedly away; and gradually, by a process he could not trace, this very doctrine came to be not merely a matter of course to him but a matter of rejoicing: "The doctrine has very often appeared exceedingly pleasant, bright, and sweet; absolute sovereignty is what I love to ascribe to God." One day he was reading 1 Timothy 1: 17, "Now unto the King, eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory, for ever and ever, Amen," and, as he read, "a sense of the glory of the Divine Being" took possession of him, "a new sense, quite different from anything" he "ever experienced before". He longed to be "rapt up to Him in heaven, and be as it were swallowed up in Him for ever." From that moment his understanding of divine things increased, and his enjoyment of God grew. There were, no doubt, intervals of depression. But, on the whole, his progress was steadily upwards and his consecration more and more complete. It was this devout young man, with the joy of the Lord in his heart, who turned his back in the early months of 1727 on his brilliant

academic life and laid aside forever his philosophical speculations, to take up the work of a pastor at Northampton.

Edwards was ordained co-pastor with his grandfather, Solomon Stoddard, on 15th February 1727, and on the latter's death, two years later, succeeded to the sole charge of the parish. Northampton was relatively a very important place. It was the county town, and nearly half of the area of the province lay within the county. It was, therefore, a sort of little local capital, and its people prided themselves on their culture, energy, and independence of mind. There was but the one church in the town, and it was probably the largest and most influential in the province, outside of Boston. At one time the membership numbered six hundred and twenty, and included nearly the entire adult population of the town. Stoddard had introduced into the Northampton church the practice of opening the Lord's Supper to those who made no profession of conversion. In this practice Edwards at first acquiesced; but, becoming convinced that it was wrong, sought after a while to correct it, with disastrous consequences to himself.

To the pastoral care of this important congregation, Edwards gave himself with single-hearted devotion. Assiduous house-to-house visitation did not, it is true, form part of his plan of work; but this did not argue carelessness or neglect; it was in accordance with his deliberate judgment of his special gifts and fitnesses. And, if he did not go to his people in their homes, save at the call of illness or special need, he encouraged them to come freely to him, and grudged neither time nor labour in meeting their individual requirements. He remained, of course, also a student, spending ordinarily from thirteen to fourteen hours daily in his study. This work did not separate itself from, but was kept strictly subsidiary to, his pastoral service.

He was recognized as a remarkable preacher, as arresting and awakening as he was instructive. Filled with the profoundest sense of the heinousness of sin, as an offence against the majesty of God and an outrage against His love, he set himself to arouse his hearers to some realization of the horror of their condition as objects of the divine displeasure, and of the incredible goodness of God in intervening for their salvation. Side by side with the most moving portrayal of God's love in Christ, and of the blessedness of communion with Him, he therefore set, with the most startling effect, equally vivid pictures of the dangers of unforgiven sin and the terrors of the lost estate. The effect of such preaching, delivered with the force of the sincerest conviction, was overwhelming. A great awakening began in the church at the end of 1735, in which more than three hundred converts were gathered in, and which extended throughout the churches of the Connecticut valley.

For twenty-three years Edwards pursued his fruitful ministry at Northampton;

under his guidance the church became a city set on a hill. But in the reaction from the revival of 1741-1742 conditions arose which caused him great searchings of heart, and led ultimately to his separation from his congregation. In this revival, practically the whole adult population of the town was brought into the church; they were admitted under the excitement of the time and under the ruling introduced as long before as 1704 by Stoddard, which looked upon all the ordinances of the church, including the Lord's Supper, as "converting ordinances", not presupposing, but adapted to bring about, a change of heart.

As time passed, it became evident enough that a considerable body of the existing membership of the church had not experienced that change of heart by which alone they could be constituted Christians, and indeed they made no claim to have done so. On giving serious study to the question for himself, Edwards became convinced that participation in the Lord's Supper could properly be allowed only to those professing real "conversion". It was his duty as pastor and guide of his people to guard the Lord's Table from profanation, and he was not a man to leave unperformed a duty clearly perceived. Two obvious measures presented themselves to him – unworthy members of the church must be excised by discipline, and greater care must be exercised in receiving new applicants for membership. It is not necessary to go into the details of the controversy regarding a case of discipline which emerged in 1744, or the subsequent difficulties regarding the conditions of admission to the Lord's Supper. The result was that, after a sharp contest running through two years, Edwards was dismissed from his pastorate on 22nd June 1750.

By his dismissal from his church at Northampton in his forty-seventh year, his strenuous pastoral labour was brought to an abrupt close. After a few months he removed to the little frontier hamlet of Stockbridge, as missionary of the "Society in London for Propagating the Gospel in New England and the Parts Adjacent" to the Housatonic Indians gathered there, and as pastor of the little church of white settlers.

It was at Stockbridge that he wrote the treatises on which his fame as a theologian chiefly rests: the great works on the Will, and Original Sin, the striking essays on *The End for Which God Created the World*, and *The Nature of True Virtue*, and the unfinished *History of Redemption*. No doubt he utilized material previously collected. He lived practically with his pen in his hand, and accumulated an immense amount of written matter. His seven years at Stockbridge were the fruitful years of Edward's theological work.

They were interrupted in the autumn of 1757 by an invitation to him to become the President of the College of New Jersey, at Princeton. It was with great reluctance that he accepted this call; it seemed to him to threaten the

prevention of what he had thought to make his life-work – the preparation, to wit, of a series of volumes on all the several parts of the Arminian controversy. But the college at Princeton, which had been founded and thus far carried on by men whose sympathies were with the warm-hearted, revivalistic piety to which his own life had been dedicated, had claims upon him which he could not disown. On the advice of a council of his friends, therefore, he accepted the call, and removed to Princeton to take up his new duties, in January 1758.

There he was inoculated for smallpox on 13th February, and died of this disease on 22nd March in the fifty-fifth year of his age. [His doctor wrote, “It pleased God to let him sleep in that dear Lord Jesus, whose kingdom and interest he has been faithfully and painfully serving all his life.”] ■

Abridged from *Edwards and the New England Theology* by Benjamin B. Warfield, in the *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, 1912.

Sermon

The Manner in Which the Salvation of the Soul is to be Sought

Jonathan Edwards

(Slightly edited to obviate some obscurities in punctuation, vocabulary, and syntax. - Editor)

“Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he,”

Genesis 6:22

CONCERNING these words, we may observe what it was that God commanded Noah. It was *the building of an ark* according to the particular direction of God, against the time when the flood of waters should come; and the laying up of food for himself, his family, and the other animals, which were to be preserved in the ark. We have the particular commands which God gave him respecting this affair, from the 14th verse, “Make thee an ark of gopher wood,” and so on.

Also, we see the special design of the work which God had enjoined upon Noah. It was *to save himself and his family*, when the rest of the world should be drowned: “Thou shalt come into the ark.” See verses 17 and 18.

We may observe also *Noah's obedience*. He obeyed God: “thus did Noah”. And his obedience was thorough and universal: “according to all that God commanded him, so did he”. He not only began, but he went through his work, which God had commanded him to undertake for his salvation from the flood. To this obedience the apostle refers in Hebrews 11:7, “By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house.”

*The doctrine here is that we should be willing to engage in, and go through, great undertakings, in order to our own salvation*¹.

