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The Means of Grace

God, in His infinite love and mercy, has provided for the needs of sinners such as we are, out of the riches of His grace. In Christ Jesus is stored the infinite fulness of His grace and mercy and love. Our greatest need is that we would be partakers of His grace in and through the Lord Jesus Christ. The fulness is in Him and to Him we are to come to receive out of that fulness. As God has provided in Christ the riches of His grace, so also has He given the means whereby sinners, lost and undone in themselves, may obtain these riches. It is in the due use of the means of grace, and not in the neglect of them, that sinners are to be saved. There is one caution we would give in relation to these means. We are not to rely on the means as though they were a Saviour in themselves. They were not so intended. They are but a means to an end, even to the obtaining of the salvation that is in Christ Jesus. Through them we are led to Christ.

What are the means of grace? The first we would mention is the reading of the Word of God. It has pleased God to give us a written revelation of His will in the Scriptures of truth. The Bible has not been given to men to lie unused and dust covered on a bookshelf or in a cupboard. It is intended to be read, meditated on and prayed over. It contains a message from the God of heaven to the children of men. How unreasonable we would think it to be for someone who had received a letter from some distant place to leave it unopened and unread, and much more so if we knew that it contained news of a fortune awaiting the recipient of the letter. Such is the way of many with the Bible though it contains good news from a far country, even from heaven itself. This written revelation makes known to sinners, ready to perish, how they may be delivered from the wrath to come and be put in possession of eternal life. The Bible is a priceless possession as one of the chief means of grace for sinners. Without it men

can never attain to the knowledge of God, or to the knowledge of God as a reconciled God in Christ Jesus but in the due use of this means of grace. Surely then we ought to prize the Bible and make that use of it which Christ commands us in His Word. "Search the Scriptures", He said to the unbelieving Jews, "for in them ye think ye have eternal life and these are they which testify of Me". Of the Bereans it is said: "These were more noble than those of Thessalonica in that they searched the Scriptures whether these things were so."

Another means of grace is prayer. It has pleased God to set up a Throne of grace. This throne is set up in Jesus Christ. To this throne sinners are commanded to come. It was so in Old Testament times. Of the mercy seat, which was the throne of grace for them, it was said by God Himself: "There will I meet with thee, and will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims." That invitation remains open to sinners under the New Testament. We are to come to God through Jesus Christ. We are to approach the mercy seat pleading that Name that is above every name — the name of the Lord Jesus, who saves His people from their sins. How many have obtained mercy and grace at the footstool of mercy in approaching unto the God of salvation and seeking for their never-dying soul a free and a full salvation through a crucified, risen and exalted Saviour. What use, then, are we making of this means of grace in the pouring out of our hearts to God in fervent supplications at His footstool seeking mercy and grace to help in time of need? How neglected a means of grace this is so far as multitudes are concerned — and not only among those who are totally ignorant of its existence but also among those who ought to know better and whose neglect of it will be a witness against them in the Day of Judgment if they persist in the neglect of it. Let it not be so with us. Let us not perish in the neglect of the throne of grace. If we must perish let it be prostrate at the Throne of grace where no needy sinner ever perished.

The principal means of grace by divine appointment is the preaching of the Gospel. Because of this Satan has set up many counterfeits of it to lead sinners to destruction. But this is no excuse for the neglect of it. As men would value their souls, so they must search for the true preaching of the Word so that this means of grace may prove a blessing to them in their spiritual experience. It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. To the carnal eyes of men it is an instrument of little worth yet all the while it is the power of God unto salvation. How many souls have been blessed for eternity under the preaching of the Word! It proved indeed a potent means of grace to them. It is not only a means

of grace to bring sinners to salvation but also for believers to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. How many believing souls have, in the due use of this means, put on Christ more and more, and were changed more and more into His image. How much of good do men lose through their undervaluing and neglect of the preaching of the Word.

Another means of grace is found in the Sacraments which Christ has appointed and which are neglected and despised by many. Has Christ instituted these means of grace in His Church and are men to despise them and count them of little worth? If so, a day of reckoning must come. The ordinance of baptism, it is true, is to be administered but once, but the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is a feeding ordinance for the children of God, the neglect of which must have a retarding effect upon their growth. What comfort the people of God have enjoyed around the table of the Lord in partaking of the symbols of the broken body and shed blood of the Redeemer! What tokens of His love He has bestowed upon them at such a time, so that they were enabled to say in the secret of their soul: "My beloved is mine and I am his!" What living fellowship and communion they have at times enjoyed with their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and also with His believing people! Yet how much more they might have enjoyed if they had not been so careless in their approach to Him at His table. They are to seek preparation for such a solemn season and the Lord alone is able to prepare their hearts to seek Him.

The next means of grace we are to refer to is the singing of God's praises. This is a precious means of grace and has often led the gracious soul into foretastes of that heavenly joy which the people of God shall know throughout eternity in the singing of the praises of redeeming love. Through preaching and praying in the formal sense will end at death, the singing of the praises of Jehovah shall never end. As we sing His praises here who has redeemed us from death, should we not ask ourselves: "Shall I be praising Him eternally?" Those who in truth begin to praise the Lord here in time, will never cease to praise Him throughout the endless ages of eternity. What a song that shall be! What unison there shall be in the singing of that song! A song surely that will fill the angels' hearts with wonder. And what a wonder to those who shall be singing it that they were ever brought to sing it. This will only make the song rise higher. Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give glory, for Thy mercy, and Thy truth's sake.

The discipline of the Church of God is another means of grace but it is a large subject and we cannot go into it at present but of this we are

sure that many will be praising God eternally for the rod of correction administered in love by His own Hand or by the Courts of the Church.

How many then are the means of grace! Have they become in our experience means of grace to us for which we will be praising God eternally? If so, let us make even more diligent use of them than hitherto, so that we may enter in more and more to the riches of divine grace stored up in Jesus Christ, and enjoy that living fellowship and communion with the Lord Jesus Christ to which they lead the exercised soul.

Sermon

by Rev. D. Macfarlane, Dingwall. (Preached 17th Feb., 1918)

"And I will leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord" (Zeph. 3: 12).

The condition of the Church and the State as described by the prophet was lamentable but there was a remnant of godly people left in the midst of all the evils that existed in both Church and State. It is of this remnant our text speaks and we shall notice three things concerning them.

- I. That they were an afflicted and poor people;
- II. What God was to do with this remnant;
- III. How these people were supported in their affliction.

I. They were an afflicted and poor people. (1) They were afflicted. It is written that — "many are the afflictions of the righteous but that the Lord will deliver them out of them all at last." There are many things that cause affliction to the Lord's people — sin in themselves afflicts them, and they must be afflicted on that account till they are made perfectly holy. They are afflicted also when wicked men are in high places in the Church to bring it low, and to provoke the Most High to pour out His judgments upon them, and when rulers in the State are doing their utmost to ruin the Lord's cause. They are, also, afflicted by the many tribulations to which they are liable in this world. Some have more tribulations than others. These tribulations may affect mind or body or both. Some of the Lord's people have been known to be afflicted by losing the use of their reason which had the effect of bringing them into despondency or almost despair concerning the salvation of their souls. Those who have the use of their reason should sympathize with these and pray that the Lord would support them by His grace in their trying affliction. To see them afflicted by that malady causes affliction to their brethren who are free from it. Though Job's reason was not touched he had great affliction of mind and body as you may see in the account given of his sufferings. His friends who came to comfort him though they were good men

