

The Free Presbyterian Magazine and Monthly Record

Vol 102

June 1997

No 6

Responsibilities of Rulers and Ruled

THE spectacular election defeat of the Conservative Party, and the Labour Party's landslide victory, are striking evidences that God rules in the affairs of men. Although political pundits may focus on party policies and personalities as the causal factors in the victory of the one and the defeat of the other, there is something far more important to be taken into account. The ultimate fact is that God exercises His power so that those who will rule in a nation are those whom He ordains should rule – when and for how long He determines.

This fact was brought home to Nebuchadnezzar, the heathen king of Babylon, so that he was constrained to acknowledge that God “doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou,” Daniel 4:35. In the days of the pagan Roman Empire, the Apostle Paul wrote these God-given words: “For there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God,” Romans 13:1. As we view recent political changes we must acknowledge, “But God is judge; he putteth down one, and setteth up another,” Psalm 75:7.

It does not necessarily follow that, when God ordains that a particular person or political group will be in power, their policies and programme are in harmony with His mind. In fact they may be far otherwise in many respects. We must therefore deem it a chastisement from God when He ordains that ungodly rulers be set over a people. On the other hand it is an incalculable blessing when those who are raised to power, rule in the fear of God and according to His word.

When the powers that be are ordained of God, it follows that God requires that both rulers and ruled conduct themselves in a certain manner toward Himself and toward one another. As the present new Government takes up the reins of power it is timely for us to remind ourselves of Scripture teaching about the mutual obligations of those who govern and those who are governed.

It is a sign of the times that the majority of the electorate thinks in terms of its rights under government rather than its obligations to government. The Bible leaves us in no doubt that the principle duty of citizens to their rulers is a proper

subjection. By *proper subjection* we mean that subjection which is both required and circumscribed by God in His word.

The principal duty required by God is seen in the instruction which Paul the Apostle gave to Titus: that in preaching to the people he was to "put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work," Titus 3:1. So Scripture requires, as we see also in Romans 13:1, that "every soul be subject unto the higher powers."

At the same time, the Scriptures circumscribe this subjection by teaching that it must not contravene the law of God. Truly Christian citizens are convinced, as Peter and the other apostles were, that when a demand of the state upon its people is contrary to the law of God, that they "ought to obey God rather than men," Acts 5:29. It is a deplorable fact that some of the laws of this country are diametrically opposed to the law of God, and that some people with Christian convictions are being forced, on conscientious grounds, to forego certain kinds of employment: for example because they would be obliged to do unnecessary work on Sabbath..

Another duty laid upon us by God is that we should be praying, in public and private, for those who have the awesome responsibility of governing the land, irrespective of their political hue. Paul exhorted that "supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty," 1 Timothy 2:1, 2. And this duty is to be performed even when those in authority are godless and enemies to the truth of God. The Israelites in captivity in pagan Babylon were commanded by God, "Seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the Lord for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace," Jeremiah 29:7.

This is not to say that we are to be complacent about the unscriptural legislation of a government, or to be silent when it enacts laws which are an affront to the God of heaven because they are contrary to His law. It is the duty of Christians individually, and collectively as the Church of Christ, to show themselves to be the Lord's witnesses. This is the reason why we, as a Church, from time to time make representations or send protests to government about such matters as anti-Sabbath legislation, abortion, unscriptural divorce laws, the National Lottery, the mooted euthanasia, and threats to the Protestant constitution of the nation. The fact that succeeding governments in this secular age have given scant or no heed to such representations does not absolve us from the obligation to continue making them.

On the other hand, rulers must have, above everything, a conscientious regard for what God requires of them with regard to those over whom they rule. "The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel said, He that ruleth over men must

be just, ruling in the fear of God," 2 Samuel 23:3. This means that rulers must frame policies, programmes and laws consistent with the Scriptures. To do otherwise is to incur the just displeasure of God which manifests itself in all its detrimental consequences in our national life.

Indeed, government has a duty not only to govern in harmony with Christian principles, but also to protect and foster the Christian faith which the nation was privileged to receive through the faithfulness of the Reformers and self-sacrifice of the Protestant martyrs. The "faith once delivered to the saints" is the foundation of all spiritual and material prosperity. The brightest and best days in the history of Israel were those in which she believed, obeyed, guarded, and transmitted the truth. It fared ill with her when "every man did that which was right in his own eyes".

One of safeguards of the Protestant Reformed faith in our land is our Protestant constitution. It is therefore imperative that the government do nothing which would in any way remove or weaken our constitution and make provision for a Roman Catholic to ascend the throne. We fear that this may yet happen when we see evidences of increasing Romanist influence in the life of the nation. Nor does it augur well for the Biblical Christianity that we are becoming more entangled in the European Union. We believe it is the duty of the Government to distance itself from this Rome-inspired confederacy.

A government which is committed to Christian principles will reverse laws which are offensive to God and a disgrace to the nation, and especially a disgrace to this nominally Christian nation. We must therefore pray for the coming of the day (and come it will) when the government of the day will face up to its responsibility to repeal laws which legalise abortion, sodomy, Sabbath desecration, no-fault divorce and the National Lottery. When rulers are ordained by God "for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well", 1 Peter 2:14, it is a measure of the depths to which we have sunk when legislation favours such wicked practices as slaying unborn infants in the womb, committing the unmentionable sins which brought destruction upon Sodom, and gambling on an unprecedented scale; and when other laws hinder and prevent the keeping of the Christian Sabbath, or ultimately lead to the breakdown of family life.

The nub of the matter for both rulers and ruled is our attitude to God and our relationship to Him. We cannot expect any substantial or enduring improvement in the spiritual and moral state of the nation, or welfare of our people, until we return to God. We have forsaken Him, and He has hid His face from us. The principal responsibility of those who rule and those who are ruled is that we heed His call, "Return unto me, and I will return unto you." Then it shall be well with us; and then we shall have reason to say from happy experience, "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord," Psalm 33:12. □

Sermon

The Humble Soul the Peculiar Favourite of Heaven

Rev Ebenezer Erskine

This sermon, taken from the 1871 edition of *The Whole Works of the Late Rev. Ebenezer Erskine*, was preached on the fast-day before the administration of the Lord's Supper at Orwell, on 27th July, 1721. It has been edited for present day readers to obviate obscurities in vocabulary, punctuation and syntax. *The Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology* informs us that Ebenezer Erskine (1680-1754), the older brother of the Rev. Ralph Erskine, was licensed by the Church of Scotland Presbytery of Kirkcaldy and ordained to the charge of Portmoak, near Kinross, in 1703. He took a leading part in the Marrow controversy and later became one of the founders of the Secession church. He contributed to the first part of *The Assembly's Catechism Explained*, which was completed and revised by James Fisher, and under the title of *Fisher's Catechism* was widely influential in Scotland for more than a hundred years. Erskine's high status as a preacher of the gospel is indicated by the statement of one of his brethren, who asked a young minister, "Did you ever hear Ebenezer Erskine in the pulpit?" The young minister replied that he had not heard him. "Well then, sir," said the older minister, "you never heard the gospel in its majesty."

TEXT: Psalm 138:6, "*Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly; but the proud he knoweth afar off.*"

IN the beginning of the psalm, the Psalmist firmly resolves to praise the Lord; and he gives these several excellent grounds of praise and thanksgiving through the body of the psalm:

First, he resolves to praise God for *the experience he had of His love and faithfulness*, in the accomplishment of His gracious word of promise unto him; verse 2, "I will praise thy name for thy loving kindness, and for thy truth: for thou has magnified thy word above all thy name." God has a greater regard unto the word of His mouth, than to the works of His hand. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but one jot or tittle of what He has spoken shall never fall to the ground. Some do understand this of Christ, the essential, personal Word, in whom God set His name, and whom He has so highly exalted that He has given Him a name above every name.

Secondly, David resolves to praise God for *the experience he had of God's goodness in hearing his prayers*; verse 3, "In the day when I cried, thou answeredst me: and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul." God granted him a speedy answer; for it was in the very day that he cried that he was heard. And it was a spiritual answer; he was strengthened with strength in his soul. Would you have soul-strength for the work you have in view? Then cry for it unto Him who is the strength of Israel; for "he giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength."

Thirdly, he resolves to praise God for *the calling of the Gentiles*, which he foresaw by the spirit of prophecy; verses 4 and 5, "All the kings of the earth

shall praise thee, O LORD, when they hear the words of thy mouth. Yea, they shall sing in the ways of the LORD: for great is the glory of the LORD." The prosperity and enlargement of the kingdom of Christ, is what fills the believer's mouth with hallelujahs of praise.

Fourthly, he resolves to bless God for *His different ways of dealing with the humble and the proud*; for His grace to the one, and His contempt and His rejection of the other, in the words of our text: "Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly: but the proud he knoweth afar off."