The building of the ark, which was enjoined upon Noah, that he and his family might be saved, was *a great undertaking*: the ark was *a building of vast size*, the length of it being three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits. A cubit, till of late, was by learned men reckoned to be equal to a foot and a half of our measure. But lately some learned men of our nation have travelled into Egypt, and other ancient countries, and have measured some ancient buildings there, which are of several thousand years standing, and of which ancient histories give us the dimensions in cubits; particularly the pyramids of Egypt, which are standing entire at this day. By measuring these, and by comparing the measure in feet with the ancient accounts of their measure in cubits, a cubit is found to be almost two and twenty inches. Therefore learned men more lately reckon a cubit much larger than they did formerly. So that the ark, reckoned so much larger every way, will appear to be almost of double the bulk which was formerly ascribed to it. According to this computation of the cubit, it was more than five hundred and fifty feet long, about ninety feet broad, and about fifty feet in height. To build such a structure, with all those apartments and divisions in it which were necessary, and in such a manner as to be fit to float upon the water for so long a time, was then a great undertaking.

It took Noah, with all the workmen he employed, *a hundred and twenty years, or thereabouts, to build it*. For so long it was, that the Spirit of God strove, and the long-suffering God waited, on the old world, as you may see in Genesis 4:3: "My Spirit shall not always strive with man; yet his days shall be a hundred and twenty years." All this while the ark was a preparing, as appears by 1 Peter 3:20: "When once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing." It was a long time that Noah constantly employed himself in this business. Men would esteem that undertaking very great which should keep them constantly employed even for one half of that time. Noah must have had a great and constant care upon his mind for these one hundred and twenty years, in superintending this work, and in seeing that all was done exactly according to the directions which God had given him.

Not only was Noah himself continually employed, but it required *a great number of workmen* to be constantly employed, during all that time, in procuring, and collecting, and fitting the materials, and in putting them together in due form. How great a thing was it for Noah to undertake such a work! For

¹ The term "salvation" is used not only in its sense of the initial deliverance of the sinner from the guilt and power of sin, but also includes the ultimate glory of the redeemed in heaven.

beside the continual care and labour, *it was a work of vast expense*. It is not probable that any of that wicked generation would put to a finger to help forward such a work, which doubtless they believed was merely the fruit of Noah's folly, without full wages. Noah must needs have been very rich, to be able to bear the expense of such a work, and to pay so many workmen for so long a time. It would have been a very great expense for a prince; and doubtless Noah was very rich, as Abraham and Job were afterwards. But it is probable that Noah spent all his worldly substance in this work, thus manifesting his faith in the word of God, by selling all he had, as believing there would surely come a flood which would destroy all; so that if he should keep what he had, it would be of no service to him. Herein he has set us an example, showing us how we ought to sell all for our salvation.

Noah's undertaking was of great difficulty, *as it exposed him to the continual reproaches of all his neighbours* for that whole one hundred and twenty years. None of them believed what he told them of a flood which was about to drown the world. For a man to undertake such a vast piece of work, under notion that it should be the means of saving him when the world should be destroyed, made him the continual laughing-stock of the world. When he was about to hire workmen, doubtless all laughed at him, and we may suppose, that though the workmen consented to work for wages, yet they laughed at the folly of him who employed them. When the ark was begun, we may suppose that every one that passed by and saw such a huge bulk stand there, laughed at it, calling it, "Noah's folly."

In these days, men are with difficulty brought to do, or submit to, that which makes them the objects of the reproach of all their neighbours. Indeed, if while some people reproach them, others stand by them and honour them, this will support them. But it is very difficult for a man to go on in a way wherein he makes himself the laughing stock of the whole world, and wherein he can find none who do not despise him. Where is the man that can stand the shock of such a trial for twenty years? But in such an undertaking as this, Noah, at the divine direction, engaged and went through it, that he and his family might be saved from the common destruction which was shortly about to come on the world. He began, and also made an end: "According to all that God commanded him, so did he." Length of time did not weary him: he did not grow weary of his vast expense. He stood the shock of the derision of all his neighbours and of all the world year after year: he did not grow weary of being their laughing-stock, so as to give over his enterprise, but persevered in it till the ark was finished. After this, he was at the trouble and charge of procuring stores for the maintenance of his family, and of all the various kinds of creatures, for so long a time. Such an

undertaking he engaged in and went through in order to a temporal salvation.

How great an undertaking then should men be willing to engage in and go through in order to their eternal salvation! A salvation from an eternal deluge, from being overwhelmed with the billows of God's wrath, of which Noah's flood was but a shadow. I shall particularly handle this doctrine, *that we should be willing to engage in and go through great undertakings in order to our own salvation*, under the three following propositions:

First, there is a work or business which must be undertaken and accomplished by men, if they would be saved.

Secondly, this business is a great undertaking.

Thirdly, men should be willing to enter upon and go through this undertaking though it be great, seeing it is for their own salvation.

I. The first proposition is that there is a work or business which men must enter upon and accomplish in order to their salvation.

Men have no reason to expect to be saved in idleness, or to go to heaven in a way of doing nothing. No; in order to it there is a great work, which must be not only begun, but finished. I shall speak upon this first proposition, by answering two inquiries.

First, what is this work or business which must be undertaken and accomplished in order to the salvation of men?

Answer. It is the work of seeking salvation in a way of constant *observance of all the duty* to which God directs us in His Word. If we would be saved, we must seek salvation. For although men do not obtain heaven of themselves; they do not go thither accidentally, or without any intention or endeavours of their own. God, in His Word, hath directed men to seek their salvation as they would hope to obtain it. There is a race that is set before them, which they must run, and in that race be victors, in order to their winning the prize.

The Scriptures have told us what *particular duties* must be performed by us in order to our eternal salvation. It is not sufficient that men seek their salvation in the observance of some of those duties; but they must be observed universally. The work we have to do is not an obedience only to some, but to all the commands of God; a compliance with every institution of worship; a diligent use of all the appointed means of grace; a doing of all duty towards God and towards man. It is not sufficient that men have some respect to all the commands of God, and that they may be said to seek their salvation in some sort of observance of all the commands; but they must be devoted to it.

They must not make this a business by the by, or a thing in which they are negligent and careless, or which they do with a slack hand; but it must be their *great business*, being attended to as their great concern. They must not only

seek, but strive; they must do what their hand findeth to do with their might, as men thoroughly engaged in their minds, and influenced and set forward by great desire and strong resolution. They must act as those that see so much of the importance of religion above all other things, that every thing else must be as an occasional affair, and nothing must stand in competition with its duties. This must be the one thing they do; Philippians 3:13, "This one thing I do." It must be the business to which they make all other affairs give place, and to which they are ready to make other things a sacrifice. They must be ready to part with pleasures and honour, estate and life, and to sell all, that they may successfully accomplish this business. It is required of every man, that he not only do something in this business, but that he should devote himself to it; which implies that he should give up himself to it, all his affairs, and all his temporal enjoyments. This is the import of taking up the cross, of taking Christ's yoke upon us, and of denying ourselves to follow Christ. The rich young man, who came kneeling to Christ to know what he should do to be saved, Mark 10:17, in some sense sought salvation but did not obtain it. In some sense he kept all the commands from his youth up; but was not cordially devoted to this business. He had not made a sacrifice to it of all his enjoyments, as appeared when Christ came to try him; he would not part with his estate for him.

It is not only necessary that men should seem to be very much engaged, and be devoted to their duty for a little while; but there must be *a constant devotedness, in a persevering way*, as Noah was to the business of the building the ark, going on with that great, difficult, and expensive affair, till it was finished, and till the flood came. Men must not only be diligent in the use of the means of grace, and be anxiously engaged to escape eternal ruin, till they obtain hope and comfort; but afterwards they must persevere in the duties of religion, till the flood come, the flood of death. Not only must the faculties, strength, and possessions of men be devoted to this work, but also their time and their lives; they must give up their whole lives to it, even to the very day when God causes the storms and floods to come. This is the work which men have to do in order to their salvation.