did not understand his case and charged him with having committed some great sin for which God was chastising him, but it was not for any particular sin that Job committed that he suffered so much in mind, and body, and property but for the trial of his faith and when the trial was over those who charged him with sin as the cause of his trouble were not accepted of God till Job prayed for them. It is dangerous to misjudge the Lord's people in their sufferings. Others are afflicted in their body as Lazarus was. There are some yet living who have been invalids from their youth while their mind was sound and clear on the Word of God. Though there is an intimate connection between mind and body so that what afflicts the one afflicts the other yet the affliction of the body is not so trying as the affliction of the mind. The temptations of Satan afflict them much. He is a "roaring lion seeking whom he may devour" and as he knows that he cannot devour the Lord's people he assaults them with manifold temptations. If he cannot tempt them to break God's law he takes another way to cause them trouble. He works very much on the imagination of man and cunningly draws a picture of the evils that are to befall them which sometimes terrifies them and leaves them restless and uncomfortable and although they have found him always a liar yet they believe him when he comes in another form and the nearer they come to their end in this world the more and the oftener he torments them with his temptations as he knows that his time of tempting them is short. He was so bold that he tempted our Saviour in the wilderness and no wonder that he tempts His people. But as Christ was tempted in all points like His people He is touched with the feeling of their infirmities. He is able to sympathize with them and succour them when they are tempted. "In all their afflictions He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them" (Is. 63: 9). But Satan's temptations are among the all things that work together for their good. It is for this reason that God permits the Evil One to tempt them. They are not so much afraid of Satan if he came to them as a naked, black spirit as they are when he becomes incarnate and assaults them by the agency of wicked men. Those of them who on account of their worldly calling have to mix with wicked men have experience of this. Lot in Sodom was vexed with the filthy conversation of his neighbours (II Peter 2: 7). (2) They are a poor people. One of the marks that Christ gives of them is that they are poor in spirit. Spirit here means the new nature or the new man. "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3: 6). The old man is never poor in his own estimation. They are not poor as to their rights for all things are theirs, Christ is theirs. The blessings of salvation are theirs. The Bible is theirs. The ministers of the gospel are

theirs. Grace and glory are theirs. They are not poor as if they had not received anything of the benefits of Christ's redemption, for they are justified, adopted, and partially sanctified but they are poor because they have not yet possessed all the good God provided for them. They are poor and yet they are rich. The richest spiritually of all men in the world. They may say with the psalmist: "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot. The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage" (Ps 16: 5, 6). To be afflicted and poor is characteristic of them during their time in the world, but the time is coming when they shall neither be afflicted nor poor. At death when they leave this world they shall leave behind them forever all their afflictions and all their poverty. They shall be put in possession of the glorious inheritance of which they received the earnest on earth. The psalmist said while on earth: "I am poor and needy yet the Lord thinketh upon me" (Ps. 40: 17).

II. What God is to do with this afflicted and poor people. He says I will leave them in the midst of thee. (1) While He is to destroy others and to remove them out of the world by His judgments He is to spare these and leave them in the world. It is a mercy that the Lord leaves the remnant of His people on earth when many others are removed from it by His judgments. When God destroyed the old world by a flood He preserved alive Noah and those with him in the Ark. When so many of our fellow creatures are removed from the world in the present terrible War the great majority of whom are lost for ever in eternity it becomes us to say: "It is of the Lord's mercy that we are not consumed." (2) He leaves them to be witnesses for Him in the world. If the Lord's people were all removed from the world He would have no witnesses on earth but however low the cause may come He never leaves Himself without a witness — "And ye also shall bear witness" (John 15: 27). They shall be left in the world so long as the Lord has work for them to do, and also so long as He has a work to do in them by His Spirit, and when their work for Him is finished and His work in them is completed He removes them from the world and raises up others to witness for Him. (3) He leaves them as a seed in the church from which shall grow a rich crop of believers. The farmer is careful to preserve the seed which he is to sow and so God is. When He destroyed the world by a flood He kept the seed in the ark. However few the Lord's people are in our own day there is a remnant left as a seed from which is to spring the rich crop that shall cover the earth in the glorious period of the millennium, which period is drawing nearer every day.

III. How these people are supported in their affliction. It is by trusting in the name of the Lord — “And they shall trust in the Lord.” The word trust here is translated in Gaelic; *hope*. It means both trust and hope. They rely upon Him with confidence and they hope in Him to support them in their affliction. (1) They have the grace of hope wrought in them by the Holy Spirit. (2) There is the exercise of that grace — they shall put their trust or hope in the name of the Lord. The Lord is the object of their hope and they hope in His name. That is as He revealed Himself in His Word. The Word is the means by which they put their trust in Him and they cannot be in any condition but there is something in the revelation the Lord gave of Himself in the Scriptures to encourage and support them. “The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it and is safe” (Prov. 18: 10). “He has magnified His Word above all His name” (Ps. 138: 2). The works of creation reveal Him as the Creator, but the word of the gospel reveals Him as the God of salvation. They that know His name in the revelation of the gospel shall put their trust in Him (Ps. 9: 10).

Oh! the need we have in this time of trouble and distress to flee to Christ for refuge as the psalmist did. “I flee unto Thee to hide me” (Ps. 143: 9). And the need we have of trusting in His name when Germany and her Allies are doing their utmost to destroy us as a nation. If we as a nation trusted in the name of the Lord more than in weapons of war and numbers of soldiers, though these are not to be despised, we would gain the victory over our enemies. Prayer is a powerful weapon to gain the victory. We have heard that in time of war in the past in which this nation was involved a godly man in the north spent a whole day in prayer pleading with God that He would give the victory to our soldiers over their enemies. After the war came to an end an officer came to the Highlands and met with a friend who brought him to the praying man’s house, and when he saw the man he said: “I saw you before.” The man asked: “Where?” and he replied: “In such a place abroad.” The man said: “I never left the Highlands; you could not have seen me.” The officer said: “I did see you. On such and such a day there was a battle fought and I saw you walking up and down between us and our enemies. So that at last they got terrified of us and fled away.” Then he asked the man: “Do you remember anything you were doing on that day?” The man said: “I do; knowing that there was a great battle on that day I spent the whole day praying that God would defeat your enemies.” This is an instance of the power of prayer. In these days when the enemy is making a great effort in France to destroy our Army we should pray for our soldiers day and

night that they might be protected and made victorious over our enemies and God is the hearer and answerer of prayer. When a large multitude came to war against Judah, King Asa cried to the Lord and said: "Lord it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many or with them that have no power: help us, O Lord, our God; for we rest on Thee, and in Thy name we go against this multitude. O Lord, thou art our God; let not man prevail against Thee. So the Lord smote the Ethiopians before Asa, and before Judah and the Ethiopians fled" (II. Chron. 14: 11, 12). When David went to fight with Goliath he said to his antagonist: "Thou comest to me with a sword and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand, and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day to the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel and all this assembly shall know that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the Lord's and He will give you into our hands" (I. Samuel 16: 45-47). David trusted in the name of the Lord and gained the victory over his enemy. The German Emperor defies the armies of Israel and the God of Israel and, however long he may continue his ambitious struggle it is to be hoped that he shall be defeated at last, but the sooner we as a nation come to acknowledge the Almighty and turn to Him with repentance the sooner the victory shall come. Are you afflicted for our young men in the trenches in mud up to their knees and for the great multitude of them killed in this war? Or whatever your affliction may be — trust in the name of the Lord.

The Lord our Righteousness

by Rev. Dr. Robert Gordon

(Continued from Page 226)

Jeremiah 23: 5,6

Such is the plan of redemption, — the principle on which sinners are accepted and dealt with as righteous in the sight of God, as that principle is here stated, and more fully unfolded and explained in the New Testament. And I doubt not many will be ready not only to acquiesce in this statement as scriptural, but to conclude that none who are in the slightest degree acquainted even with the most elementary truths of the Gospel, the first principles of the oracles of God, and who profess to believe in Christ, can hesitate to acquiesce in it also, or can conceive of any other

ground of acceptance with God than that which has now been stated.