It is the first part of the verse, "Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly," I design to speak upon. In it we see:

First, *the character of the gracious soul*; he is a lowly person, one that is emptied, and abased in his own eyes. He sees nothing in himself, either to recommend him to God or man: on which account he is sometimes called "poor in spirit", Matthew 5:3. He has got something of the mind and spirit of Jesus in him, and so has learned of Him who is meek and lowly, Matthew 11:29.

Secondly, we see here *God's transcendent greatness*; He is the high Lord, or Jehovah. He is "the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, and who dwells in the high and holy place, to which no man can approach." Who can think or speak of His highness in a suitable manner? It dazzles the eyes of sinful mortal worms, to behold "the place where his honour dwells." O how infinite is the distance between Him and us! There are none among the sons of the mighty that can be compared unto Him. Yea, "the inhabitants of the earth are before him as a drop of a bucket, and as the small dust of the balance." He is not only high above men, but above angels: cherubims and seraphims are His ministering spirits. He is high above the heavens; for the heaven, yea, the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him. And He humbleth himself when He beholds the things that are in heaven. O, sirs, study to entertain high and admiring thoughts and apprehensions of the glorious majesty of God: for "honour and majesty are before him; strength and beauty are in his sanctuary."

Thirdly, we see *the amazing grace of this High God*: though the distance between him and us be infinite, yet He has a regard to the lowly. The apostle Peter expresseth this by "giving grace to the humble," 1 Peter 5:5. God is good to all; He distributes His common bounty to the good and bad, to the just and unjust; but he reserves his special grace and favour for the meek and lowly soul.

The doctrine of the text is that the lowly and humble soul is the peculiar favourite of the high God. "Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly."

This truth is so evidently founded on the text, that I shall not consume time in adducing other texts of Scripture to confirm it; many that I might name will be cited in expounding the doctrine. Through grace, I shall attempt to:

First: Give some account of this lowliness and humility, and shew wherein it consists;

Second: Prove, that the humble and lowly soul is the peculiar favourite of heaven;

Third: Show why God has such respect to the lowly;

Fourth: Lay before you some marks or characters of the lowly and humble soul;

Fifth: Offer some motives pressing you to seek after it;

Sixth: Offer a few directions and advices how it may be attained.

I. The first thing proposed is to give some account of this lowliness and humility, and shew wherein it consists.

Now, lowliness being a relative grace, we must consider it in a relative view; first, as it has respect to ourselves; secondly, as it has respect unto others; and thirdly, as it has respect unto God.

First, considering lowliness and humility with respect to ourselves, it implies: *low and under-rating thoughts of ourselves.*

The humble soul has low thoughts of his own person; as David had when he said, "I am a worm, and no man." "I am not worthy of the least of thy mercies," said Jacob. The lowly soul has low thoughts of his pedigree: he is not like the princes of Zoan, that prided themselves on being the offspring of ancient kings. Some folk think there is none like them because they are of such a clan and such a family, or they have such and such lords and lairds for their relations. But the humble soul makes little account of all these. "Who am I," says David, "and what is mine house, that thou has brought me hitherto?" He considered himself as the degenerate plant of a strange vine; as a rotten branch of the corrupted and fallen family of Adam. He views the rock whence he was hewn, and the hole of the pit whence he was digged, saying, as in Psalm 51:5, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity: and in sin did my mother conceive me."

Again, the lowly man has low thoughts of *his own abilities* for any work or service he is called to in his generation. "O," says the lowly soul, "I see I am nothing, I can do nothing; I cannot of myself think a good thought." "I am not sufficient of myself to think any thing as of myself," says Paul. "I cannot read, hear, pray, communicate, meditate, or examine myself," says the humble one. "I see such sin and imperfection attending every duty I set about, as may justly provoke a holy God to cast them back upon my face. I am sure my goodness extendeth not to Him. I see I cannot subdue one corruption, or resist the least temptation, when left to myself; I fall before it, and must needs be carried down the stream like a dead fish, unless the Lord's grace be sufficient for me."

The lowly man has low thoughts also of his own attainments, whether moral or evangelical. "Oh," says Agur, "I am more brutish than any man, and have not

the understanding of a man. I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy." And Paul, the great apostle of the Gentiles, did not reckon that he had attained, or that he was already perfect; but he forgets those things which were behind, reaching forth unto things that were before, Philippians 3:12, 13.

This lowliness and humility with respect to *ourselves*, has in it, *secondly*, not only low and under-rating thoughts of ourselves *but also a self-abhorrence*, which is a degree beyond the former. The humble man sees so much sin and guilt, so much emptiness, poverty, and vileness about himself, that, with holy Job, he cries out, "Behold, I am vile, what shall I answer thee? I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." As also in Ezekiel 36:31, "Ye shall remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities, and for your abominations."

Lowliness with respect to ourselves has in it, *thirdly, a singleness of heart in the discharge of duty, without vain glory, or Pharisaical ostentation*. It argues a proud hypocritical spirit, to pray, or give alms, or do any duty, to be seen of men, that we may procure a name for ourselves, or the approbation of others. I am afraid, there are many that attend sermons, and sacraments, with a design to maintain their credit and reputation among their neighbours. Verily, such have their reward; but a sorry one it is, when they have got it. The day comes, when this fig-leaf covering shall be torn, and your nakedness, emptiness, hypocrisy, exposed before men and angels. The humble and lowly Christian will make conscience of duty, although none in the world should see him; yea, the more retired he is, the better he loves it. He cares not though, in things of this nature, his left hand did not know what his right hand does.

Secondly, This lowliness and humility, considered with respect to *others*, has these things in it:

1. *A preferring of others above or before ourselves*. Agreeable to this is the apostolic command, "Let nothing be done through strife, or vain-glory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves," Philippians 2:3 Not that a child of God should think a profane reprobate to be in a better state than himself; but every true child of God will see so much in himself as will make him ready to think the worst reprobate as good, or rather better than he is by nature; and he will see, that the least of saints have something wherein they do excel him. This was the disposition of the great apostle: he looked on himself as the chief of sinners, and the least of all saints.

2. Having lowliness with respect to *others* has in it a *looking upon the gifts and graces of others without a grudge*. The humble man will not say, "This or that man darkens me." No; he rejoices to see the gifts and graces of God's Spirit abounding towards others. "Would God (says Moses) that all the Lord's people were prophets." The lowly one will shun all vain comparison of himself

with others: he will not say, "Stand by, for I am holier than thou;" or, with the proud Pharisee, "God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, or even as this publican." No, he rather sinks in his own esteem, when he looks on others, as Agur did: "Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man," Proverbs 30:2.

3. Lowliness with respect to *others* has in it also *an affable, courteous carriage toward all*. "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous," 1 Peter 3:8. Religion does not countenance a sullen, morose, and haughty carriage; no, on the contrary, we are expressly commanded to be "gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men."

Thirdly, This lowliness and humility of soul may be considered with reference unto God. And so it implies these following things:

1. *High and admiring thoughts of the majesty of God*. When God reveals Himself, the man sinks into nothing in his own esteem. "Oh", the humble soul will say with Moses, "Who is like unto thee, O Lord, amongst the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?" Exodus 15:11

2. Lowliness in a man with reference to God will have in it *a holy fear and dread of God always on his spirit*; especially in his immediate approaches unto the presence of God, in the duties of His worship. That man says, "The very angels cover their faces with their wings before him, crying, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of hosts. How then shall I, a man of polluted lips, take His holy name into my mouth?" This makes him, with the publican, to smite upon his breast; to stand afar off, crying, "God be merciful to me a sinner." This is the language of the humble soul, "Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?" Psalm 15:1; and, "Who shall ascent into the hill of the Lord? and who shall stand in his holy place?" Psalm 24:3.

3. It has in it *an admiring of every expression of the divine bounty and goodness toward men in general, and toward himself in particular*. "Oh," says he, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" and, "Who am I, that thou hast brought me hitherto: Is this the manner of man, O Lord God? and what can I say more?" And what more can be said! for "praise is silent for thee, O God in Zion." A silent admiration of the grace and condescension of the great Jehovah, is the highest degree of praise we can attain to in this life, while our harps are so mistuned by sin.

4. Lowliness in us with respect to God has in it also *a giving God the glory of all that we are helped to do in His service*. When the man is able to discharge duty in any measure comfortably, he will not say, like proud Jehu, "Come, and see my zeal for the Lord." No, that is not the way of the humble soul; he knows that he has all from the Lord, and therefore he will give all the glory unto him, saying, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name be

the glory." "I laboured more abundantly than all the apostles," said Paul, "yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. By the grace of God I am what I am."