The second inquiry is, Why is it needful that men should undertake to go through such a work in order to their salvation?

Answer: Not to merit salvation, or to recommend them to God. Men are not saved on the account of any work of theirs, and yet they are not saved without works. If we merely consider what it is for which, or on the account of which, men are saved, no work at all in men is necessary to their salvation. In this respect they are saved wholly without any work of theirs: Titus 3:5, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He

saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." We must indeed be saved on the account of works; but not our own. It is on account of the works which Christ hath done for us. Works are the fixed price of eternal life; it is fixed by an eternal, unalterable rule of righteousness. But since the fall there is no hope of our doing these works, apart from salvation by grace, offered freely without money and without price.

But we answer, secondly, though it be not needful that we do any thing to merit salvation, which Christ hath fully merited for all who believe in Him; yet God, for wise and holy ends, hath appointed that we should come to final salvation in no other way but that of good works done by us. God did not save Noah on account of the labour and expense he was at in building the ark. Noah's salvation from the flood was an instance of the free and distinguishing mercy of God. Nor did God stand in need of Noah's care, or cost, or labour, to build an ark. The same power which created the world, and which brought the flood of waters upon the earth, could have made the ark in an instant, without any care or cost to Noah, or any of the labour of those workmen who were employed for so long a time. Yet God was pleased to appoint, that Noah should be saved in this way. So God hath appointed that man should not be saved without his undertaking and doing this work of which I have been speaking; and therefore we are commanded "to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling," Philippians 2:12.

There are many wise ends to be answered by the establishment of such a work as prerequisite to salvation. The glory of God requires it. For although God stand in no need of any thing that men do to recommend them to His saving mercy, yet it would reflect much on the glory of God's wisdom and holiness to bestow salvation on men in such a way as tends to encourage them in sloth and wickedness; or in any other way than that which tends to promote diligence and holiness. Man was made capable of action, with many powers of both body and mind fitting him for it. He was made for business and not idleness and the main business for which he was made, was that of religion. Therefore it becomes the wisdom of God to bestow salvation and happiness on man in such a way as tends most to promote this end, and to stir him up to a diligent use of his faculties and talents.

It becomes the wisdom of God so to order it that things of great value and importance should not be obtained without great labour and diligence. Much human learning and great moral accomplishments are not to be obtained without care and labour. It is wisely so ordered, in order to maintain in man a due sense of the value of those things which are excellent. If great things were in common easily obtained, it would have a tendency to cause men to slight and undervalue

them. Men commonly despise those things which are cheap, and which are obtained without difficulty.

Although the work of obedience performed by men be not necessary in order to merit salvation; yet it is necessary in order to their being prepared for it. Men cannot be prepared for salvation without seeking it in such a way as hath been described. This is necessary in order that they have a proper sense of their own necessities, and unworthiness; and in order that they be prepared and disposed to prize salvation when bestowed, and be properly thankful to God for it. The requisition of so great a work in order to our salvation is no way inconsistent with the freedom of the offer of salvation; as after all it is both offered and bestowed without any respect to our work, as the price or meritorious cause of our salvation, as I have already explained. Besides, salvation bestowed in this way is better for us, more for our advantage and happiness both in this and the future world, than if it were given without this requisition.

II. The second proposition is that this work or business, which must be done in order to the salvation of men, is a great undertaking.

It often appears so to men upon whom it is urged. Utterly to break off from all their sins, and to give up themselves for ever to the business of religion, without making a reserve of any one lust, submitting to and complying with every command of God, in all cases, and persevering therein, appears to many so great a thing, that they are in vain urged to undertake it. In so doing it seems to them, that they should give up themselves to a perpetual bondage. The greater part of men therefore choose to put it off, and keep it at as great a distance as they can. They cannot bear to think of entering immediately on such a hard service, and rather than do it, they will run the risk of eternal damnation, by putting it off to an uncertain future opportunity.

Although the business of religion is far from really being what it appears to be to such men, (for the devil will be sure, if he can, to represent it in false colours to sinners, and make it appear as black and as terrible as he can); yet it is indeed a great business, a great undertaking, and it is fit that all who are urged to it should count the cost beforehand, and be sensible of the difficulty attending it. For though the devil discourages many from this undertaking, by representing it to be more difficult than it really is; yet with others he takes a contrary course and flatters them it is a very easy thing, a trivial business, which may be done at any time when they please, and so emboldens them to defer it from that consideration. But let none conceive any other notion of that business of religion, which is absolutely necessary to their salvation, than that it is a great undertaking. It is so on the following accounts.

First, it is a business of *great labour and care*. There are many commands

to be obeyed, many duties to be done, duties to God, duties to our neighbour, and duties to ourselves. There is much opposition in the way of these duties from without. There is a subtle and powerful adversary laying all manner of blocks in the way. There are innumerable temptations of Satan to be resisted and repelled. There is great opposition from the world, innumerable snares laid, on every side, many rocks and mountains to be passed over, many streams to be passed through, and many flatteries and enticements from a vain world to be resisted. There is a great opposition from within; a dull and sluggish heart, which is exceedingly averse from that activity in religion which is necessary; a carnal heart which is averse from religion and spiritual exercises, and is continually drawing the contrary way; and a proud and a deceitful heart in which corruption will be exerting itself in all manner of ways. So that nothing can be done to any effect without a most strict and careful watch, and great labour and strife.

Secondly, it is a great undertaking because *it is a constant business*. In any business which requires great labour, men love now and then to have a space of relaxation, that they may rest from their extraordinary labour. But this is a business which must be followed every day; as Luke 9:23 says, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me." We must never give ourselves any relaxation from this business; it must be continually prosecuted day after day. If sometimes we make a great stir and bustle concerning religion, but then lay all aside to take our ease, and do so from time to time, it will be of no good effect; we had even as good do nothing at all. The business of religion so followed is never like to come to any good issue, nor is the work ever like to be accomplished to any good purpose.

Thirdly, it is a great undertaking because it is an undertaking of great expense. We must therein sell all: we must follow this business at the expense of all our unlawful pleasures and delights, at the expense of our carnal ease, often at the expense of our substance, of our credit among men, the good will of our neighbours, at the expense of all our earthly friends, and even at the expense of life itself. Herein it is like Noah's undertaking to build the ark, which, as hath been shown was a costly undertaking: it was expensive to his reputation among men, exposing him to be the continual laughing-stock of all his neighbours and of the whole world: and it was expensive to his estate, and probably cost him all that he had.

Fourthly, it is a great business because sometimes the fear, trouble, and exercise of mind, which are undergone respecting the salvation of the soul, are *great and long continued* before any comfort is obtained. Sometimes persons in this situation labour long in the dark, and sometimes, as it were, in the very fire, they having great distress of conscience, great fears, and many perplexing

temptations, before they obtain light and comfort to make their care and labour more easy to them. They sometimes earnestly, and for a long time, seek comfort, but find it not, because they seek it not in a right manner, nor in the right objects. God therefore hides His face. They cry, but God doth not answer their prayers. They strive, but all seems in vain. They seem to themselves not at all to get forward, or nearer to a deliverance from sin: but to go backward, rather than forward. They see no glimmerings of light: things rather appear darker and darker; insomuch that they are often ready to be discouraged, and to sink under the weight of their present distress, and under the prospect of future misery. In this situation, and under these views, some are almost driven to despair. Many, after they have obtained some saving comfort, are again involved in darkness and trouble. It is with them as it was with the Hebrew Christians: "After ye were illuminated ye endured a great fight of afflictions," Hebrews 10:32. Some, through a melancholy habit and distemper of body, together with Satan's temptations, spend a great part of their lives in distress and darkness, even after they have had some saving comfort.