I wish I could think that all who profess to believe in Christ for salvation did thus clearly see, and understand, and approve of the one only ground of acceptance. But I fear it is far otherwise; I fear there are many professing Christians who have very indistinct or confused notions as to the principle on which men are justified, or received as righteous in the sight of God. While, in some sense, they do take Christ's obedience and death into account, and professedly rely on Him, there is, at the same time, mixed up with this some notion of the mercy of God, and of their own repentance and reformation, as forming part also of the reason or ground on which they are to be received into favour. And thus they cherish a double delusion. They virtually say, on the one hand, that the righteousness of Christ is not, alone and in itself, a sufficiently sure and solid ground whereon to rest; and they virtually assume, on the other, that God will in mere mercy accept of something of theirs, which in reality has nothing of righteousness in it, and which, at all events, they will themselves acknowledge to be very imperfect.

Now, I know no consideration better fitted to dispel this delusion than the truth here stated, that Jehovah is His people's righteousness. Did they but believe and remember that no man, no intelligent and accountable creature, can approach God with acceptance, but on the ground of a perfect righteousness, they could not but feel that they have nothing to hope for from the mere mercy of God, and nothing in themselves in the strength of which they dared to look up to Him. They must have a perfect righteousness, — a righteousness which the law, in its inflexible rectitude and rigour, will recognise as perfect. Until they are clothed with this righteousness, God cannot regard them with favour, or accept them as righteous.

And if they really believed this, how anxiously would they inquire whether it was possible that they could ever become possessed of such a righteousness! And with what gratitude, and gladness, and wonder, would they receive the gracious assurance, that God in His mercy had provided such a righteousness for them, — that it has actually been wrought out and perfected in their name and their behalf, — and that the righteousness of which they may reap the benefit is the righteousness of Jehovah Himself! And if it be, to those who are earnest about their acceptance with God, a most precious and welcome truth, that such a righteousness has been provided, they will find a subject equally fitted to awaken their joy and call forth their gratitude in the manner, or the terms, if I may so express it, in which this righteousness is proposed to

be made available to them, — that is, reckoned to their account, as if it were their own. It is offered to them without money and without price. It is made over to their acceptance as a free gift. It is God's own testimony to them, that He has given them eternal life, and that this life is in His Son. And the moment that they believe this, and, with heart and soul, close with and accept the offer, the perfect righteousness which Christ has wrought out becomes theirs.

And yet it is at this point that they will often hesitate and doubt, before they cordially embrace Christ and rest upon Him. And it were not wonderful, perhaps, that when they first begin to discern the divine generosity, the unsearchable depth of divine grace, in thus making over to them the perfect righteousness of Christ to be theirs, — I say it were not, perhaps, wonderful, when they first perceive this, that they should doubt, and be ready to say, It is too great, and too glorious to be true; just as it is said of the disciples, that when they were told that their Lord was risen, they "believed not for joy". But there are often, I fear, other grounds of doubting than this. Self-righteousness is one of the many delusions and lamentable inconsistencies which characterise man's fallen nature; and even when sinners are convinced that they cannot work out a perfect righteousness for themselves, they will cling to the idea that they must do something to entitle or to qualify them for receiving and profiting by that which Christ has wrought out for them. But, all the while, it is offered to them, nay, pressed upon their acceptance, without money and without price, — and if they receive it, it must be as a gift; if they are justified, it must be "freely", "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus;" for "by grace" are they "saved through faith," and that not of themselves; "it is the gift of God".

But if it be wonderful that a perfect righteousness should have been wrought out on behalf of those who had no righteousness of their own, and must, therefore, have perished for ever, — and if it be wonderful, also, that this righteousness is freely made over to them, and becomes theirs the moment they accept it, — is it not, if possible, still more wonderful that any creature, not to say a guilty and polluted creature, should have such a righteousness imputed to him, and that he should be dealt with as if it were his own? It is not enough to say of it that it is a perfect righteousness. This is true of the righteousness of unfallen angels. They have never sinned. Their obedience, from the first hour of their existence, has been a cheerful, a uniform, an unsinning obedience. They have obeyed the commandments of the Lord, "hearkening unto the voice of His word," and doing His pleasure. According, therefore, to their capacity, and the

extent of their powers and faculties, their righteousness is perfect; and while they approach God with reverence, covering their faces with their wings, they approach Him also with confidence, knowing that as the righteous God he will award to them what He has inseparably connected with righteousness namely, the enjoyment of His own favour and fellowship. But perfect as their righteousness is in itself, and sufficient though it be for their appearing with approbation in the presence of God, and for being regarded by Him with complacency, still it is but the righteousness of mere creatures, who will themselves acknowledge that they have done only what it was their duty to do.

How glorious, how exceeding glorious in comparison is that righteousness in which redeemed sinners of mankind stand clothed in the presence of God, and are accepted in His sight! And how marvellous that any should seek to unite with this white and spotless robe the filthy rags of their own righteousness, as if they would thereby secure more of God's approbation and complacent regard! That robe in which Christ would array them infinitely exceeds in glory and beauty any thing in which the highest and holiest of God's intelligent creatures ever stood arrayed in His presence. It is the righteousness of a divine person, even God's own righteousness. It has not only satisfied the divine law in a twofold manner, — that is, by bearing the punishment which the law awards to transgression, and fulfilling what it requires in the way of obedience; but it has magnified the law and made it honourable.

And what does not such a righteousness deserve at the hand of the Lawgiver and Judge in the way of reward? It is not enough to say that it is sufficient for the justification of every sinful child of Adam to whom it is imputed, and that Christ has redeemed His people from the curse of the law, having bought them with His own blood. There is no blessing which He is not entitled to claim on their behalf. We have already seen how full of consolation the promise we have been considering must have been to the suffering Church of the old time, when they were assured that the days would come when the people of God would participate in all the benefits and blessings which the promised King of David's house would, in virtue of His righteousness, be entitled and authorised to dispense. These blessings or benefits, it is true, are set forth as temporal privileges; for the promise was, "In those days Judah shall be saved and Israel shall dwell safely." But temporal blessings did not exhaust the promise. These were employed, generally, under the old dispensation, to represent or figure forth all the blessings of the great salvation, and by the true Church they were valued not merely on their own account, but also and especially as

tokens of the divine favour, — as channels through which He conveyed to them the assurance of His love. And such must have been, in a peculiar manner, their view of this promise, when they were assured that the righteous King, under whom they were to enjoy prosperity and peace, should be called, JEHOVAH THEIR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

And how fully have the largest and brightest of the anticipations of the Old Testament Church been realised in the representations which the New Testament gives of the privileges of believers, — of the grace provided for them here, and of the glory prepared for them hereafter! Not only has Jehovah their Righteousness procured for them acceptance with God, and restoration to the blessedness which they had forfeited and lost by their apostasy; He has provided for their exaltation to a state of honour and distinction, which we do not find ascribed even to principalities and powers in heavenly places. It was His prayer for them before He left this earth, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which thou hast given Me." The import of this prayer is more fully brought out by the apostle when he says, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!" "Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." And lastly, another apostle has said of himself, and of all true believers, "Ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit Itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together."

Two Acts of the Third Synod of Charenton — 1645

Act against Religious Adoration of the Host

Forasmuch as that religious adoration given by the Church of Rome to their pretended consecrated host, in its public service, and whenever it is carried in procession to the sick, has for its sole foundation, this false supposition, that it is by the Priest's consecration properly made the self-same body, which was taken out of the womb of the blessed Virgin by the Eternal Son of God, and united to His Divine Person, unto which belongs both before and since His incarnation the empire of glory and religious worship most strictly and properly so-called, and not unto His

humanity separated from it: that the Church of Rome neither renders to, nor requires for its consecrated host any other adoration than that of *latria*; and the professors of our religion are in this point of another faith, believing this host after consecration to be that very self-same insensible and inanimate matter which it was before, and cannot, if they will follow the dictates of their own consciences, and the prime and fundamental verities of Christianity ascribe divine adoration unto a thing which by nature is not God, nor transfer the glory of the Eternal God from him unto the basest of creatures.