5. Lowliness with respect to God has in it *a silent resignation unto the will of God*, and an acquiescence in the disposals of His providence, let dispensations be never so contrary to the inclinations of flesh and blood. "Here I am," will the poor soul say with David, "let him do to me as seemeth good unto him." The man sees awful sovereignty in the dispensation, which makes him to say, "Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?" He sees that his furnace is not ten thousandth part as hot as his sins deserve; and therefore he silences his soul, saying with the church, "Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins? Thou has punished us less than our iniquities deserve." He sees that the cup put into his hand is far from the bitterness of that cup that was put into the hand of Christ; and this makes him say, "If these things were done in the green tree, what shall be done to such a withered stick as I am? And therefore I will even be dumb with silence before Him, not opening the mouth, because it is the Lord that doth it."

Although all these things I have named be the ingredients of true humility with respect to ourselves and others, and to God, yet I think the very soul and essence of gospel-humiliation lies in *the soul's renouncing of itself*; its going out of itself and going in to, and accepting of, the Lord Jesus Christ, as its everlasting all; as the all of its light, life, strength, righteousness, and salvation. And I believe that a man never passes into truly spiritual humility, till self-righteousness be dethroned, till the high and towering imaginations of the man's own righteousness by the law be levelled by the mighty power of the gospel, and he be brought to submit unto the righteousness of God for justification, which is revealed in the gospel from faith to faith.

In short, the humble and lowly believer is *content to be nothing, that Christ may be all in all unto him*: content to be a fool, that Christ may be his only wisdom; content to be, as he really is in himself, a guilty condemned criminal, that Christ may be his only righteousness; content to be stripped of his filthy rags, that he may be clothed with a borrowed robe. "Oh", says the humble soul, "surely in the Lord alone have I righteousness and strength: in him will I be justified, and in him alone will I glory," Isaiah 45:24, 25. "Yea, doubtless," says humble Paul, "I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: and do count them but dung that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith," Philippians 3:8, 9. And so much for the first general head, namely, the nature of this lowliness.

II. The second principal thing proposed was, to shew that the lowly and humble soul is the peculiar favourite of Heaven. This will be abundantly evident, if we consider:

First, that when the Son of God was here in our nature, *He shewed a particular regard unto such*. You have this in the case of the centurion in Matthew 8:8. He addresses Christ in behalf of his servant, who was grievously tormented by the palsy. Christ promises to come to his house and heal the servant. Well, see in verse 8 the lowliness of the man's spirit. "Lord," says he, "I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof." And what a large commendation Christ gives to the man: "I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel." Christ grants him all that he asked, saying, "Go thy way, and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee." We see the same in the Syrophenician woman, in Matthew 15:27. The lowliness and humility of her spirit made her to be submissive under all the repulses she met with. When Christ called her a dog, she takes it saying, "Truth, Lord, I am a dog. and shall be content if I may have but a crumb, the dog's portion." And what follows this? "O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt." Thus, I say, Christ, in the days of His flesh, showed the greatest regard to the humble; and He is the same now in a state of exaltation as He was in a state of humiliation.

Secondly, when God gives the grace of humiliation, *it is a sign that He intends more grace for that soul*: "He giveth grace to the humble." 1 Peter 5:5. You know that men lay up their richest wines in their lowest cellars; so God lays up the richest treasures of His grace in the heart of the humble. And therefore the humble Christian is ordinarily the most thriving and growing Christian. The humble valleys laugh with fatness, when the high mountains are barren; so the humble Christian is made fat with the influences of heaven, when lofty towering professors are, like the mountains of Gilboa, withered and dry, because the dew and rain of the graces and influences of the Spirit are withheld from them.

Thirdly, *honour, exaltation, and preferment is intended for the humble soul*: "Before honour is humility," says Solomon. "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill; that he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his people," Psalm 113: 7, 8. They shall be, as it were, His ministers of state that shall attend His throne, and have a place among them that stand by.

Fourthly, *God's eyes are upon the humble*. The eye of His omniscience indeed beholds all the children of men; but His pleasant countenance beholds the humble and upright soul. "Thus saith the Lord, the heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool; where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? for all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord; but to this man will I look, even to him

that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word," Isaiah 66: 1, 2. The humble soul is the object of his peculiar love and care: "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in their behalf."

Fifthly, not only God's eye, but *His ear is toward the lowly soul*: "Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the humble; thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear," Psalm 10:17. Would you have preparation for a communion table? Would you be brought unto God's footstool and have a hearing there? Then come with lowliness and humility of soul.

Sixthly, the great Jehovah, the infinite God, *dwells in and with the humble*: "Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy, I *dwell* in the high and holy place; with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones," Isaiah 57:15. God has two palaces where he dwells; the one is in heaven, the other is in the heart of the humble Christian. He says of the humble soul, as he said of Zion, "This is my rest for ever; here will I dwell, for I have desired it." And for what purpose will He dwell in the hearts of the humble ones? It is to revive and comfort them. The new wine of the consolations of God, which are not small, shall be poured into the heart of the lowly soul. He will "comfort them that mourn in Zion, he will give them the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness."

Seventhly, as God dwells with the humble, so the humble shall dwell with God in glory for ever: "Blessed are the poor in spirit (which is the same as the lowly in spirit), for their's is the kingdom of heaven," Matthew 5:3. They shall sit not only at His table here below, but also at the high table of glory, and eat and drink with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; yea, with the King of glory Himself. It is the humble that surround the throne above, as you see in Revelation 4. They take their crowns off their heads, and cast them down before the Lamb, saying, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power." Thus you see that the humble soul is the peculiar favourite of the high God.

III. The third principal thing proposed was, to enquire why God has such a respect unto the lowly.

The first answer is that God has such a respect unto the lowly, not as if this frame of soul merited any good from Him, but *because this is a disposition that best serves His great design of exalting and glorifying his free grace*. What do you think was God's design in election, in redemption, in the whole of a gospel dispensation, and in all the ordinances thereof? His grand design in all was to rear up a glorious high throne, from which He might display the riches of His free and sovereign grace; this is that which He will have magnified through eternity above all His other names. Now this lowliness and humility of spirit

suits best God's design of exalting of the freeness of His grace. It is not the legalist or proud Pharisee, but the poor humble publican who is smiting on his breast and crying, "God be merciful to me a sinner," who submits to the revelation of grace. And truly, I never think a man really humbled till he be brought so far off his law foundation, on which he stands by nature, as to lie down like a worm at the feet of sovereign grace, heartily content to be indebted to free grace for life, righteousness, pardon, and salvation.

Secondly, God has such respect unto the humble soul because it is a fruit of His own Spirit inhabiting the soul, and an evidence of the soul's union with the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom alone we are accepted.

Thirdly, this is a disposition that makes the soul like Christ; and the more like Christ a person becomes, the more the love of God is manifested to him. We are told that Christ was meek and lowly; He did not cry, not lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street; though he was the brightness of His Father's glory, yet He was content to appear in the form of a servant; though He was rich, yet He was content to become poor, that we through His poverty might be rich. Now, the humble soul, being the image of Christ, who is the express image of His Father, is a soul unto whom God cannot but have a respect and regard. ●

To be concluded

A Catechism for the Instruction of Communicants

*By Andrew Thomson, D.D.**

Questions Nos. 29 to 55

(some of which have been edited)

29. Q. *Why should we partake of the ordinance of the Lord's Supper?*

A. For several strong and important reasons.

30. Q. *What is your first reason or motive?*

A. Christ, to whose authority we are subject, has commanded us to do this in remembrance of him, and it is in our interest, as well as our duty, to obey Him in every particular.

31. Q. *What is your second reason?*

A. We should love Christ; and partaking of this ordinance is an expression of love to Him, inasmuch as it is complying with His injunction; for He Himself hath said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments;" (John 14: 15); and

* See the May issue for a biographical footnote about Andrew Thomson.

inasmuch as it is bearing our testimony to His goodness and mercy in dying for His people.

32. Q. *What is your third reason?*

A. This ordinance is one great means of keeping up the remembrance of Christ in the world and in our own hearts; and He deserves, in an eminent sense, to be held in everlasting remembrance.

33. Q. *What is your fourth reason?*

A. The Sacrament of the Supper is an excellent opportunity of professing, publicly and solemnly, our faith in Jesus, and our attachment to His gospel.

34. Q. *Are believers bound to make a public profession of their faith?*

A. Yes: our Saviour has said strongly, "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven;" (Matthew 10: 32, 33).

35. Q. *Why is the ordinance of the Supper peculiarly fitted for the purpose of professing our faith?*

A. Because the eye of the world is then more particularly upon us: and because, by eating and drinking at the Lord's Table, we give our assent to the doctrine of the cross, which lies at the very foundation of the gospel, and is the chief cause of offence to its adversaries.