Fifthly, it is a business which, by reason of the many difficulties, snares, and dangers that attend it, *requires much instruction, consideration, and counsel*. There is no business wherein men stand in need of counsel more than in this. It is a difficult undertaking, a hard matter to proceed aright in it. There are ten thousand wrong ways, which men may take; there are many labyrinths wherein many poor souls are entangled and never find the way out; there are many rocks on which thousands of souls have suffered shipwreck, for want of having steered aright.

Men of themselves know not how to proceed in this business, any more than the children of Israel in the wilderness knew where to go without the guidance of the pillar of cloud and fire. There is great need that they search the Scriptures, and give diligent heed to the instructions and directions contained in them, as to a light shining in a dark place, and that they ask counsel of those skilled in these matters. And there is no business in which men have so much need of seeking to God by prayer, for His counsel, and that He would lead them in the right way, and show them the strait gate. "For strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it;" yea, there are none that find it without direction from heaven. The building of the ark was a work of great difficulty on this account: that Noah's wisdom was not sufficient to direct him how to make such a building as should be a sufficient security against such a flood, and which should be a convenient dwelling-place for himself, his family, and all the various kinds of beasts and birds and creeping things. Nor could he ever have known how to construct this building, had not God directed him.

the media mill in the United States; there is scarcely a newspaper which has not, at some time in the last 10 years, run a story on the Seminar's findings. And such publicity has its dangers. As one opponent expressed it, "In this age of mass ignorance, to have headlines proclaim that this or that fact about [Jesus] has been declared true by supposedly scientific inquiry has the effect of gospel. There is no basis on which most people can counter these authoritative-sounding statements."

Those scholars who are determined to work on the assumption that there is no such thing as the supernatural find it is perfectly easy to rule out most of the Bible. From start to finish it is unashamedly a supernatural book, so this unbelieving approach must leave out everything that is specifically Christian; it cannot be satisfied with removing a few isolated passages. And seminar members have gone to work on this principle with a will. The guidance they have given themselves include the assumptions that short passages are more likely to be accurate, as are those with vivid images and sayings which run against the social and religious tendencies of the time. On the other hand, they assumed the worst about parables with explicit applications, and ruled out quotations from the Old Testament and sayings expressed in "explicitly Christian terms". These instructions illustrate the determinedly negative and arbitrary basis on which the whole process was based, clearly encapsulated in the direction to Seminar members, "When in sufficient doubt, leave it out." Lying behind all their thinking is the assumption which is basic to most present-day New Testament scholarship, that the Gospels were not written by eyewitnesses, but were cobbled together by later writers on the basis of earlier documents and oral tradition. But if Dr Thiede, a German academic, is right in his assertion that fragments of the Gospel of Matthew held in an Oxford University library were written not much later than 60 AD then no one can dispute the fact that the writer was an eyewitness.

The whole tendency of unbelieving biblical scholarship is to ignore the evidence. For instance, although the Seminar has dismissed the resurrection as non-historical, it is one of the best-attested facts of history. Paul presents compelling evidence to the Corinthians: "He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: after that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles" (1 Cor 15:5-7). Even in far-off Corinth these claims ran the risk of being disproved at some stage, for multitudes were still alive who knew the facts about the events which had taken place in and around Jerusalem. The fact of the resurrection was also fundamental to Paul's hope of salvation. "If Christ be not risen," he confessed

plainly, "then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." And again, "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins" (1 Cor 15:14,17). Could Paul have submitted to all the hardships he experienced unless he knew that the Master he was serving was the risen Saviour about whom he wrote so fervently: "To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain"?

The fact remains that John as well as Matthew was an eyewitnesses of what they wrote in their Gospels. Mark, it is understood, wrote under the guidance of an eyewitness, Peter – as well as under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, like all the other writers of Scripture. It was Peter who claimed, with reference to that great supernatural event, the transfiguration: "We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty" (2 Pet 1:16). Luke too lays emphasis on the fact that his Gospel is the evidence of eyewitnesses: "Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word; it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed" (Luke 1:1-4).

There is throughout most of modern New Testament scholarship a wilful disregard of such men as John, who could say of Christ, with whom they had spent more than three years in close contact, "We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). But modern scholarship will accept as genuine in the Bible only what will satisfy the demands of fallen human reason. To quote an expert in this field, Professor Linneman, (a German Professor of New Testament, who was previously an enthusiastic proponent of the critical study of the Bible and who has published books and articles on the subject), "For historical-critical theology, critical reason decides what is reality in the Bible and what cannot be reality; and this decision is made on the basis of the everyday experience accessible to every person. Nothing is accepted as fact unless it is generally held to be possible. That which is spiritual is judged using fleshly criteria." And again, "These philosophies simply presupposed that man could have no valid knowledge of the God of the Bible, the Creator of heaven and earth."

Professor Linnemann explains the principles employed in teaching courses on the Bible in universities: "The one who takes up study is required to approach theological study 'without presuppositions', to seek the truth 'radically and without holding back'." But of course students cannot escape from the

influence of presuppositions; they can only exchange one set of presuppositions for another: "The fundamental presupposition of university theology in its entirety . . . is the conviction that the final authority regarding what is true is the trained, professionally informed, regimented critical intellect. That is, holy Scripture is subordinated to reason. Reason decides what in the Scripture is true and real. Reason decides what is certain, probable, or improbable in the Bible and what did not, does not, and never will occur." Professor Linnemann also accuses erstwhile colleagues of "using grotesque literary methods which would lead immediately to absurd results if they were ever applied to the work of a poet or a theologian".

It is disturbing that the Bible is treated so irreverently, and in such a way that those who study it are unlikely to profit from it. Yet it should not surprise us. Paul himself warned, "The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (2 Tim 4:3f). There have been many departures from the truth which have destroyed the souls of multitudes, and this form of unbelieving scholarship is also highly dangerous. When the Word of God loses its authority over the souls of sinners, they feel safe in ignoring the claims of God. And Moslems have been known to throw the writings of professedly Christian critics in the face of missionaries and say, "Your own people say that the Bible is not true."

Spurgeon once asked with characteristic insight, "Is anyone so gullible as the person who determines not to believe the Bible? He swallows a ton of difficulties, while complaining that we have swallowed an ounce." But the time will come when it will become unfashionable to read the New Testament in the light of such God-provoking and irrational principles. The time will come, to put the matter on a higher level, when believing scholarship will once more take its rightful place in institutions of higher education, and when those who were once deceived by their teachers, and those who deceived themselves, will turn to the Lord in repentance.

In the meantime let us who accept that the whole Bible is the inspired Word of God not rest satisfied unless we have truly come to know in a personal way the God who is there revealed. Although we cannot see Christ in this world with the eyes of the body, how earnest we should be in seeking grace to say about Him from the heart, "We beheld His glory [in His inspired Word], the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth"! Those who have thus seen the Saviour have indeed profited from the Scriptures. They have been made willing to bow before the living God and worship. ■

Heart Treasure – Known by God

Oliver Heywood

Extracted from *Heart Treasure* by the Rev. Oliver Heywood (1629 – 1702). He was one of the ejected ministers of 1662 and was frequently persecuted. Under his preaching believers were greatly edified, and large numbers of the impenitent were converted. *Heart Treasure* is based on Matthew 12:35, “A good man, out of the good treasure of the heart, bringeth forth good things.”