This Synod therefore does adjure all of them, by that profession they make of serving the Lord in purity and sincerity, and by that irreparable prejudice they do the truth, but their rash and inconsiderate impugning of it; and to their own consciences, which are shamefully betrayed by them; and to their countrymen of the Romish Communion, whom they confirm in their superstitions; and to weaker Christians among ourselves, whom by such a vile example, utterly unbecoming that worthy Name that is called upon them, they learn to prevaricate in religion, that they would once again return unto themselves, and mourn bitterly in the presence of the great God, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, for that by this sin of theirs they have profaned His glory. And the Synod ordains, that when as the host shall be carried in procession, or to the sick by those of the Romish Church, every one do withdraw himself from the sight of it, that so no scandal may be given unto their neighbours.

And whereas some, who do not step out of the way, do feed themselves with this frivolous imagination, that they may tarry and see it, though they do not, as those of the Romish Church, let out their thoughts to a religious adoration of the host; yet if their bodily presence be voluntarily at it, it is a kind of approbation of it. And whereas some, out of a sordid and servile spirit, do comply with the received custom, in taking off their hats when the host passes by, which, say they, is not for its sake, or any reverence to it, but only out of respect and honour to the curate or vicar who carries it, or of the persons which accompany it; this is sinful, because they do not conform themselves to their intention whom they pretend to gratify; and they yield only a civil salutation, where the Romish Church ordains religious worship to be paid and performed, bestowing it on another object besides that proposed by her; which acts of theirs are directly contrary to the received maxims of civility among all men, in that they honour, though not as the Church of Rome professes to do, the Lord of glory, but in His presence, and to His contempt, a priest, who says he is called to serve Him, and this in that very proper act of worship, yield-

ed by him as he pretends unto his God. Besides, this is contrary to all Christian sincerity, which requires our actions to be true copies and transcripts of our hearts, and not fallacious feignings of that which is not only not our intentions, but is formally contrary to them, which is a most mischievous trick and abuse put upon those who see and converse with them. Yea lastly, this is contrary to those glorious patterns and examples of the primitive and ancient Christians, who being in no wise able to brook such disguises, did repute and esteem them most sacrilegious impieties, and would rather expose themselves to many deaths, than to swerve from the least tittle of that fidelity and allegiance they had sworn unto God at their baptism.

Wherefore this Synod ordains, that such offenders be strictly and carefully admonished not to persist in their hypocrisies; for with whatever glosses and fine pretexts they may colour it over, it is an open mockery and scorn both of God and man, a grievous scandal to their brethren, and a mortal wound to their own consciences. And in case they shall obstinately abide in their impious resolutions, then all Consistories are enjoined to pursue and prosecute them with all Church censures, as being persons utterly unworthy of communion with the saints of God. And that none may pretend ignorance of this Act, let it be read and notified publicly in all places and congregations where it be judged needful.

Act for a National Fast

Forasmuch as the patience and longsuffering of God which leadeth men to repentance, has been horribly despised by them so that His just wrath and indignation has burnt like fire against them for their great ungodliness in every nation and country in Christendom, and yet this fierce anger of God is not turned away, but His almighty arm is stretched out still; and that devouring wars by reason of the obdurateness and impenitency of sinful men, do menace them with utter ruin and desolations: the National Synod assembled by His Majesty's permission at Charenton, considering that the only means for the removing of so great and so sore judgments, is the conversion of sinners, and the humbling and abasing of their haughty hearts before the glorious tribunal of that great God whom they have so much provoked to jealousy: and whereas it is the indispensable duty, and should be the perpetual practice of all Christians to become new creatures, to purge themselves from dead works, and to serve the most holy God in all holiness, righteousness and true godliness: the National Synod exhorts all the faithful in general and particular, to offer unto the Lord of glory whom they have exceedingly dishonoured, the reasonable sacrifice of a

contrite and broken heart, and to lie prostrate in all humility and sincere repentance, at the feet of His Divine Majesty. And Provincial Synods are all of them required to proclaim public and solemn fasts in their respective divisions, according as their public or private necessities may demand. And now that the grace and mercy of our infinite and almighty God may be implored, and His blessing and favour obtained for the establishing of a universal peace, for the settling of the kingdom, for the conservation of His Majesty's sacred person, for His Divine benedictions upon his youth, for the glory of his crown, and the happy success of his armies under the lawful government of the Queen Regent, and for the prosperity of the whole Royal Family; it is decreed, that a solemn Day of Fasting and prayers be observed and celebrated in all the Churches of this Kingdom upon the Fourth Day of May now next ensuing; and that the faithful may be prepared for the religious observance of it, public notice shall be given to them by all Pastors from their pulpits, by reading of this present Act.

The Millennium

by Rev. K. D. MacLeod

(Continued from Page 268)

We have already tried to demonstrate, in opposition to A-Millennialism, that there is an extensive period of world-wide blessedness before the church of God. We must now consider explicitly the relation of the Millennium to the second coming of Christ, which is where we find the dividing line between Pre-Millennialism and Post-Millennialism. The question is, Will Christ come again before the Millennium, as Pre-Millennialists believe, or afterwards, which is the Post-Millennial view? A minor detail surely, one might think. On the contrary, "Pre-millennialism," to quote David Brown, "is no barren speculation — useless though true, and innocuous though false. . . . It impinges upon and affects some of the most commanding points of the Christian faith; and, when suffered to work its unimpeded way, it stops not till it has pervaded with its own genius the entire system of one's theology and the whole world of his spiritual character, constructing, I had almost said, a world of its own".¹³

I do not propose to discuss in any detail that particular variety of Pre-millennialism known as Dispensationalism. Its name derives from the idea that the history of the world can be divided into seven *dispensations*, some of which turn out to be perfectly arbitrary. Dispensationalists hold, in particular, that the present dispensation is that of the Church, an institu-

13. Brown, p 6.

tion which they are quite unable to trace in the whole of Old Testament prophecy. On their theory the Church has come into existence only because the Jews refused the offer by Christ of the Kingdom, while He was on earth, and the Kingdom was accordingly postponed until after the second advent. Dispensationalism teaches also that no part of Revelation, chapters 4-19, has yet been fulfilled. There must first be the Rapture, when Church will come to raise the righteous dead and, at the same time, and equally unnoticed by the wicked, He will carry the living saints away to meet Him in the air, where they will all remain with Him for seven years. These seven years form what they call the Tribulation period, when they believe all the woes of those 16 chapters in Revelation will fall on the world. At the end of this period they expect Christ to return to earth with His saints; Antichrist and his forces are to be destroyed in the battle of Armageddon, and the Kingdom is to be set up on earth. The Jews are then to be converted, simply by seeing Christ physically, and are to have a specially favoured place in Christ's Kingdom.

These ideas are largely unique to Dispensationalism and are opposed by more traditional forms of Pre-millennialism. We are not going to wait to answer them; in any case, if Pre-millennialism is itself in error in believing that the Millennium is to be brought about through Christ's physical presence in the world, then the whole system of Dispensationalism falls to the ground with it.