36. Q. *What is your next reason?*

A. The Sacrament of the Supper is a powerful means of strengthening and improving the most important graces of the divine life.

37. Q. *How does it operate in strengthening our faith?*

A. It strengthens our faith by giving us a lively representation of the great and interesting doctrine of the atonement, which makes Christ so worthy of our unreserved confidence.

38. Q. *How does it improve the grace of repentance?*

A. By showing in the strongest manner possible, the exceeding sinfulness of sin, which God would not pardon without the sacrifice of His own Son; and by thus naturally leading us to hate it with a more perfect hatred, to feel a greater sorrow on account of having committed it, and to be more determined to avoid it in our future conduct.

39. *Q. How does it improve our love and gratitude to Jesus Christ?*

A. By setting Him forth as voluntarily dying to avert the divine displeasure from our souls, and to restore us to the favour and friendship of God.

40. *Q. How does it improve our love to our fellow believers?*

A. By reminding us of the value of the human soul, manifested in the sacrifice which Christ offered for its salvation; and by associating us together in an ordinance which exhibits, "the great love wherewith God hath loved us;" (Ephesians 2: 4). for, "if God so loved us, we ought to love one another." (1 John 4: 11).

41. *Q. What is your next reason for partaking of the Lord's Supper?*

A. It is a source of great consolation under all the afflictions to which we are subject in this state of sin and imperfection.

42. *Q. How does it comfort us under the consciousness of guilt?*

A. It sets before us that perfect sacrifice which Christ offered, and God accepted, for our sins, and on which, therefore, we may safely depend for pardon and reconciliation.

43. *Q. How does it comfort us under a sense of our spiritual weakness and danger?*

A. We see in the symbols of Christ's broken body and shed blood, a solemn pledge or promise that He who thus died for us will never forsake us, that He will help our infirmities, that He will defend us from our enemies, and conduct us in safety to His heavenly kingdom.

44. *Q. How does it comfort us under the burden of temporal distress?*

A. We behold in the bread and wine, as emblems of our Redeemer's sacrifice, the seal of that gracious covenant by which God, the disposer of every event, is our compassionate heavenly Father, who will make the afflictions of this life, "work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," (2 Cor 4: 17).

45. *Q. What is your next reason for partaking of the Lord's Supper?*

A. It is an appointed token of our acceptance of the Gospel, and of God's favour to us; if our acceptance is sincere: for Christ said, when He gave the wine to His disciples, "This cup is the New Testament, [or as it might be translated, the New Covenant] in my blood."

46. *Q. How do you explain yourself, when the Gospel is considered as the Testament, or last will of our Saviour?*

A. In this case the sacramental wine represents the blood or death of Christ the Testator, with which He purchased the blessings that He bequeaths; and when we partake of the wine, we declare at once our firm belief in the merits of His death, and our cordial reception of the blessings that He conveys to us by His Testament or Gospel.

47. Q. *How do you explain yourself, when the Gospel is considered as a Covenant?*

A. In this view, the blood of Christ is the seal by which the new Covenant is ratified; and when we drink the wine, as representing the blood of Christ, we declare our acceptance of that Covenant, and bind ourselves to fulfil all the engagements under which it lays us.

48. Q. *Were not these engagements entered into when you were baptized?*

A. Yes; by having the sacrament of baptism administered to me, I was solemnly and truly engaged to be the Lord's; but as, on account of my infancy, I could not give my own consent to what was done, I partake of the Lord's Supper to renew my baptismal engagements by a conscious and voluntary dedication of myself to God through Jesus Christ, into whom I was baptized: And this renewal of my baptismal engagements I make as often as I partake of the Lord's Supper.

To be continued

Heart Treasure

Various Experiences to be Treasured

Oliver Heywood

THIS extract, with some editing, has been taken from *Heart Treasure* by the Rev. Oliver Heywood (1629-1702), a work that is based on Matthew 12:35, "A good man, out of the good treasure of the heart, bringeth forth good things." Heywood, one of the ejected ministers of 1662, was frequently persecuted. Under his preaching believers were much edified, and large numbers of the impenitent were converted. See November 1996 issue for the extract, *Heart Treasure – Known by God*.

ONE class of precious and useful treasure which the believer should lay up in his heart, is composed of those *various experiences which meet him in all the passages of his life*. By collecting and preserving these, he may secure much benefit; for to do so is a plain duty, a mark of wisdom, and a means of more. Thus the Psalmist, after a glowing record of the varied operations of Divine Providence, says, "Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving and kindness of the Lord." It is as if he had said, "They that set themselves to consider the Lord's works in the world have

wise and observant spirits, and shall grow still wiser, and see more of God in His dispensations than other men." God opens His secret cabinet to those who humbly and devoutly study the developments of His moral government

But, on the other hand, God views with displeasure those who are blind to His dealings, and threatens them with the heaviest punishment. "Because they regard not the works of the Lord, nor the operation of His hands, He shall destroy them, and not build them up." Rightly to ponder the agency of God in all earthly affairs, is a work too high for the sottish minds of irreligious men.

It is only the true Christian that suitably recognizes this agency, and derives from it the lessons which it is intended to teach. "The righteous man wisely considereth the house of the wicked;" that is, he considers what becomes of it, how the Lord deals with wicked men and with their houses; and observes, in all the vicissitudes of human things, the dispensations of God towards the good and the evil, in mercy and in judgment. "Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he shall know them? for the ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them; but the transgressors shall fall therein."

It is my purpose, however, to notice in this connection the personal experience of the believer in matters *relating to himself*, and to view them as having reference to four particulars: the vanity of the world, the treachery of his own heart, the bitterness of sin, and heavenly discoveries. From each of these departments, I would urge every child of God to draw salutary instruction for his future guidance.

First, lay up experiences of *the world's vanity*. Solomon was engaged, during his whole life, in making such a collection; and in his old age he recorded it in the Book of Ecclesiastes as a lesson to all after generations. He possessed unrivalled faculties and opportunities for prosecuting such an experiment. He knew better than any man what the world can do for its most favoured votaries. But, after having tasted its most intoxicating delights, he pronounces the sad and disheartening result. "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." And the whole book, in which he thus describes his experience, is an induction of facts and arguments to prove his assertion. What then "can the man do that cometh after the king?" If you make the like investigation, you will be forced to come to the same conclusion. You cannot search deeper than he did into the nature of earthly good, nor drink fuller draughts from the fountains of worldly pleasure; yet he found but emptiness and vexation in all the enjoyments which sense can offer. And have you not found the same? Read the wise man's last and soundest lectures on the vanity of every pursuit that terminates here; recall your past history as you read, and let dearly bought experience give its comment; and then lay up both text and comment in your hearts.

Say, did you ever trust the world but it deceived you? Has it not failed you at

such a time? and disappointed you in such a case? O, how you blessed yourself in such an expectation, but alas, you grasped the sand or smoke. Have you not found riches uncertain, friends inconstant, relations vanishing? Have you not seen the world passing away, and its pleasures, profits and honours to be like a swift gliding river hastening onward to the dark ocean of forgetfulness? However men may be bewitched with the world's splendour, the Spirit of God judges of it as a mere phantasy – a pageant show that glitters with a hollow and deceitful lustre. What solid content have you ever found in it? When you have sought to the creature for happiness, has it not answered, "It is not in me?" C have you not learned that all created joys are, at best, but as a dream of the night, when the hungry and thirsty think they eat and drink, but wake and still are faint? Have you not found this true in your own sad experience? If so, then treasure up these results; regard them as settled facts; and learn from them to trust the world no more.

O, would you endanger your soul again? Will you lean again upon this broken reed that will run into your hand and heart, and pierce you with many sorrows? Will you, by striving to be rich, "fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition?" The truth is, there is nothing in this world which can answer our desires and hopes. No earthly pursuit or attainment is capable of affording us what we expect from it. We find the world but a lie. Its brightest glories are a mocking vision; its fairest promises turn into disappointments that strike and wound us; and thus what we trusted to as our leaning-staff becomes a knocking cudgel. Well, then, since you have found it so, look upon it as such, and carefully preserve the experience.

Secondly, lay up experiences of *the treachery of your own heart*. The heart is a mournful book; but you must peruse and re-peruse it, if you would not live and die in fatal ignorance. Study, then, the multifarious windings, and artifices, and concealments of your depraved heart. Consider and remember well all its ways of guile and guilt which have cost you so dear. In thus reviewing your inward history, you will find, that in a certain duty your heart gave you the slip; in such a temptation your heart led away your feet, or hands, or tongue, and caused your flesh to sin. In such an enjoyment your perfidious heart stole away; in such a moment of worldly success your grovelling heart prostrated itself in bestial idolatry at the altar of Mammon; in such an affliction your murmuring heart rose up against God, and your tumultuous, quarrelsome spirit made you speak unadvisedly.