GOD knows and owns that treasure which is sometimes concealed from the possessor. This is a most sweet and consoling thought. “Our life is hid with Christ in God”, and frequently it is so hidden as to be imperceptible to our own eyes, as well as to the eyes of others. But still it is “hid with God”, and He that hides can find. Saints are called God’s “hidden ones”; and their spiritual birthright and dignity may be said to be hidden, not only with respect to their safety and secrecy, but often also with respect to the obscurity with which they are manifested to the saints themselves. A Christian may have much more of God in him than he is aware of. It is one thing to have grace, and quite another to know that we have grace.

A sincere child of God, while he has the seed and root of holiness, may want the bud and blossom of actual comfort. He has always a solid basis for divine consolations, yet, from a variety of causes, he may, at certain intervals, be without their sensible enjoyment. Sometimes God withdraws the light of His countenance, suspends the witness of His Spirit, and leaves the soul in darkness and desertion. Sometimes the believer is negligent, and does not faithfully use the appointed means for obtaining and preserving an assurance of his interest in Christ. Sometimes, by seeking for more comfort than God sees fit to bestow, he forgets, denies, and so neutralizes what he has. And sometimes from the indulgence of a cherished sin, from the prevalence of a worldly spirit, or from the influence of a melancholy temper, the features of the “new man” within him become so veiled and clouded as not to be discernible to his view.

Every Christian knows by sad experience, that he is often at a loss, and cannot tell what to make of his condition. He has his nights as well as his days; a nipping winter as well as a flourishing summer. The sap of grace may retreat into the root – the flowers and plants may shrink and disappear – the streams may cease to flow – and the whole spiritual creation in his heart may droop and lose its verdure. Yet life is still there.

A reviving spring will come, when the beams of the Sun of Righteousness shall reanimate these hidden graces, and so draw them forth in blossoms and fruits of holy obedience, that the saint shall live again, and know that he lives; shall believe, and know that he believes. In the mean time, while he thus “walks

in darkness, and hath no light, let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay himself upon his God". Let him cast his anchor within the veil, and repose his troubled heart on the Rock of Ages. Faith is a venture, and you must venture your all on this bottom. You must confide in God when you cannot see Him, and lean upon Him when you cannot feel His presence.

Diligently employ the means which He has ordained for communicating comfort; study His promises; meditate on His love; awaken your slumbering affections; recall your past experiences; renew your repentance; forsake all sin; be importunate at the throne of grace – and hope and joy will soon spring up afresh in your heart. Peace is the usual result of the exercise of grace; and as the striking of flint and steel together produces fire, so the acting of sincere grace upon its proper object begets light and heat of spiritual comfort. Nay, the very pouring out of your heart to God will be itself a precious and healing comfort. If you have a treasure of grace, God will, in due time, give you a treasure of joy.

Should He, in His wisdom, delay this for a season, He will still maintain His interest in you, and keep you from fainting. If you have no spiritual rejoicings, you shall have spiritual support. If your state be not sweet, yet it shall be sure. The grace of the Redeemer shall be sufficient for you, and that is equivalent to the mercy desired. The less comfort you have in the way, the more you shall have in the end; and it matters little whether comfort come an hour before death, or an hour after, since come it certainly will.

Amidst all your doubts and fears, therefore, seek to approve your heart unto God. He searches your heart, and knows what you are and what you have, though neither yourself nor others know it. He sees the principles by which you are actuated; watches the struggles of light and darkness within you; and regards with favour every effort which you make to shake off the fetters of unbelief and sin, and walk forth in the glorious liberty of His sons. He knows and He approves the way of the righteous.

Your path may be, for the present, enveloped in gloom, and you may have to press onward in it through many sorrows, and anxieties, and conflicts. Still your end shall be peace. In the hurry of temptation, you may be ready to misjudge both your character and your conduct; yet your final happiness does not depend on the account which you may form of yourself, but on God's account of you in Christ.

A sincere believer may not always be able to recognize the actual workings of faith in his own mind, and yet may be satisfied respecting the object of faith. There may be times when he cannot say, I know that I do now truly believe; but still he can say, I know in whom I have believed, and desire to believe again. With a trust that wavers not because the cloud is over him, he can exclaim, I

know not, indeed, how it is with me; I have lost myself in a labyrinth of cares and fears, and see not the path before me; yet I put my hand into His, who knows the way and can lead me out, and confide in Him who shed His precious blood for my soul, to guide it in safety to the rest and heritage of His saints. ■

Answers to Excuses for Not Praying

Asahel Nettleton

THE Rev. Asahel Nettleton (1783 – 1844), a graduate of Yale University, was the means of awakening thousands of souls, says his biographer. As is indicated by the following piece taken from his “Miscellaneous Remarks” in *Asahel Nettleton - Sermons from the Second Great Awakening*, his preaching was close and searching and was effective by the divine blessing in driving many sinners from their refuges of lies.

OBJECTION. I have a wicked heart, and it is an abomination for me to pray with such a heart.

Answer. Granted. It is so. But what then? Is it not an abomination to neglect to pray And do you think that God will accept of one abomination in excuse for another?

Objection. What shall I do then? You tell me I must neither neglect to pray, nor pray with an impenitent heart. You leave me no choice. I expose myself to the curse either way.

Answer. This statement is not correct. There is a course left for you to choose, and that is to pray as God commands you. Why are you not willing to do as He commands? It is true you have no choice between neglecting prayer, and praying with an impenitent heart. The path of duty is plain: pray as God commands you.

Objection. If to neglect prayer is sin, and if to pray with an impenitent heart is sin, I wish to know which is the greatest sin?

Answer. Why do you ask such a question? What right have you to be balancing sins, to see which you shall choose, when your duty is plain before you? It is of no consequence to you to have this question answered. To neglect prayer, or to pray with an impenitent heart, is abomination to God. Either course leads to hell. Of what consequence is it to the poor soul who is determined to walk in one of them, to know whether they are of equal or unequal length, when they both tend with equal certainty to destruction? Your duty is plain. You must pray with a penitent heart, or be lost.

Objection. But I cannot pray with a penitent and believing heart. I do not possess such a heart; and I cannot change my heart.

Answer. Do you mean to plead your wicked heart as an excuse? Will God, who commands you to love Him, excuse you from performing this duty, because you hate Him? You say you have no heart to pray aright. What a confession is this! This is the very thing for which you are to blame. Will you plead your sin and your desert of condemnation as an excuse for disobeying God? Do you think God will accept such an excuse?

Objection. The ground you take, leaves only one way for the sinner, and cuts off all hope of safety in any other.

Answer. This is the very thing I aim at. To cut off all hope of safety in your present course, is the grand object I have had in view. The ground I have taken is, that obedience, and that only, is acceptable to God; and that we cannot expect safety in any other way. There is not a principle more clearly taught in the Bible, than it is the duty of all men to love God, and to "worship Him in spirit and in truth". ■

Book Reviews

John Boyana Radasi – Missionary to Zimbabwe by *Jean Nicolson*.

Published by Free Presbyterian Publications. Paperback, 112 pages, £4.95 but obtainable at £4.00 from the Free Presbyterian Bookshop, 133 Woodlands Road, Glasgow, G3 6LE.

THIS is a most welcome and useful addition to previous books which have been written about the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland Mission in Africa. It presents to us an outstanding servant of Christ. The Rev. John Boyana Radasi was the African missionary (of the Fingo tribe) used by God for establishing the Church's Mission in Southern Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe. Although the book has been written for young people especially, other readers are finding it to be very informative and absorbing.