Literal interpretation of Scriptures is the watchword of Pre-millennialism. It is often applied to the prophecies in a way that ignores the clear teaching of other parts of Scripture. So if Ezekiel speaks of the temple and of sacrifices they feel bound to interpret the temple as a literal Millennial temple at which actual animal sacrifices are to be offered. Even a respected commentator like Andrew Bonar can speak like this, albeit conjecturally, about Ezekiel's temple: "Believing nations may frequent that temple in order to get understanding in these types and shadows. They may go up to the mountain of the Lord's house to be taught there His ways. In that temple they may learn how not one tittle of the law has failed. . . . At all events, it is probable that this much-neglected book of Leviticus shall be fully appreciated".¹⁴

Yet take a verse like, "And it shall come to pass that every one that is left of all the nations that came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles" (Zec. 14: 16). In the face of the sheer practical difficulty

14. Bonar on *Leviticus*, 1972 reprint, p 6f. In spite of this remark Bonar has provided a first-class exposition of a difficult part of Scripture.

of the people of all these nations descending on one city at one particular point in every year, what happens to Pre-millennial literalism?

Evidently then the principle of literal interpretation is not inviolate. And at least some varieties of this type of thought allow themselves to interpret Peter's prediction of the end of the world, for instance, without any regard for its literal and evident meaning: "The heavens and the earth shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (2 Pet. 3: 10). Such interpreters say that only some nations are to be destroyed. Thus T. R. Birks, a nineteenth-century Pre-Millennial writer, speaks of endless "successive generations of the redeemed throughout the course of the ages to come," and he claims that at the day of judgement "the faithful that are then living are passed over in silence, and the natural conclusion seems to be, that from them the new earth is peopled with holy and righteous generations".¹⁵ Ideas of this kind are in direct opposition to the plain teaching that we are given in Scripture of the absolute finality of the day of judgement, "for we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ" (2 Cor. 5: 10). It is not necessarily an easy matter to determine whether particular passages are to be interpreted literally or figuratively, but when a particular approach to a passage leads one to say what is contrary to the clear teaching of some plain passage of the Bible then that approach, be it figurative or literal, is obviously wrong.

Robert Dabney was in no doubt that Pre-Millennialism is an unbelieving response to the lack of progress which the Church has yet made in evangelising the world. For the Pre-Millennial conclusion quite blatantly is that the present agencies committed to the Church are manifestly inadequate for the spiritual conquest of mankind. In opposition to this Dabney points out that "the temper which Christ enjoins on us is one of humble, faithful, believing diligence in the use of those agencies, relying on His faithfulness and power to make them do their glorious work."¹⁶ In disparaging the means already at the disposal of the church there is a disparagement also of the Holy Spirit, whereas, as Dabney also points out, "Christ represents the presence of the Holy Ghost, and this His dispensation, as so desirable, that it was expedient for Him to go away that the Paraclete might come."¹⁷

The Saviour went on to declare that "when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment." (Jn 16: 8), which surely makes it crystal clear that, if the world has not yet yielded allegiance

15. Quoted by Brown, p 171.

16. Dabney, *Systematic Theology*, 1985 reprint, p 839.

17. Ibid.

to Christ, it is not because the power at present available is insufficient. The same conclusion follows from the final commission given by the Saviour to His disciples, "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28: 19f). Quite clearly Christ is still present on earth, though not physically so. And if we consider seriously the power of the Holy Spirit — for it is through the Spirit that Christ applies redemption — there can be no limit to the effects of the preaching of the gospel and the reading of the Scriptures.

The Scriptural basis claimed for Pre-Millennialism is to be found in commands like, "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh" (Matt. 15: 13), and in statements like, "The coming of the Lord draweth nigh" (Jas. 5: 8). How can we take such commands and statements seriously, it is argued, unless we believe that Christ may come personally to this world at any moment? The fact is, however, that the Bible speaks of the coming of Christ in more than one sense. Having spoken Himself of "the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory", Christ went on to say, "This generation shall not pass away till all these things be fulfilled" (Matt. 24: 30,34). It is clear that the Saviour was there referring to His coming in providence to judge Jerusalem, in AD 70. Such a coming of Christ is, however, typical of His coming at the end of time to judge the whole world. On the other hand Paul declares how Christ "*came* and preached peace" in Ephesus, (Eph. 2: 17), evidently not in person, but by His ambassadors. Fairbairn points out that all such descriptions "are alike in connecting the Lord's personal presence with events, whether of mercy or of judgment, which bore materially on the well-being of His people, or on the power and policy of their enemies."¹⁸ Clearly they do not necessarily imply Christ's physical presence on earth, which, in particular, is not to be the cause of the spiritual prosperity of His church during the Millennium.

Solely on the strength of the passage we have referred to in Revelation, chapter 20, pre-Millennialists hold that there will be two resurrections from the dead, first a resurrection before the Millenium of all the righteous who have lived before then, and a second resurrection afterwards of everyone else. In spite of the fact that there is no mention elsewhere in Scripture of more than one resurrection, they insist on interpreting the first resurrection as a bodily resurrection. There is indeed no difficulty

18. Fairbairn, p 446.

about interpreting this as a spiritual resurrection, for Christ describes the beginning of new life in the soul as a resurrection (see John 5: 24f). The picture is further complicated by those who believe in the continued presence of generations of the righteous on earth after the Millennium. So complicated can these schemes become, and so various are these schemes, that this endless complication and variation itself makes it unlikely that the Pre-Millennial system is true. But it is, in fact, inconsistent with the Westminster Confession of Faith statement, "At the last day such as are found alive shall not die, but be changed; and all the dead shall be raised up with the self-same bodies, and none other, although with different qualities, which shall be united again to their souls for ever" (32: 2). And the Confession of Faith is just summarising the teaching of Scripture.

Because Pre-Millennialists believe in a resurrection of the righteous before the Millennium, it is not surprising to find them arguing for a day of judgment at the same time, exclusively for the righteous. But if there is to be but one resurrection there can be only one judgment day, which is the teaching of the verse already quoted, "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ." It is teaching which also appears in that oldest of confessional documents, the Apostle's Creed, which states that Christ "ascended into heaven and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, from whence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead," that is, to hold one judgment and one only.

The Larger Catechism teaches equally emphatically that the last day is the time of the one resurrection and the one judgment: "The members of the invisible church . . . rest in their graves as in their beds, till at the last day they be again united to their souls. Whereas the souls of the wicked . . . remain in torments and utter darkness, and their bodies kept in their graves as in their prisons, till the resurrection and judgment of the great day" (Q 86). And in an earlier answer it is quite as explicit about Christ's second coming: "Christ . . . shall come again *at the last day*" (Q 56).

The revelations in Scripture concerning the glory of the latter days have not been given merely to instruct us intellectually. The design of prophecy, to quote Charles Hodge, "was not to anticipate history, to enable us to read the future as we do the records of the past. Its great object was to keep alive and active the faith and hopes of the people in the exceeding great and precious promises which had already been made."¹⁹

It is therefore no surprise to find John Owen thus instructing his hearers as to how they might meet with God's design of casting down all opposi-

19. In his introduction to J. B. Ramsey on *Revelation*, 1977 reprint, p 29.

tion to the kingdom of His Son:

“First. *By faith*. Believe the promises, close with them, act faith upon them, and you will believe the beast unto destruction, antichrist into the pit and Magog to ruin. Believe that the enemies of Christ shall be made His footstool, that the nations shall be His inheritance, that He shall reign gloriously in beauty, that He shall smite in pieces the heads over divers nations. Live in the faith of these things, and, as it will give you the sweetness of them before they come, so it will hasten their coming beyond the endeavours of thousands, yea, millions of armed men.