And will you trust your deceitful heart again? Who but a fool will venture his whole estate with a known thief? What wise man will be imposed on by a detected juggler? "He that trusteth his own heart is a fool." And will not you be

the greatest fool that breathes, if after so many cheating tricks, you still confide in this unmitigated traitor? Ah, reader, I appeal to your own experience. How many a woeful instance you have had of the heart's deceitfulness! It is prone to deceive, and equally prone to be deceived, and the latter is more dangerous. The heart, since the fall, is naturally of a crafty, subtle, and fickle temper, and is made still worse by the deceitfulness of sin which is woven and twisted, as it were, into its very texture. These two cheats, deceitful sin and the deceitful heart, conspire to undo the soul. And were not God a better friend to us than we are to ourselves, our salvation would be impossible. Every man is a satan to himself; and the sincere Christian will pray, most of all, to be delivered from that evil one, himself. He is far more afraid of the folly bound up in his own heart, than of all the outward assaults of the world, and the machinations of hell.

The reason that any man indulges self-confidence, is because he is ignorant of the treacherous workings of his own heart, or having felt them, neglects the experience. As a desperate bankrupt shrinks from inspecting his accounts, lest the evidences of his ruin should glare too frightfully upon him; so a poor deceived sinner dares not look into his heart, from a vague, but uneasy consciousness that he will not find things there exactly as he wishes; and thus he seeks to cover it over, and to conceal even from himself a sight so destructive to his peace. The real child of God, however, cannot but see what others overlook, or strive to hide; and willingly does he see it, and as sadly does he lament it, and as watchfully labour to subdue and extirpate it.

And it deserves to be noted, that though the deceptions of the heart are a source of great evil and danger, yet to observe and remember them is of singular benefit to a serious mind, and one of its strongest safeguards against their power. May God enable us all so to know and fear our own hearts, that we shall henceforth trust them less, and Him more.

Thirdly, lay up experiences of the *bitterness of sin*. Consider what have been the insinuating ways of sin and Satan to entangle you, and the sad effects which followed. Consider what tears, and groans, and painful strugglings it has cost you to extricate your captive souls and regain freedom and peace. O, the intricate windings of that crooked serpent! What strange and subtle devices has he used to entrap you in his snares, or overtake you with his furious assaults! How often has he presented the bait, and hid the hook! Has he not set before your credulous souls the pleasure or profit of a base lust? Has he not extenuated sin at first to induce you to commit it, and afterwards aggravated it to drive you to despair? Sin cheats us with the prospect of golden mountains, and lures us on in pursuit of the delusive vision, till it leaves us in the mire at last. Though its beginning may seem delightful, its end is always bitter.

Has not such been your experience? Ask your own hearts, what fruit you had

in those things whereof you are now ashamed? The awakened conscience will answer, that their only fruit is death – deadly pain now, or eternal death hereafter – the death-like throes of repentance in this world, or the death-dealing inflictions of vengeance in the world to come. Your wild oats, sown with delight in youth, sprung up, in your riper years, into bitter hemlock and wormwood. Though wickedness was sweet on your lips, it turned to the gall of asps within – a biting, scathing poison, filling your very soul with agony. O, the dreadful stings and pangs that sin leaves behind it! With what fears and horrors, with what wearing griefs and crushing anxieties, does it fill the penitent soul!

Consider also what broken bones and affrighting cares must the prodigal endure, before he is received into his Father's sweet embraces! How long is the humble suitor compelled to lie at the gates of mercy before he can obtain admission, or see the King's face, or taste the joy of His salvation! And this arises not from any unwillingness on the part of God to bestow forgiveness, or from any delight which He feels in the anguish of a sinner; but from His desire to impress the heart with the evil of sin, to stir it up to more earnest longing for His grace, to lead it to prize Christ and pardon more, and to teach it to hate and to avoid sin for the future. He, therefore, often keeps the soul long in suspense, even when He yearns over it, as Joseph did over his brethren. He deals with the soul, as He dealt with Miriam in the cure of her leprosy. When Moses besought Him to pardon her sin, and heal her, although He listened to the prayer, yet, in order to affect her mind with a just sense of the offence which she had committed, He required her to wait seven days, and to be shut out, during the interval, from the congregation. Thus God would have us know the worth of His favour, by the want of it for a season.

Surely, if you would lay such sad experience in store, it would prove a powerful antidote against future temptation. O, what abhorrence of sin did the soul feel in the hour of its deep humiliation, and what earnest resolves did it form to sin no more! If, while David was bathing himself in briny tears, he had been asked, What sayest thou now to murder? How dost thou like thy fleshly lusts? Wilt thou buy repentance at so dear a rate, and fall again into uncleanness? Would he not have answered, "O no! God forbid that I should sin again: I will be racked, or torn in pieces, rather than dishonour my God, grieve His Spirit, and fill my poor soul with such tormenting troubles?" When he was roaring by reason of the disquietness of his spirit, when there was no rest in his bones because of his sin, he had far other thoughts of his sin than when he was adventuring upon it. There is scarcely any man so brutish as not to abstain from that which experience tells him has done him great harm. Every man of the least prudence will forbear such food and drink as he knows will infallibly bring upon him excruciating pain.

So the Christian, who has learned by experience the bitterness of sin, and how dear it has cost him, will be careful not to commit it again. Thus will he reason, "I remember into what a sad condition sin brought me. It behoves me to sin no more lest a worse thing come upon me. Sin broke my bones; but now, if I sin again, I fear it will break my neck. Sin filled my soul with heart-shaking fears; but I may expect it will now fill me with heart-desolating despair. It brought a hell into my conscience before; but I fear it will now cast my soul into hell." Lay up and thoughtfully ponder such sad experience, and I may then almost say, Sin if you dare.

Fourthly, treasure up *the divine discoveries, of which your souls have had sweet and satisfying experience*. If you are Christians, such discoveries have doubtless been vouchsafed to you; and they were bestowed, not merely to be enjoyed, but to be remembered, contemplated, and improved. Of this class of experiences there are two kinds which I would recommend you to preserve; special providences, and spiritual influences.

You should lay up experiences of the particular *manifestations of divine providence towards you*. The wisdom of God has so disposed affairs with respect to His people, that one part of our life may help us in another; the van of our days contributing to bring up the rear. From the recollection of past deliverances, the soul may thus argue: "The Lord helped me in such a strait, directed in such a doubt, prevented such a fear, broke such a snare; He is the same God still, and will, therefore, help for the future." At every fresh interposition of Divine goodness, set up an Ebenezer, so that from the portion of your pilgrimage which has been accomplished, you may derive memorials and encouragements for that which is to come. In each hour of perplexity and difficulty, sustain yourselves by the conclusive and scriptural argument, "The Lord has delivered; He does deliver; and, therefore, He will deliver."

Write down signal providences, or lock them up in the safe depository of a sanctified memory, and produce them when you are in extremity and have your back to the wall. Sweet experiences of former displays of God's care and protection are not the least part of the Christian's treasure. I would not, indeed, have you dote upon them, or imagine that God can go no further than He has gone – a supposition which can only serve to daunt you in new and greater troubles. Nevertheless, be careful not to despise or slight these proofs of His kindness, but lay them up and plead them with Him, whenever the storm of calamity threatens to renew its violence. One part of the seventy-fourth Psalm contains a sad complaint of God's anger, and the afflictions of the Church; while the other glows with a cheering rehearsal of former exhibitions of the power and mercy of Jehovah. Thus the merciful assistance vouchsafed in the past, sheds hope and confidence over the darkness of the future.

You must also treasure up the *spiritual enlargements and comforts*, which have gladdened your religious course. Call them to mind; review them with humility and gratitude; and in the season of desponding gloom draw from them encouragement and consolation thus:

"In such an ordinance I met with God, and beheld His reconciled face. In such a duty my graces were quickened, exercised, increased. In such a season of secret prayer, my heart was warmed, melted, satisfied. In such a company, in such a society, in such a time of public worship, my whole soul was enlarged, filled, and sweetly transported beyond myself. O what a blessed time was that to me, when I experienced the manifestations of God's favour, enjoyed the smiles of His love, and felt the witness of His Spirit, sealing my forgiveness and acceptance.

"Well do I remember it; and my heart dances within me at the recollection. Those hours of blissful fellowship with God come over my spirit still, like gleams of Paradise. Such moments are not always to be expected. These heavenly dainties are not the Christian's ordinary fare. A pining time may come. I will, therefore, highly prize and carefully store up such foretastes of divine joy against the hour of need. God forbid that I should lose this token for good, this broken ring, this pledge from heaven. This may stand me in stead, in a dark and gloomy day when the Lord may frown upon me as an enemy, and seem to put me from Him as though He would forsake me.