The opening chapters introduce us to the early life of Radasi: his family background, conversion, coming in contact with the Free Presbyterian Church, training for the ministry in Scotland, and his eventual settling at Ingwenya, 30 miles north-east of Bulawayo, to begin his preaching and teaching labours among the Matabele people in 1904.

The next section deals with the history of the Matabele tribe and the white settlers, and brings the reader right into the picture of the situation in which Mr Radasi began his missionary work. The remainder of the book deals in some detail with his work and the founding and progress of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland in Africa.

One of the fascinating parts of the book is the account of the Lord's

remarkable providence in leading Mr Radasi to the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. It is also striking how faithful and conscientious Mr Radasi was in carrying out his numerous duties, in adhering to the doctrines, worship and Christian practice required by the Word of God, and in keeping the Sabbath Day according to the Scriptures. Mr Radasi's gracious conduct toward his fellow-men marked him out as a Christian gentleman of high character.

Not least, there were the fruits to his ministry: sinners brought from death to life, and to walk in newness of life. In the several interesting accounts of such cases we see the basic marks of conversion come across clearly: a deep consciousness of sin and finding refuge in Christ alone. This cheers the heart, especially in this sad day of so many spurious conversions.

Having read the book, one is left with the distinct impression that the Rev. John Boyana Radasi was an outstanding Christian, and a most remarkable missionary and minister of the gospel. This little volume is worthy of a place in every home and is most suitable to give as a present to friends. We heartily commend it and pray that it will be blessed to young and old. DAF

Smooth Stones Taken from Ancient Brooks by *C. H. Spurgeon*.

Published by Soli Deo Gloria Publications. Hardback, 269 pages, £14.95, but available at £12.95 from the Free Presbyterian Bookroom, 133 Woodlands Road, Glasgow, G3 6LE.

THE pithy sayings, striking similes and illuminating illustrations in the preaching of many of the Puritan divines make the reading of their sermons to be especially interesting. This fact is clearly indicated by *Smooth Stones Taken from Ancient Brooks*, a collection of about a thousand sayings from the works of the renowned Puritan, Thomas Brooks (1608 – 1680).

Most of Brook's writings are addressed to believers (as is seen in his *The Crown and Glory of Christianity* or *The Necessity, Excellency, Rarity and Beauty of Holiness*, *The Mute Christian Under the Smarting Rod*, *A Believer's Last Day Is His Best Day*, and other such titles). Therefore, while there is great variety of subjects covered by these sayings, most of them deal with such matters as overcoming sin, growth in the several graces, communion with God, the afflictions of the godly, the preciousness of Christ, and God as the portion of His people.

Having compiled this excellent collection, Spurgeon says, "One of these pithy extracts may assist our meditations for a whole day, and open up some sweet passage of Scripture to our understanding." Certainly, a considerable number of the sayings are very impressive and thought-provoking. Here is just one: "Private prayer is a golden key to unlock the mysteries of the Word unto

us. The knowledge of many choice and blessed truths are but the returns of private prayer. The Word dwells most richly in their hearts who are most in pouring out their hearts before God in their closets." No doubt many readers will make use of the book in their private devotions.

The compiler evidently had in mind the usefulness of the collection for preachers also. He says, "Perhaps some brief sentence may stick in the sinner's conscience, like an arrow from the bow of God." However, the preacher will have to be resigned to making his own index of the sayings, as the book has none and the sayings have no titles.

Spurgeon rightly calls the sayings "precious stones". Like the precious proverbs of the Book of Proverbs, they are not so much pearls on a string, having a theme running through them, as jewels in a casket. Many of which are especially sparkling. "Adorn thyself with them," says Spurgeon, "by putting them into the golden setting of holy practice, which is the end the writer always aimed at."

Not only are the contents valuable but the print is large and clear, the hardback binding is good, and the dustjacket is attractive. It will make an excellent gift. May it prove a blessing to many. ■

Protestant View

Celibacy and the Bishop Wright affair

A SPOKESMAN for the Roman Catholic hierarchy in Scotland has castigated us for condemning enforced celibacy and its bearing on the Bishop Roddy Wright affair. He says that our "ranting and raving", as he calls our criticism, "is born out of desperate ignorance and unenlightenment". But perhaps we know more about the teachings and practice of Rome than he would have others believe.

The Scottish hierarchy continues to insist that celibacy had no bearing upon the Bishop Wright affair. Wright, former Bishop of Argyll and the Isles, is not only living with a woman to whom he is not married, but has also fathered a son by another woman. Since his case hit the headlines, several similar cases have come to light.

Enforced celibacy very evidently is a heavy yoke which many priests are quite unable to bear. But, despite this and Cardinal Hume's call for flexibility, the Pope, says the Vatican, "insists on mandatory celibacy". The Council of Trent pronouncement still stands: "Whosoever shall affirm that the conjugal

state is to be preferred to a life of virginity or celibacy, and that it is not more conducive to happiness to remain in virginity or celibacy than to be married, let him be accursed.”

As Boettner rightly says, “Historically, celibacy had its roots in the Gnostic and Manichean heresies of the second and third centuries which taught that matter was inherently evil and that salvation consisted in resisting and overcoming it.”

Rome bolsters her case for enforced celibacy on, for example, the words of Christ, “. . . there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven’s sake,” Matthew 19:12. What did the Saviour mean? We believe that Hendriksen gives the right answer when he says about these eunuchs, “They could marry and fulfil all their responsibilities in that state, if they so desired. Their abstinence from marriage is of a purely voluntary character. They are eunuchs or celibates in the interests of the kingdom of heaven. Being fully aware that, in the course of spreading the gospel, situations will develop that are marked by tremendous hardship and sore distress, but nevertheless being filled with eagerness to spread the gospel of salvation far and wide, these men, of their own accord – not because of any divine or human decree – decide not to marry. That is their privilege. They are not raised to a higher degree of holiness, as if in the eyes of God the state of celibacy as such would give them extra credit. Such a doctrine is entirely foreign to Scripture, which everywhere exalts the married state.”

Notes and Comments

The IRA continues its murderous course

IT was a matter for thankfulness to the God of providence that the IRA plan to devastate London with massive lorry bombs was foiled. But a fortnight later the IRA was triumphant after its two huge bombs exploded inside Lisburn barracks in Northern Ireland. Although placed and timed to kill extra victims, it was a mercy that no more than 23 people were injured. Sadly, one soldier died from his injuries and eight others are seriously injured.

The two-faced talk of Adams and other Sinn Fein leaders cannot hide the fact that this IRA return to war is intended to provoke a loyalist backlash. As a former IRA terrorist has said, “Far from worrying about it, the IRA will positively welcome it. Anything which helps to provoke a crisis of authority in Northern Ireland strengthens the republican movement. Every shot fired and

every bomb planted by loyalists helps weaken the ethos of the union, and is grist to the IRA mill."

Let us continue to pray for troubled Ulster, for the downfall of the men of violence, and for the gospel of peace to prevail in the province.

Sharp rise in crimes of violence in England and Wales

OFFICIAL police figures and the British Crime Survey both show the biggest increase in violent crime for eight years: a rise of 10.4 per cent to 330,000 crimes of violence. The highest rise, 58 per cent, occurred in Sussex. The crime of rape has increased by 14 per cent: much more than other sexual offences. Domestic assaults are three times what they were in 1981.

Humanity before the Flood was characterised by brutality. Scripture says that "the earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence". Therefore God sent the Flood. God has promised that "the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh", but He has not promised to withhold other judgements against national wickedness. These figures are yet another call to us to return to God: they are a sure sign that it is time to seek the Lord and humble ourselves before Him.