“Secondly. *Meet Him with your supplications*. Cry unto Him as Psalm 45: 3-5, ‘Gird Thy sword upon Thy thigh, O most Mighty, with Thy glory and Thy majesty. And in Thy majesty ride prosperously, because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and Thy right hand shall teach Thee terrible things. Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the King’s enemies, whereby the people fall under Thee’. This will make you be the armies of heaven, that follow Him in His great undertakings (Rev. 19: 14). It is His praying people that are His conquering armies that follow Him. Now you find it coming, leave not pulling with all your strength, lest it roll back again. Shoot not two or three arrows and so give over; but never leave shooting till the enemies of the Lord be all destroyed.”²⁰

But, beyond it all, it is especially to the second coming of Christ that we are to look, *that day* in Paul’s expression, against which he had committed the keeping of his soul to Christ. So he speaks of “looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Titus 2: 13). And beyond the judgment there is for the believer the everlasting blessedness of heaven, to be enjoyed in his complete person, body and soul having been brought together again at the resurrection. As Jonathan Edwards points out, “All the glory of the glorious times of the Church on earth is but a faint shadow of this her consummate glory in heaven.”²¹ Yet in a dark day what encouragement there is in looking forward to a time when the gospel will be so clearly seen as the power of God unto salvation, because of the great multitudes who throughout the world will become sincerely obedient to this gospel of the grace of God. For, as John Howe so aptly expressed it, “Religion shall not be an inglorious thing in the world always.”²²

20. Owen’s *Works*, vol 8, 1851 edition, p 335.

21. Edwards, p 342.

22. Quoted in Iain H. Murray, *The Puritan Hope*, 1971, p 254. This highly readable book shows clearly that the Puritans as a body very definitely believed in the future world-wide prosperity of Christianity. Murray also shows how this view lay behind the beginning of the modern missionary movement, and how support for this view only faded with the general weakening of Scriptural Christianity in the nineteenth century.

Trinitarian Bible Society

(The following extract is taken from the Annual Report by the Administrative Secretary.)

Distribution

As in previous years, the Society continues to supply copies of the Holy Scriptures to ministers, churches, schools, hospitals, prisons and other institutions and individuals in need of the Word of God. The policy of the Society is to supply copies wherever possible, regardless of the ability of the recipients to contribute towards their cost. In many instances Scriptures are sold at a profit, others are sold at cost value or less, and others are granted free of charge. All profits from the sale of Scriptures, together with the generous gifts of the Society's members and friends, are used to subsidise sales in cases of need and to cover the costs of production and distribution of the Scriptures which are granted. In addition to the many tens of thousands of pounds used to subsidise the cost of sales, over £290,000 of the Society's income in the past financial year was spent on the cost of Scriptures granted free of charge. To this figure a substantial amount needs to be added to cover the distribution and other costs involved in this important aspect of the Society's work.

Scriptures in the English Language

In the English language the Society continues to publish only the Authorised (King James) Version. It is now 380 years since this translation of the Holy Scriptures was first published. Throughout its history the Lord's blessing has rested to a remarkable degree on its use here in the United Kingdom and throughout the English-speaking world. Many testimonies have been received by the Society during the past year of the continuing spiritual fruitfulness of this translation of the Bible in both the conversion and the establishing of the Lord's people in the Truth of His Word. Although many of the modern versions of the Bible in the English language may contain features which recommend them to a large proportion of the Christian public at the present time, not one of them is of a sufficiently high standard to be considered as a replacement for the Authorised (King James) Version.

The number of Bibles in the English language sold and granted during the financial year was 189,855, an increase on the previous year of 41,544 copies. The number of English New Testaments sold and granted during this period was 41,200, which, together with other items, made a total of 2,046,950 Scriptures distributed in the English language in the year. It is interesting and encouraging to note that for the second year running

there has been a substantial increase in the number of copies of the English Bible distributed by the Society both as sales and grants. May the Lord cause this trend to continue.

In addition to the Bibles and New Testaments supplied by the Society, a wide range of other English Scriptures have been distributed and profitably used. These have included Gospels, Scripture Booklets, Calendars, Posters, Leaflets and Text Cards.

Scriptures in Eastern Europe

The need for copies of the Word of God in Eastern Europe is immense. The Lord in His sovereign goodness has opened the door for the free circulation of His Word throughout the countries which a few years ago were behind the "Iron Curtain". In those lands, and especially in the Soviet Union, multitudes are seeking to obtain copies of the Holy Scriptures and every week the Society receives many requests from men, women and children who are evidently hungering for spiritual reality. During the year the Society sold or granted 180,259 Russian Bibles and 150,575 Russian New Testaments for distribution in the Soviet Union, 51,894 Hungarian Bibles for distribution in Hungary and Romania and 16,089 Polish New Testaments for Poland. The need in these countries where the Scriptures have been virtually unobtainable for so many years will continue to be exceedingly great in the years to come. The Society will, God willing, continue to provide considerable assistance wherever possible for the furtherance of the Gospel throughout Eastern Europe. Although the Society has not yet been able to publish Scriptures in the Romanian language, a project with this aim continues and it is hoped that something will be available in that language in due course. Meanwhile, work continues on the construction commenced earlier last year of a Bible Depot in Bacau in the North-East of Romania.

Scriptures for the Rest of the World

In addition to supplying copies of the Holy Scriptures in the English language and in some of the languages of Eastern Europe, the Society has supplied many tens of thousands of copies of the Bible and New Testament for distribution in other languages. These have included over 5000 Bibles and New Testaments in the Arabic language, 2500 Gio New Testaments for Liberians now living as refugees in the Ivory Coast, 2000 Pokot New Testaments for Kenya, 20,000 Kisanga Bibles for Zaire, 7500 Telugu New Testaments for India, 5500 Greek Bibles and New Testaments for Greece and Cyprus, 189,000 French Bibles and New Testaments for

France and other French-speaking parts of the world, 38,000 Spanish Bibles and New Testaments for the Spanish-speaking world, and (including those distributed by Gideons International) over four million copies of the Portuguese New Testament for Brazil.

Large quantities of the "Golden Thoughts" calendars, Gospels and other Scripture Portions and leaflets in these and other languages have also been despatched to convey the Word of Life to our fellow men throughout the world. It will be the prayerful desire of the Society's members and friends that these copies of the Word of God may, under the blessing of the Most High, be the means of spiritual profit to those who receive them.

The Society has continued to work on a number of translation projects during the year. One of these, the Kisanga Bible project, was brought to completion; it is hoped that several other projects will be completed during the next 12 months. In conformity with its policy of aiming to supply accurate and reliable translations of the Holy Scriptures based upon the Masoretic Hebrew Text and the Received Text of the Greek, the Society has decided to revise its edition of the French Bible. The prayers of all are sought that the Lord may be pleased to guide and direct all who will be engaged in this and other translation and revision projects which need to be undertaken by the Society.

Our Fellow Helpers

During the year the Society has received the prayerful, financial and practical support of many thousands of individuals and institutions throughout the world, reminding us of the inspired words of the sweet Psalmist of Israel, "The Lord gave the Word: great was the company of those that published it." We have valued this fellowship in the Gospel and extend our thanks to all who in various ways have assisted the Society in its work of publishing the Word of God among all nations.

"Reformed" Churches and "Reformed" Conferences

by **Rev. D. M. Boyd.**

The June 1991 issue of *Evangelical Times* carries a column attacking Billy Graham's Mission Scotland 1991. It states: "It is not at all surprising to discover that great numbers of modern 'evangelicals' are involved in this mission, but what is surprising — and profoundly disturbing — is the involvement of many 'Reformed' Christians and churches." It goes

on to document Billy Graham's errors and further states: "For our part, we cannot understand how men claiming to be Protestant and Reformed can support an evangelism which is obviously neither. An unscriptural pragmatism is abroad: 'Only by involvement can we hope to have young people referred to us.' This is the pragmatism to which the apostle referred — 'Let us do evil that good may come' (Romans 3: 8). Our duty is to 'separate' ourselves from Romanism and modernism (Romans 16: 17; 2 Corinthians 6: 14-18) and to 'withdraw' from all who walk disorderly (2 Thessalonians 3: 6, 14)."