"Then, with Job, will I say unto Him, 'Thou knowest that I am not wicked.' Lord, dost thou deal so with wicked men, or reveal thyself thus to men who know thee not? Art thou wont to stir up in the careless world such penitent bemoanings, such ardent breathings, and such vehement pantings after thyself? And hast thou ever given to unregenerate souls such familiar discoveries of thy grace, as my heart hath many a time received? Are these thy ways with unsanctified men? Wilt thou hold communion with those who were never united to thee? Does not such communion presuppose a union? Either my experience is false and counterfeit, or I am thine; for whom thou lovest once, thou lovest to the end. Though I am fickle and inconsistent, thou art the same, changeless in thy love, as in thy nature. I dare not say that all my sweet experiences were mere fictions, shadows, dreams.

"No. I humbly hope they were genuine evidences of thy special love, arising from thy word, and built upon it; yea, they carried their evidence along with them, and left such impressions on my soul as can never be forgotten or effaced. I can appeal to myself, O Lord, if tokens have not come from thee to me, such as thou only couldst give, and none but a renewed heart could receive. And since thou canst not deny thy name, engraven on my heart, and sweetly sealed to me, I commit the matter wholly to thee. Though now thou seemest to deal

strangely with me, as if thou hadst quite cast me off; yet thou art my God still; my loving Father; my only Friend. I cannot part from thee – I will not let thee go. There was once love between us; and though now, in wisdom and faithfulness, thou appearest to smother and restrain thy love; yet I know, by the workings which I feel in my own breast towards thee, that thou hast the same heart which thou wast wont to have. And, therefore, Lord, I hang upon thee, and plead with David, ‘Where are thy former lovingkindnesses which thou swarest unto me’?”

Thus lay up your sweet experiences, and thus draw them forth in the black night of despondency and spiritual desertion. O, when God deals graciously with you, neglect not the testimonies of His love, but garner them in the recesses of your heart, as mementoes from your Husband, Christ, to be your solace and joy during the dark and lonely hours in which you mourn His absence! ●

Book Review

Evangelism: A Reformed Debate by *John Kennedy and Horatius Bonar*

Published by The James Begg Society. Paperback, 144 pages, £2.20. Available from the Free Presbyterian Bookroom, 133 Woodlands Road, Glasgow, G3 6LE

HERE, published together for the first time, are Kennedy's *Hyper-Evangelism*, subtitled, *Another Gospel, Though A Mighty Power. A Review of the Recent Religious Movement in Scotland*; with Bonar's reply, *The Old Gospel*, with the subtitle, *Not Another Gospel, but the Power of God Unto Salvation*; and finally Kennedy's *A Reply to Dr Bonar's Defence of Hyper-Evangelism*. The "recent religious movement" which came under Kennedy's scrutiny was the evangelistic campaign which the American evangelist Dwight L Moody conducted in Scotland in 1873-74, supported by soloist Ira D Sankey. Kennedy produced a devastating analysis.

Kennedy had two main objections to this evangelistic campaign: (1) he believed Moody's was "another gospel, though a mighty influence . . . because it is just an extreme application of some truths, to the neglect of others which are equally important", (2) because of the unscriptural practices which were used; he lists "singing the gospel" in uninspired hymns; the use of instrumental music; open prayer meetings; and the "inquiry room", where inquirers were unwisely dealt with (Kennedy would have preferred them to be sent home to seek the Lord in their own closets rather than be given brief instruction and premature encouragement within earshot of everyone else). Kennedy had listened repeatedly to Moody and he pointed to the great defect in what he had heard: "It ignores the supreme end of the gospel, which is the manifestation of the Divine glory; and misrepresents it as merely unfolding a scheme of

salvation adapted to man's convenience." With this in mind he went on to list four main objections to Moody's teaching:

(1) "No pains are taken to present the character and claims of God as Lawgiver and Judge, and no indication given of a desire to bring souls to self-condemnation, to accept the punishment of their iniquity." But, he pointed out, "it should be an aim of preaching . . . to bring sinners . . . to feel themselves in excuseless guilt, shut up to the sovereign mercy of Him against whom they have sinned". He also indicated his concern that faith was being presented merely as belief – omitting the crucial aspect of trust – and comments, "This is but to place it on the same footing with works. Faith, as mere belief, is considered to be something within the power of all."

(2) "It ignores the sovereignty and power of God in the dispensation of His grace." Kennedy explains the reasoning behind this omission when he represents Moody as arguing thus: "If men are to be told that salvation is entirely at the disposal of God's sovereign will, and that sinners are so utterly lost that only the working of God's power can move them either to will or to do what is required by the claims of the gospel, then the result will be that some will be offended and go away, others will fold their hands and sleep, and others will sink down in despair." But, asks Kennedy, "Am I therefore to refrain from proclaiming Jehovah as King? . . . In no other sphere does He appear more gloriously kingly than this. Did not the Divine preacher make the sovereignty of God the theme of His very first sermon, though His hearers were thereby so incensed that only by a miracle could He preserve His life from their fury?" At this stage Kennedy calls attention to two specific errors in Moody's teaching: that regeneration is the result of faith, and that "God would not call men to believe unless they had the power to do so".

(3) "No care is taken to show, in the light of the doctrine of the cross, how God is glorified in the salvation of the sinner." There was nothing in Moody's preaching that would raise the question, How can God be just in justifying the ungodly? He points out that, while the work of Christ as the sinner's substitute received attention, sinners were not pointed to the dignity of His person as what gave merit to the work which He accomplished.

(4) "No precaution is offered against a tendency to antinomianism in those who profess to have believed." Kennedy explains, "The man who is disposed to think of his sin as a great calamity, rather than as a heinous crime, is not likely either to reverence God or to respect His law. To his view, salvation is something which it would not be fair to withhold from him, rather than a gracious gift which a sovereign God is glorified in bestowing. . . . He thinks of an easy reign of mercy, under which he can be as imperious as if his own will were law."

It might have been better had this reprint extended no further than Kennedy's

first booklet. Bonar's reply is much longer, he often misses the point, and is generally unhelpful. He assumes that Kennedy was attacking all those who supported Moody rather than, in fact, concentrating on the American evangelist's unscriptural statements and methods. Kennedy makes clear in his reply that he did not have Bonar in mind when he first wrote and that he regarded him as a brother in the ministry. He does, however, find it necessary to comment adversely on many of Bonar's statements. But he also states, "The views which I have referred to, though found in Dr Bonar's writings, are not his standing opinions. They are only his temporary aberrations from the line of orthodoxy. They indicate the shape which his teaching assumed under pressure from without." The pity is that Bonar did not maintain a more consistent line and keep a safe distance from the newer methods which were then being brought in by those who believed that personal dealing with souls is more effective than the preaching of a pure gospel – in spite of Paul's statement: "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe," 1 Corinthians 1:21.

One assumes that the publishers included Bonar's *The Old Gospel* so that they could also include Kennedy's second booklet, *A Reply to Dr Bonar's Defence of Hyper-Evangelism*. However, *A Reply...* is largely taken up in answering Bonar's detailed responses to Kennedy's *Hyper-Evangelism*. It contains useful material and successfully rebuts Bonar's charges, but the whole effect, 120 years after the conflict, is to muddy waters which were remarkably clear when Kennedy first laid down his pen.

We can look back over those 120 years and state without any qualification whatever that Kennedy had much the better of the argument. History, quite simply, has proved him right. The quality of evangelism since 1874 has gone from bad to worse, and vast multitudes who clearly were never converted have been brought to public profession in the Church by evangelistic campaigns. There will undoubtedly be false professions under the best of preaching, but when men try to convert sinners by using methods which are the product of man's wisdom – and encourage others in that direction – they have a solemn responsibility for the consequences.

(Rev.) K. D. Macleod

Protestant View

Half a million Roman Catholics flock to Fatima

LAST month, half a million people gathered at the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima, at Fatima in Portugal. It was there, 80 years ago, that three shepherd children claimed they saw the Virgin Mary on the same day of several months, until October 13, 1917, and heard three prophecies from her.

A local man said, "The pilgrims have been coming since last week, some crawling to the shrine on their hands and knees. I think it is faith, just faith in our Lady that brings the pilgrims. Many, of course, hope to be cured of their diseases." About 30,000 people travelled from Ireland alone. The high point was a mass held on 13 May and celebrated by the Pope's special representative, Cardinal Meissener, Archbishop of Cologne.

Here is one principal example of devotion to and worship of Mary, which pervades the Church of Rome from the Pope downwards. It shows too the strong delusion they are under, in looking to Mary as a co-redemptrix, and "a mediatrix of peace between sinners and God" (as Roman Bishop Liguori put it in his book, *The Glories of Mary*). We see also the sad superstition which is evident when so many of them hope for cures at such Marian shrines, where poor sinners are duped by "lying wonders".