Britain suffering consequences of being a godless society

SOCIAL problems in Britain, including paedophilia and broken homes, are the result of society's departure from religion, and its rejection of God and treating the Ten Commandments as unduly repressive. This is the view of a leading Church of Scotland minister who is convener of its Board of Social Responsibility. He is right, of course.

Neither did he overlook the deplorable fact that his own Church has a hand in this sad decline. He criticised the "faint hearts" in the Church who acted as if the consensus view was always right.

There is a profound need in the Church of Scotland, and in all branches of Christ's visible church, of an awakening and reviving by the power of the Holy Spirit of God. National reformation must be preceded by the reformation of the Church. We cannot expect any substantial moral and spiritual betterment until this happens.

The Free Church and Professor Donald Macleod

THE Commission of Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland met on 2 October and expressed its thankfulness for the acquittal of Professor Macleod. It appointed a committee to look into the matter of Rev. John MacLeod, Rev. Angus Smith and Professor Hugh Cartwright, members of

the Training of the Ministry Committee, having lost the confidence of many in the Church. It also directed the Training of the Ministry Committee to take action regarding "statements and comments made by Professor Donald Macleod in the media which appear to be at variance with the Free Church's confessional position". It called on the members of the Church to promote and pray for healing, forgiveness and renewal; to refrain from calling in question the innocence of any alleged conspirators; and to refrain from calling in question the finding of the criminal court regarding the innocence of Professor Macleod.

Later a large number of Free Church ministers and members met and issued a counter-statement alleging faulty procedure on the part of the Commission, supporting Professor Macleod in his intention not to submit to the investigation of the Training of the Ministry Committee, and requested that the Commission withdraw its decision.

The press has made capital of the sad saga and has not been slow to cast the conservative wing of the Church in a bad light. Professor Macleod's own pen has added to the criticism; after the Commission came to its decision he compared the Free Church to an asylum that has been taken over by the lunatics.

It seems that the storm is far from over.

Religious Education – Isle of Man parents press for Christian syllabi

AT public meetings on the Isle of Man a call for a return to completely Christian religious instruction resulted in excellent recommendations being presented to the Manx parliament. The meetings proposed to parliament that its next Education Act should include the following clause: "For the removal of all uncertainty, it is hereby enacted that the Religious Instruction in schools maintained by the Isle of Man's Department of Education shall be based on completely Christian syllabi. In every such school provision shall be made in the timetable thereof for instruction in the Christian faith and for the reading of the Holy Bible, accompanied by such explanation thereof and instruction therefrom as may be suited to the capacities of the children."

Should the Manx parliament enact the proposal, as we hope it will, a light will be lit which, although it be in a corner of the land, will grow brighter.

Hallowe'en – further evidence of its pagan nature

HALLOWE'EN is a pagan festival to celebrate the last day of the Celtic and Anglo-Saxon year, to which Popery has applied a veneer of pseudo-Christianity. Its devilish nature is shown by two American societies for the

prevention of cruelty to animals. The ASPCA says that at Hallowe'en "black cats or mainly black cats have been taken and slaughtered as part of Satanic rituals. It is not an isolated thing . . . it is happening all over by people who take their sick cults seriously." A spokesman for the DCSPCA stated, "We have had several instances of very deliberate acts of cruelty and ritual slaughter of cats definitely linked to Satanic cults. It is happening across the country because Hallowe'en is a major satanic ritual."

Undoubtedly, the works of darkness are promoted when people treat Hallowe'en as innocent fun and permit their children to participate in it.

Jehovah's Witness family refuse blood for injured daughter

A TEENAGE girl, Emelie Grootjes, on holiday in Dorset, was injured when roller-blading, but died five days later after refusing a blood transfusion.

Doctors say that they pleaded with the girl's family, who are Jehovah's Witnesses, to permit a transfusion which would have given her a 90% chance of survival, but that her parents signed a form banning the use of blood or blood products in her treatment. Miss Grootjes confirmed the refusal.

Apart from the Jehovah's Witnesses cult having the blasphemous error of denying the deity of Jesus Christ, it also perverts Scripture by denying the use of blood for food and the preservation of life. As J. A. Alexander shows, the Scripture prohibition of the use of blood for food was on account of blood being the emblem of life for sacrificial purposes. The system of sacrifices came to an end with the final sacrifice of Christ on the Cross, and therefore the prohibition was no longer necessary. The prohibition in Acts 15:20 was a temporary and prudent measure for maintaining peace between converted Jews and Gentiles while the Christian Church was becoming established.

African Mission News

Zimbabwe Mission

THE thoughts and prayers of all those interested in our African Mission have centred recently on the illness of the Rev. A. B. Ndebele, Ingwenya, incurred by the serious accident he met with when he was taking Rev. John MacLeod part of the way to Mbumba Mission.

Mr. Ndebele was struck by a bus which had veered off the road to avoid another vehicle. Because of his injuries Mr Ndebele has had to lie flat on his

bed in hospital, which caused congestion in his lungs; but we are glad to hear that he is showing some improvement. He had a host of visitors, forty, one Sabbath day, and these visits had to be severely curtailed. In fact, a security guard was placed in the ward to limit visitors to the immediate family.

Communion services were held in the Ingwenya congregation despite the illness of their pastor. Rev. John MacLeod was senior minister and was assisted by Rev. Z. Mazvabo, who was providentially invited to come some time before the accident occurred. The elders took full responsibility for all the arrangements and were on duty each day of the communion from the time of the early morning prayer meeting until the end of the evening service.

On Sabbath morning Rev. John MacLeod conducted the service and preached from the text, "It is finished". It was a very impressive service. The John Tallach School is in session and it was noticeable how subdued the young people were – and still are, in the absence of their ill pastor.

Mr. Donald MacDonald left Scotland for Zimbabwe on 17th September, and then proceeded to Kenya after some days. He is dealing with various administrative and financial matters on both Missions. He hopes to return to Scotland on 22nd October, D.V. His wife, Dr. Christine, and their little daughter, Sarah, joined him early in October for a two-week visit.

Kenya Mission

WE hear that all went well at the induction on 25th September of Rev. John Goldby as Missionary at Sengera Mission, as did the ordination of Mr. Ian MacLean to the eldership a couple of days earlier. His father, Mr. Ian MacLean Senior, is to remain at Sengera Mission for some weeks yet. He will be of much assistance in conducting services there. It is hoped that a full account of Mr Goldby's induction will appear in the next issue. Rev. John MacLeod arrived home safely in Stornoway on Saturday, 28th September.

Rev. Neil Ross received two letters on 30th September from African friends in Kenya. One says, "The induction of Rev. John Goldby was conducted well and we had so many people from many places, Kuria, Magenche, Maiga, Ogembo, and Sengera itself. So it ended very well. The preaching of the Word was touching my heart so much, and others also."

The second letter is from the Kuria Churches. "Surely we are very grateful that the mother church in Scotland has installed a missionary in Kenya. We trust that this will give a greater chance to Mr. Ian MacLean to pay regular visits to Kuria and preach the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ, as it says in Proverbs 25:25, 'As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country'."

J.N.

Church Information

Meetings of Presbytery (D.V.)

NORTHERN: At Dingwall on Tuesday, 18th February 1997, at 2.00 pm.

SOUTHERN: At Glasgow on Tuesday, 12th November, at 6.00 pm.

WESTERN: At Laide on Tuesday, 17th December, at 6.00 pm.

SKYE: At Portree on Tuesday, 5th November, at 11.00 am.

OUTER ISLES: At Stornoway on Tuesday, 10th December, at 1.00 pm.

AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND: At Auckland on Friday, 24th January, 1997, at 2.30 pm.

THE THEOLOGICAL CONFERENCE will be held in Inverness Free Presbyterian Church as follows, D.V.

Tuesday, 3rd December

2.30 pm: *Alexander Henderson*, Rev. K. D. Macleod, Leverburgh

7.00 pm: *The Church of Rome at the Bar of History*, Rev J MacLeod, Stornoway.

Wednesday, 4th December

10.00 am: *The Toronto Blessing*, Rev. K. M. Watkins, London

2.30 pm: *Personal Piety*, Rev. Alex. McPherson, Perth

7.00 pm: *The Need for Creeds and Confessions*, Rev. D. MacLean, Glasgow

Both evening meetings will be held in public.

(Rev) D. J. MacDonald

Mbumba Mission, Zimbabwe

THERE is an urgent and immediate need for qualified nurses at Mbumba Mission Hospital. The staff have been under considerable pressure for a year. The situation has been made acute as one of our nurses on furlough is not now able to return long-term. Anyone qualified and willing to help should get in touch in the first instance with: The Clerk of the Foreign Mission Committee, the Rev. J. R. Tallach, F. P. Manse, Raasay, Kyle, Ross-shire, IV40 8PB. Telephone and fax no: 01478 660216.

Eastern Europe Mission

REV. Neil M. Ross and Mr Edward Ross will depart, God willing, for a visit to Eastern Europe on Monday, 21st October, and return on Friday, 8th November. It is intended that they travel by Ramsgate to Oostende. It is anticipated that the usual work will be engaged in: preaching, and distribution of the Scriptures, Christian literature and material aid. The prayers of the Lord's people

for their safe travel and the Lord's blessing on the work, especially of preaching and teaching the Word of God, would be deeply appreciated. *DAR*

Secretarial / Administrative Assistant

APPLICATIONS are invited for the full-time position of Secretary / Administrative Assistant to the Church's General Treasurer, to be based in Glasgow. In order to fulfil the wide-ranging duties envisaged for this role, the applicant should be:

- an accomplished typist, preferably with audio typing skills
- computer literate, especially in word processing
- proficient to a high standard in written English
- polite and helpful, with a good telephone manner
- motivated, disciplined, reliable and of undoubted integrity
- in full sympathy with the principles of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

Remuneration, which can include membership of a non-contributory pension scheme, will be dependent on qualification and experience. For an application form, please write to or telephone Mr R. A. Campbell, 133 Woodlands Road, Glasgow G3 6LE (Tel: 0141 332 9283). Closing date for applications: 31 December, 1996.

(Rev.) *K. M. Watkins*, Convener, Finance Committee

Teacher for Missionaries' children, Kenya

AT the Sengera Mission, Kenya, there is urgent need for a teacher to teach the missionaries' children in both primary and secondary subjects. There are several children to be taught at present, and the course for children at all stages will be based on a curriculum, yet to be decided upon by the Committee and the parents, which covers all necessary subjects.

The new teacher will also have the opportunity to give religious instruction, under the guidance of the Mission minister, to the African children in the large Mission-sponsored primary school there.

For further information please contact the Clerk of the Foreign Mission Committee, the Rev. J. R. Tallach, F. P. Manse, Raasay, Kyle, IV40 8PB. Telephone and fax no: 01478 660216.

Larne Communion

THE Larne Kirk Session, having taken into account the supply situation throughout the Church, especially within the Southern Presbytery, has reluctantly taken the decision to reduce the number of Communion services from two

to one each year for the time being. The annual communion will be held on the second Sabbath of September, D.V.

(Rev.) Keith Watkins, Interim Moderator

Acknowledgements of Donations

THE General Treasurer acknowledges with sincere thanks the following donations:

Eastern Europe: Matthew 28 v 19, £300; Psalm 60 v 4, £200; C. M., £50.

Foreign Mission: Harris Friend, £50; Friend, Glasgow, £20; Friend, Stornoway, £50; Friend, Stornoway, £100; Friend, Tolsta, £50; Glasgow Meeting, £380, all per Miss N.B.M.; Wellwisher, England, £300; Anon, Canada (Sept), Can \$100.

Magazines Free Distribution: Anon, Skye, £16 50.

Congregational treasurers acknowledge with sincere thanks the following donations:

Beauly: *Congregational Fund.* A friend, "In loving memory of Alexander MacLennan, Missionary," £2,000, per E. Ross.

Bracadale, Strath: *Sustentation Fund:* A wellwisher, £100; *Jewish and Foreign Mission Fund:* A wellwisher, £50; both per Rev. G.G.H.

Breascleite: *Sustentation Fund:* Friend of the cause, £50; Friend of the cause, £30; P. J. Macleod, £50; *Church Painting Fund:* Portree friends, £20; *Communion Expenses:* Friend of the cause, £10; *Collections:* Friend of Cause, £40, all per M. Maclean, treasurer.

Broadford: Entry in August issue should have read: *Sustentation Fund:* "In loving memory of our dear parents and all our loved ones", £300, C. MacLean per treasurer.

Dingwall: *Kenya Mission:* From an English friend, for the support of Mr Goldby, £20; *Eastern Europe Fund:* A friend, Dingwall, £100; A Stornoway friend, £10; A friend, £200; Three Edinburgh friends, £40; *Communion Expenses:* London friend, £10; all per Rev. N.M.R.

Dumbarton: *Congregational Fund:* Anon, £10, per P.H.; J.MacD., £20, per envelope in plate; M.G., £10, per envelope in plate.

Dundee, Perth and Stirling: *Congregational Fund:* Friends of the cause, £100, per treasurer.

Gairloch: *Congregational Funds:* Friend, Lewis, £10; Friend, Skye, £50; Anon, £100; Anon, £60; all per Rev. A. E. W. MacDonald; Friend, £100; Friend, £50; Friend, £20; all per J.M.

Edinburgh: "Where most needed": Miss J. MacCuish, £40; *Sustentation Fund:* Anon, £100; both per D. M. Campbell.

Lochcarron: *Eastern Europe Fund:* P.M., Inverasdale, £5, D. T., £100, Anon, £5, W. Allan, £40, all per E. Ross; Anon, £84; Anon, £25; Anon, £100; Anon, £25; Anon, £40; Anon, £11; Anon, £100; *Lochcarron Church:* Friend, Laide, £10; Alex. S. Andrew, Stratford, £5; *For roof repair:* Friend, £200.

North Harris: *Communion Expenses:* M. M., Cluer, £10; Friends, Stockinish, £50; Two Friends, MacQueen Street, £20; all per J.M.L.; Friend, Leachlee, £40; Anon, Tarbert, £10; both envelope in plate; *Bus Fund:* E.M.D., Stockinish, £20, per envelope in plate; M.M., Cluer, £10, per J.M.L. *For New Communion Cloth:* Anon, £100, per J.M.L.

Portree: *Bus Fund:* Anon, £20, per J.G.; Anon, £10, per envelope in plate; A.N., £5, per J.G.; *Where Most Needed:* Friends, £50, per F.M.; Tolsta, Friend, £10, per S.Y.M.; Tolsta friend, £10, per S.Y.M.; Stornoway friend, £10 per S.Y.M.

Raasay: *Sustentation Fund:* B. Nicolson, £50; *Car Fund:* Anon, £25; Envelope in plate, £20; Envelope in plate, £5; all per treasurer; Correction to September Magazine: *Car Fund:* Job 38:31, £10 per Rev. J. R. Tallach should have been £20.

Staffin: *Where Most Needed:* Anon, £60, per envelope in plate.