This is just one example of some evangelicals giving a clear call to have no involvement in evangelical campaigns such as Billy Graham's. In marked contrast to this is the position of the Aberdeen A.P.C. who registered their congregation with the Billy Graham Mission, while their June 1991 congregational newsletter encourages the congregation to shake one of the elder's "by the right hand — that's the one which made physical contact with the most famous evangelist of this century!"

Notice that the quotation from *Evangelical Times* put the word "Reformed" in inverted commas. The columnist then said that he could not understand how men claiming to be Protestant and Reformed can support an evangelism which is obviously neither. The answer is, of course, in the inverted commas. They are not Protestant, and they are not Reformed.

The same problem is further illustrated on a subsequent page of the *Evangelical Times*. There is a report on the second annual Scottish Reformed Conference held in Stirling University. It is evident from this report that the Conference has an ecumenical aim for those that are "Reformed". The report also tells us: "To be 'Reformed' was defined by the organizers as holding to the classic expressions of Calvinistic theology as found in the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Baptist Confession of 1689." A similar statement appears in a report in the June 1991 issue of *The Monthly Record*: "The aim of the Conference is to recall Christians to the central importance of biblical preaching and to show the contemporary need to recover our largely lost heritage of Reformation theology."

This is wholly inadequate. It explains the need for the inverted commas around "Reformed" in this modern era. To be Reformed is more than theology. If one turns to the front cover of *The Free Presbyterian Magazine* one will see that this magazine has been drawing attention to its readership, for decades, that we are Reformed in Doctrine, Worship and Practice. We find it difficult to believe that the committee organising

this Reformed Conference did not know that there is more than Reformed theology, that there is also Reformed Worship and Reformed Practice. It may be, however, that if emphasis was placed on this, then the conference would not get off the ground. Hints in this direction are given in the report; e.g. "Those registering received a praise sheet . . ." (maybe there were not enough Psalters); "the committee suggested that a (Scottish) Reformed Fellowship would provide a forum to bring men of like mind into closer and more regular proximity to one another. The forum would . . . evoke in-house discussions on matters dividing the brethren, such as exclusive psalmody" (notice the presumption — it is exclusive psalmody which is divisive; is inclusive hymnody not so?); "the only low point of the day was the undercurrent of tension with regard to Mission Scotland 1991. Yet that is not new." The house is divided.

The recently published autobiography of Prof. G. N. M. Collins, *The Days of the Years of My Pilgrimage*, contains two chapters on the rise and fall of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod. We hope that some lessons will be learned for the proper course of Reformed ecumenism.

Another point worth noting is the conjunction of the word Protestant with Reformed. While these words have separate meanings, it is being overlooked that, historically, the word Reformed includes the slightly older concept of Protestantism. People who call themselves Reformed and who are not at the same time Protestant are not Reformed at all. Until the Committee improves its definition and aims, we suggest that inverted commas are appropriate — the Scottish "Reformed" Conference.

Mission News

Mr Vermeulen has written an account of his arrival in Kenya and of his assuming his duties once more. He said he was delighted with the new motor vehicle, as the old one was quite unreliable. Travelling long distances was now less of an ordeal. Two of the men came to see him in Nairobi to check up on details regarding the Church Constitution before applying for the registration of our Mission Church in Kenya.

Mr Vermeulen left for Sengera on Saturday morning, which meant a six hour drive. It is in Sengera that we have the small hospital. On Sabbath there was a Catechism Class before the first service. The Shorter Catechism is at present in Kiswahili, but the older people do not know Kiswahili. The local dialect is Kisii. They have Bibles in Kisii and now the men are concentrating on translating the Shorter Catechism into Kisii.

Mr Vermeulen says the work is slow and painstaking but well worth the trouble, if the people are to have a thorough grasp of the main doctrines.

Mesech, one of the men came to go over the accounts and bills with Mr Vermeulen as he had been paying the wages and bills during Mr Vermeulen's absence.

Mr Vermeulen and the Chief went around looking at school buildings. The first Pre-School class had begun last year. This class will now be Standard One. To Mr Vermeulen's surprise the Government has provided a teacher and will pay her salary. As the teacher belongs to our church she will give religious instruction according to our church teaching.

There are the same never-ending trips to the City Hospital with seriously ill patients, most of them suffering from malaria. Who can resist the pitiful plea, "Please help me. My child is dying. Will you please take us to hospital?" As fourteen people had died during the previous three weeks it was obvious that the cases were serious. "Humanly speaking", as Mr Vermeulen says, "if we had a doctor in Sengera many deaths might be prevented."

On Sabbath Mr Vermeulen went to Maiga congregation to speak and to Getumbe in the afternoon. The question is frequent, "Why are you not coming to our place?" "The harvest is great" — as the Saviour said. Why are the labourers so few?

J.N.

Notes and Comments

The Aids Epidemic

Press reports give some indication of the extent of this plague. In San Francisco in the last ten years 7,300 have died and another 30,000 are infected with the virus. In Malawi the World Health Organisation reports that 37 per cent of the population, which is just under 3 million, are infected with the Aids virus. Worldwide the number of cases officially reported in the last ten years was 366,455 spread over 162 countries. Notwithstanding this judgment of the Most High on the sin of sodomy, the governments of the countries affected have failed to outlaw the practice of sodomy, and consequently the plague has spread beyond the homosexual community so that the innocent suffer along with the guilty. The blindness of the leaders of the nations to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah will ensure that the plague will spread even further than is already the case. The supporters in Parliament, and outwith Parliament of the 'liberalising' of penal sanctions against sodomites have now to live

with what is the fruit of their perverted judgment. Only repentance on a national and worldwide scale will bring an end to this menace.

Sabbath Trading

The following letter from Mr J. G. Roberts, General Secretary of the Lord's Day Observance Society indicates the danger of further deregulation of Sabbath trading:—

Dear Mr Macleod,

Thank you very much for your letter on the 8th July enclosing a further gift towards the Society's ministry. As with previous gifts, we assure you of our deep gratitude and I would again ask you to convey to the Synod our real appreciation for remembering our work in this generous way, and at this needy time.

In June, the Society received an invitation to visit the Home Office and discuss with Senior Officials the issue of trading on the Lord's Day. We spent over an hour with them and this was followed by a further invitation to meet the Home Office Minister on the 11th July. This gave an opportunity to bring before the Minister the Biblical issues why we totally oppose Sabbath trading. We were given 40 minutes and felt the visit was most worthwhile.

However, we do feel that steps may be taken this autumn to introduce legislation which would attempt to further deregulate trading on the Lord's Day. We will prepare for this and act accordingly. Your prayers are greatly appreciated.

We do value the support and fellowship of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland as we seek to uphold this Divine Institution that has been such a blessing to our nation in past years.

I send my Christian greetings.

Yours sincerely,
John G. Roberts,
General Secretary.

Hyde Park Concert

An estimated 50,000 people gathered in Hyde Park in torrential rain to hear the tenor opera singer, Luciano Pavarotti. These included the Prince and Princess of Wales, the Duchess of York and the Prime Minister. If an opera singer can gather so many together on a night of torrential rain for worldly entertainment, what will it be like when the Gospel is once more preached in the power of the Holy Spirit, as it was in the days

of George Whitefield and others who were mightily used of the Lord to the ingathering of many souls to His Kingdom? For such a day of the Lord's power let us plead.