Although the Church of Rome claims that she does not really worship Mary, the fact is, as Loraine Boettner demonstrates, that "the average Roman Catholic acts on the assumption that Mary has the powers of deity", an assumption to which they have been led and in which they are entrenched by the teaching of Rome. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1994) states that she, "by her manifold intercession continues to bring to us the gifts of eternal salvation... Therefore the Blessed Virgin is invoked in the Church under the titles of Advocate, Helper, Benefactress, and Mediatrix."

The day is coming when this grave dishonour being done to Jesus Christ, the "one Mediator between God and men", will cease by the fall of the Papacy. The fate of Rome is writ large in Holy Scripture. 2 Thessalonians 2 predicts that "that man of sin [shall] be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God... For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders." Then multitudes of souls will be delivered from its deluding, soul-destroying doctrines. □

The Prime Minister and his relationship to the Church of Rome

WE have been recently maligned by sections of the press for saying that "the possibility of having a Roman Catholic prime minister, who would be involved in appointments within the Church of England, is not too remote when we consider that... that Tony Blair is personally too close to Rome. Mr Blair has not only been attending mass with his Roman Catholic wife but also has

participated in the mass on one occasion, although prohibited since then by the Roman hierarchy." Mr Blair's office has assured journalists who followed this up that he is an Anglican and has never participated in the Roman Catholic mass.

What then are we to make of reports last summer that he partook of communion in a Roman Catholic church and that the priest involved was taken to task by his bishop for having allowed it? And are we to believe a report in July, 1996, that a spokesperson for Mr Blair "stated that he has taken Catholic communion from time to time"? Indeed, a recent report says that a Downing Street spokesman said that "although Mr Blair might have taken Communion during the Catholic Mass, he had stopped doing so since last July's row over the matter." We hope that this is indeed an end of the matter.

Leading columnist, Roman Catholic Paul Johnson, has engaged in what seems to be a kite-flying exercise in *The Daily Telegraph* of May 9. His article, *Why Mr Blair will become a Catholic*, "explains his reasons for believing that the Prime Minister will become the first Roman Catholic to hold the office." Of course, it is speculation on his part, and no doubt there is in it an element of the wish being the father of the thought, but we have reason still to be praying that we be kept, as a nation, from ever having a Roman Catholic Prime Minister. □

Notes and Comments

Saying, No, to abortions in Ross-shire

THE Ross-shire Journal reports a sudden rise in the number of girls under 16 in Ross and Cromarty who have had abortions. Provisional figures released by the Highland Health Board show that there has been a sixfold increase from one conception and abortion in each of the years 1991 to 1995, to six conceptions and abortions in 1996. There was also an increase in the number of abortions carried out in the 16 to 19 age group.

Further, there is an increasing trend towards abortion in the 16 to 19 age group. In 1994, out of 64 conceptions, 21 were aborted. In 1995, 33 out of 67 conceptions were aborted.

On the subject of teenage sexuality, it is encouraging to hear the Health Board spokesman say, "The counselling we urge is to encourage the vast majority of girls who want to say 'No' to do so until they feel old enough." This is a new step in the right direction. Until recently we heard the refrain "safer sex" *ad nauseam*, instead of the little but powerful word "No". Churches have been urging the Health Board to promote this line for a long time.

On the solemn subject of abortion, the sad number of abortions is as much a comment on Health Board policy as it is a comment on the immorality amongst teenagers. It is high time that the Health Board learnt to say "No" to social

abortions. The number of abortions is determined by the abortion policy of politicians and doctors; and more immediately by the Health Board and the gynaecologists in our hospitals. The real solution to the problem about increasing teenage abortion figures is simply to review abortion policy in order to eliminate "social" abortions. However, the British Medical Association's intention to modify the Hippocratic Oath so that it does not explicitly protect human life from the moment of conception does not auger well for the future.

D. M. B

Ultra-Orthodox bill before Israel's Knesset

A PRIVATE member's bill before the Israeli parliament, the Knesset, has caused great concern in Christian circles. This bill would make it illegal to publish or distribute material intended to persuade people to change their religion.

There is already legislation which prohibits material that is deemed to be coercing people to change their religion. However, the Ultra-Orthodox Jews consider this law to be too weak, but until recently they did not have enough support to amend existing legislation. That was until the arrival in Israel of Morris Cerullo, an American evangelist who claims the Charismatic gift of healing. His activities in Israel have been described in one Christian magazine as "clumsy and foolish". The outcome is a bill which, if passed, would make all missionary activity totally illegal. In fact, it is suggested that it would outlaw the whole of evangelical activity in Israel.

The bill has strong support within the Knesset, and the fact that there is a likelihood of this, or a similar bill, passing into law, shows clearly how firmly the veil is still on their heart of the Jews. How much both Jews and Gentiles need the inward illumination of the Holy Spirit! Yet "how shall they hear without a preacher?" And if the supply of such preachers and of suitable literature to Israel is cut off how can we expect that veil ever to be lifted? Yet we must not underestimate the power of God to turn His ancient people to Himself in spite of their consistent resistance to the gospel since the time of the Apostles. Nor should we ignore the promises of the Scriptures, which assure us that in God's good time "all Israel shall be saved".

It would be a dangerous matter for the nation of Israel to take such a determined step as this to pass a bill which would prevent her people being influenced by the gospel, which tells of her own Messiah. The Lord is able to prevent it, and He is able to take the wise in their own craftiness. What need there is of prayer that the gospel would indeed go out in power and purity to the whole world and in particular to the people of Israel!

K.D.M.

African Mission News

ZIMBABWE

THE Rev. Petros Mzamo and one of his elders, Mr. Levi Ndlovu, are at present in Scotland in order to attend the meetings of Synod in Inverness. Mr. Ndlovu is Headmaster of Lutsha School which is about six miles from Mbumba. This is his first visit to Scotland and we hope it will be a happy and memorable one.

At Mbumba Hospital, they were very short-staffed for a period at the beginning of the year. Nursing sister Lia Terlouw was off duty with a serious and painful ear infection, which has now cleared up. The situation was relieved when Sister Louise Leiper gave up the remainder of her leave at Ingwenya and returned to Mbumba; and two nursing sisters, Sister Henriette and Sister Hanneke, came to their help from Kenya. In addition, there are three Dutch nurses on holiday in Zimbabwe and staying at Mbumba, who are most interested in the work being done there, and pleased to help in any way they can.

There has been a series of visitors at Ingwenya and Mbumba. Among them was Miss Etta MacLennan, who used to teach at the John Tallach Secondary School. On this occasion she spent three weeks at the Mission, and received a very warm welcome from former colleagues and pupils. *J. N.*

KENYA

It was most interesting to see recently a picture of the Sengeru Mission compound. It gives the impression of being a close-knit community with everything geared for work. We are informed that a hospital theatre and an out-patients department are urgently required. Mr. Ian MacLean has been asked by the Foreign Mission Committee to move between Kenya and Zimbabwe in order to supervise building work in Zimbabwe.

Mr. George MacAskill, of the Inverness congregation, who offered to go to Kenya to work for four weeks at no cost to the Committee, apart from his fare being paid, has arrived safely and is very busy servicing and repairing the mission ambulances, truck and other vehicles.

Miss Catherine Mackenzie's application for a work permit in order to teach the children of the staff, is being processed in Kenya. Miss Mackenzie has been examining various materials and has decided that the tuition offered by World Wide Education Service for Primary Education, and by the National Extension College for Secondary Education would provide a suitable basis. *J. N.*

Kenya postscript

AS we go to press, we have just received a newsletter from Mr and Mrs Ian MacLean. Among other things they say: "The spiritual work goes on and we long to see some fruit. There are still good attendances at church and Sabbath

School... Quite a number of children are also doing the Scripture and Catechism Exercises in The Young People's Magazine. These are being corrected here.

"Visiting homes of the local people is very pleasant. The conversation is soon on spiritual things and the people are willing to listen, and many are eager to learn. Family worship is conducted and the heads of families are being encouraged to continue this daily. It was much blessed among families in Scotland in days gone by, and we long that similar blessings will be on families in Sengera. Jeremiah 31:1, ['At the same time, saith the Lord, will I be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people']....

"We have all had malaria at various times but because we take treatment early none of us has been very ill... Life is always busy and not without some stress, so we can all feel very exhausted at times. However, we are truly thankful for the health and strength we have been given to carry on in the work here. Psalm 29:11, ['The Lord will give strength to his people; the Lord will bless His people with peace']" □

Eastern Europe Mission Visit

IN the May issue we recounted the problems we experienced in bringing humanitarian and other aid to the Ukraine at the beginning of April. Eventually, we received clearance from the Cabinet of Ministers in Kiev to distribute our goods. However, the distribution did not in fact take place. The Customs officers prevented it by unexpectedly impounding the goods and demanding that we complete more pages of seemingly endless documentation.

Since we returned to Scotland we have been informed that the goods are to be released shortly, apart from a quantity of food which was confiscated. The increasing confrontations with bureaucracy makes it needful to have much patience in order to persevere in this work of compassion in providing aid. Regulations are frequently changing, and the latest ones are that we must produce a veterinary certificate for certain kinds of food we take in, and a fumigation certificate for all the clothing. We are thankful that the Bibles and literature, which cost more than £1,100, were not confiscated.

The main cause of our trying difficulties on this occasion was that aid sent in by some charitable organisations in recent times ended up being sold on the open market. It was for this reason that all our goods were to be taxed by an amount that was far more than the original cost. However, the tax was eventually waived. It is often the case that the misdemeanours of others cause troubles for innocent parties. Meantime we are making further enquiries and taking steps to prevent, if possible, the arising of a similar situation again.

With regard to public worship services, there are two families in Borispol which take turn about of making their homes available for the meetings; and for this we are very grateful. Sixteen souls met and were addressed from the words, "So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief," Hebrews 3:19. A certain lack of earnest and spiritual appreciation of the gospel among these friends constrained us to preach from this truth. However they listened attentively, and an old lady expressed deep affection for our coming to preach the gospel to them. There was also a number of young people present. We long that their young hearts would yet know something of the beauty of Christ.

In Odessa a congregation of 20 was addressed from the words of the Saviour in John 16:8, "And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgement." The doctrine of the renewing work of the Holy Ghost is one with which few in many other churches are familiar; and this is one of the reasons I spoke on this verse. On the previous day I had to write the sermon in full, and then the interpreter had to translate it and write it in Russian. At the service the sermon was read phrase by phrase, alternately in English and Russian. I felt a little hampered by this method, but this was the only way, at this stage, in which the address could be given as the interpreter does not feel confident enough yet to interpret without such preparation.

It seems that the congregation has a sincere desire to embrace the doctrines of the Word of God as these are summarised in *The Westminster Confession of Faith* and *The Shorter Catechism*. Mr Igor Zadorozniy is the leader of the group, although he is not a pastor. The people express the wish to belong to the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, and are anxious that they would have the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper administered in the congregation. At the moment Mr Zadorozniy is proceeding with registering the congregation as a church in the manner required by Ukrainian law. This is not an easy task, and could take many months to complete. Our hope is that this movement in Odessa will show itself more and more to be a genuine embracing of the Reformed Faith.

During our stay in Odessa Mr and Mrs Zadorozniy kindly provided for us in their home, as did Mrs Belozyorov and her son Igor in Kiev. To these people, and others also, we are very much indebted for their warm hospitality.

In Kiev I addressed 30 patients in the Cancer Hospital at a mid-week service, at the invitation of Pastor Grechenko. I spoke from 1 Timothy 1:15, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." Some of our listeners were no doubt hearing the gospel for the first time.

Pastor Grechenko is the person responsible for inviting us into the Ukraine. Without such an invitation we could not enter the country. His daughter Luba

attends to all the documentation at the Kiev end which is necessary for our arrival. Once we arrive in Kiev, it is Luba and Mr Igor Belosyrov who show us the way from one Government department to another and who do all the necessary negotiating in preparation for the final release of aid.

Pastor Grechenko has asked me to express to the our Church in Scotland his heartfelt gratitude for the aid which was left for his congregation, and expressed his deep sorrow for all the troubles we had to endure in the course of bringing in the aid. However, it is himself and his daughter who at times have to endure the greater harassment. It is most unpleasant to be harangued by belligerent beauraucrats and brought to breaking point.

At the moment we are proceeding to print 5000 copies of *The Westminster Confessions of Faith* booklet in Russian. This will be done, God willing, in Odessa, and at a fraction of what it would cost in Western Europe. Reformation Christian Ministries, USA, with the assistance of Dr Stephen Westcott, gave us permission to use their translation. When the copies are printed, Mr Igor Zadorozniy will distribute them, mostly by post. He has many outlets for distribution. We hope and pray that the Lord, in His great mercy, will bless this spreading of the Biblical teachings set forth in the *Confession of Faith*.

Last, but not least, we acknowledge the hard word of Mr Edward Ross in preparing our vehicle for the journey. We thank him also for accompanying myself to the Ukraine; for which he took time off from his work, and employed someone in his place. Without his constant help, and that of many others, it would not be possible to pursue this mission endeavour in Eastern Europe.

We look to the Lord to prosper this small work. It is the Saviour who has said, "The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof." Matthew 13: 31,32.

(Rev.) Donald A. Ross

Church Information

Meetings of Presbyteries (D.V.)

NORTHERN: At Dingwall on Tuesday, 17th June, at 2.00 pm.

SOUTHERN: At Glasgow on Tuesday, 24th June, at 6.00 pm.

WESTERN: At Laide on Tuesday, 24th June, at 6.00 pm.

SKYE: At Portree on Tuesday, 24th June, at 11.00 am.

OUTER ISLES: At Stornoway on Tuesday, 17th June, at 1.00 pm.

ZIMBABWE: At Bulawayo on Tuesday, 10th June, at 11 am.

Acknowledgements of Donations

THE GENERAL TREASURER acknowledges with sincere thanks the following donations:

Bookroom Fund: Anon, £15.45.

Jewish and Foreign Mission Fund: A.A. Berman, Holland, £29.20, per Bookroom; Anon, Canada (April), Can \$100; Presbyterian Reformed Church, for J. Tallach School, £10.

Magazines Free Distribution: A friend, Skye, £10.

CONGREGATIONAL TREASURERS acknowledge with sincere thanks the following donations:

Breasclete: *Sustentation Fund:* Friend of Cause, £20; *Door Collection,* Friend of Cause, £20; *Church Funds,* S.G., £10; *For Collections,* Friend of Cause, £50, all per Treasurer.

Dingwall and Beaully: *Dingwall Church Fund:* Family of the late Mr George Ross, £25.

Gairloch: *Congregational Fund:* Friend, Skye, £60; Friend, Skye, £60; Friend, Skye, £20; Friend, Lewis, £10; all per Rev. A.E.W. MacDonald. *Sustentation Fund:* Anon, £20; Anon, £10; both in church plate.

Glasgow: *Congregational Fund:* Anon, £70; *Communion Expenses,* Anon, £10; *Where most needed:* Anon, £60; *Fabric Fund:* Mr. J.M. MacL., £30; *Bus Fund:* Anon, £80; Anon, £10; *Bus Fund (South side):* Anon, £10; *TBS and Eastern Europe:* Anon, £65; *TBS:* Anon £10; *Sustentation Fund:* Anon £50; Anon £60; Anon £30; Anon £100; Anon £16; Anon, £ 50; Anon, £30; *Foreign Mission Fund:* Anon, £5; Anon, £240; Anon, £20; *Kenya FP Mission:* Anon £90; *African and Eastern Europe Missions:* Anon, £120; *Eastern European Fund:* Anon, £80; Anon, £120; Anon, £40; Anon, £100; *Dominions and Overseas Fund:* Anon, £20; *Home Mission Fund:* Anon, £20; *College and Library Fund:* Anon, £20; *General Building Fund:* Anon, £20; *Publications Fund:* Anon, £20.

Inverness: *Sustentation Fund:* Anon, Ballifeary, £40; Anon, £20; Anon, £2; Anon, £30; Anon, £40; Anon, £10; Anon, £5. *Kenya Mission:* Anon, £20, per envelope in plate; *Foreign Mission:* A.A. Berman, Holland, £10; *Tape Fund:* Anon, £10, Anon, £20.50; Anon, £10; all per D.M.; *Bus Fund:* "R&S Suth", £10, and £50.

Laide: *Sustentation Fund:* Mrs. Mack, £20; Friend, Kishorn, £20, both per Rev. D.A.R.; *F.P. Magazine Free Distribution Fund:* R.K., £20, per Rev. D.A.R.; *Congregational Fund:* Anon, £ 50, per collection plate; *Eastern Europe Fund:* N.H.R., £100 per collection plate; J.N., £20; D .A. MacL, £100; Friend, Ullapool, £20; all per Rev. D.A.R. S.C., for Bibles, £20; S.C., for travel expenses, £20; both per Rev. D.J.M.; Friends, Laide, £50; W.M., £10, per Rev. D.A.R.; J.M.J., N.Z., £50, per A.B; Friend, Laide, £10, per Rev. D.A.R; Anon, £40, per collection plate; Friend, Aultbea, £50; Friend, Gairloch, £10, both per Rev. D.A.R; Residents, Isle View Home, £9.30; Friend, £100, both per Rev. D.A.R.; *Italian Mission:* Friend, £50, per Rev. D.A.R.

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