Increase in Abortion

In England and Wales the abortion rate has increased nearly three fold in the past twenty years. The Abortion Act was passed in 1967 and since then there have been more than three million abortions. How low our nation has sunk to permit such a colossal slaughter of children in the womb! Is it any wonder that life has become cheap and that violence is endemic throughout the country. The next step — the ending of the lives of the aged — is now called for by many. It is euphemistically called 'euthanasia' or 'the right to die with dignity.' Men reckon without God. He has said: "Shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?"

Ulster Violence

The attempt by the Northern Ireland Secretary of State to effect an agreement over Northern Ireland failed. The place given to the government of Eire in connection with the affairs of Ulster made it almost certain that no meaningful progress would be made. The Chief Constable of the Royal Ulster Constabulary warned that the province was facing probably the highest terrorist threat in the last two years. Of the 65 persons killed last year 46 were killed by Republicans.

The IRA, through their murderous campaigns, are still attempting to force Britain to abandon Ulster to its fate. So far the Government have not succumbed to this pressure and it is to be hoped that they will never do so. If the Roman Catholic Church had not been antagonistic to Britain the troubles in Northern Ireland would never have begun or have been carried on so long. The part played by the RC Church in these events will yet come to light.

Ministerial Visiting

The following letter appeared in the Church of Scotland magazine in August 1991: "I have been a member of various churches in Edinburgh since 1926. I cannot recollect a visit from a minister except when my husband died over 20 years ago, when the minister officiated at the cremation. I realise ministers are very busy people. What with baptisms, weddings, burials, cremations, plus visiting hospitals and the housebound, their time is really limited, but maybe they could spare a flying visit to

members who attend church regularly. I know many people would welcome a chat, especially the lonely."

We hope that no-one in the Free Presbyterian Church could write the same but, if so, we hope they are very few. When one contemplates the level of pastoral care evident by "various churches in Edinburgh since 1926", it is breath-taking. We are shocked beyond words that one "who attends church regularly" has not been visited in 65 years by a minister, except for bereavement. The preaching which has produced such remarkable patience — or is it indifference? — must have a similarly remarkable quality. There is surely food for thought here.

D.M.B.

Church Notes

Presbytery meetings (D.V.)

Northern: At Dingwall on 10th September at 2 p.m.

Southern: At Glasgow on 10th September at 6 p.m.

Western: At Laide on 17th September at 6 p.m.

Canadian: At Inverness on 1st October at 9 p.m.

Zimbabwe: At Bulawayo on 8th October at 2 p.m.

Outer Isles: At Stornoway on 15th October at 12 noon.

Australia and New Zealand: At Gisborne on 25th October at 2.30 p.m.

Halkirk Communion

The Kirk-Session has appointed a Communion Season in Halkirk for the second Sabbath of September, D.V. The services are expected to be held in the Halkirk Church on Thursday and Friday at 7 p.m.; Saturday 12 noon; Sabbath 11.30 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Monday 11 a.m. Any inquiries can be made to the interim Moderator, Rev D. M. Boyd, Inverness (0463 712872) who will be officiating at the Communion.

Eastern European Fund

Until now the work in Eastern Europe has been done under the auspices of the Religion and Morals Committee but it was decided at the Synod in May that it come under the Dominions and Overseas Committee and that a separate fund be set up for donations for Eastern Europe. The purpose of the Fund is to bring Bibles and Reformed literature into Eastern Europe, also food, clothing and medicines, and provide for visits to Eastern Europe from time to time. It is hoped a visit may be possible in October.

In the account detailing the cost for last year's visit to Eastern Europe

£4805 is shown for travel. Part of this was used for a visit to Italy and another part of it for medicines and food for Romania.

It is very necessary that we do what we can to spread sound teaching to these parts; and this is all the more urgent when the cults are using to advantage the freedom of movement now found in the USSR. One person from the USSR, not knowing the evil of Mormonism writes, "I was under a great impression of our meeting with the students and teachers from the state Utah, USA. We have, (our school), a correspondence with them for three years and not long ago we had a meeting . . . my friend gave me the Book of Mormon in Russian and a small book about saint Joseph Smith. It's rather interesting to read and compare with the Bible." I forwarded to this person the leaflet on Mormonism by the late Rev. W. MacLean, and other literature exposing this pernicious cult. We hope and pray that the seeds of error will not find a place in this person's heart nor in the school to which the Mormons have access.

Those who wish to contribute towards the work in Eastern Europe should forward their contributions to the Mr R. A. Campbell, General Treasurer, 133 Woodlands Road, Glasgow G3 6LE or Rev. D A Ross, Free Presbyterian Manse, Laide, Achnasheen, Ross-shire, IV22 2NB.

— D. A. R.

Induction at Bracadale

On a lovely summer evening, with Loch Bracadale in a placid mood, reflecting the beauty of the surrounding hills, a congregation of over 300 gathered to witness the Induction of Rev. George G. Hutton to the Bracadale Strath Free Presbyterian congregation. The pastoral vacancy which had lasted for 12 years, was now filled, to the joy of the people and Presbytery alike. On Tuesday, 16th July 1991 they came from the far flung corners of the church of their fathers, to express their gratification and interest in the Gospel, and the Free Presbyterian Cause in Skye.

With the Presbytery duly constituted by prayer at 6.30 p.m., and the Roll called, the other six ministers present were associated with the Skye Presbytery. The Clerk read the relevant part of the last Minute of Presbytery calling for this meeting. The Moderator called for the return of the Edict duly served and attested: the proclamation at the door of the church was made by Mr J. Campbell, the appointed Officer of Court, before Rev. D. Nicolson went to the pulpit and preached appositely from Jeremiah 8: 5-8. The sermon over, the Clerk gave a brief narrative of the steps taken in the Call to Rev. G. G. Hutton. Then the Moderator, Rev. A. M. Cattanach addressed to Mr Hutton the normal Questions put to

ministers on such a solemn occasion. Having answered these in the affirmative, Mr Hutton signed the Formula in the presence of the congregation. The Moderator now engaged in prayer, and solemnly admitted Rev. G. G. Hutton to the pastoral charge of the Bracadale Strath congregation; in token whereof he received the right hand of fellowship from the Moderator and fellow-Presbyters. Mr Hutton was suitably addressed by the Moderator, and the congregation by the Clerk. Of the associated brethren present, Rev. A. Macdonald, Gairloch from the Western Presbytery, Rev. D. J. MacDonald from the Outer Isles, a quondam minister of Bracadale, and Rev. Dr. B. Boyd from the North, were asked to speak. The Clerk tendered an apology for absence from Mr Thompson, Larne. Mr James A. Falconer, Clerk to the Deacons' Court of the Larne Free Presbyterian congregation, where Mr Hutton had previously laboured sent a message of goodwill. Letters in similar vein from Rev. J. A. MacDonald, Inverness, and Rev. L. MacLeod, Greenock, were also read by the Clerk. Presentations from the Bracadale Strath congregation were then made by the Moderator to Rev. D. Nicolson, Interim Moderator, and to Rev. G. Hutton respectively. Thereafter, the Clerk presented the new minister of the congregation with a beautifully inscribed Pulpit Bible, gifted by a Friend in memory of the late Mr Donald MacCaskill, elder, so long associated with, and devoted to our Cause, and so recently taken Home, to be for ever with the Lord. The praise which was hearty and harmonious, and reflected the delight of the people, was led throughout by Rev. Dr. J. Tallach. As the strains of the closing verses of Psalm 122 faded away, Mr Hutton went to the door of the church, where the congregation had the opportunity of shaking hands with the new pastor of the Bracadale Strath congregation. A sumptuous repast was prepared and served by the ladies of the congregation in a marquee erected for the occasion in close proximity to the church. There the friends were refreshed and mingled freely with each other.

We fervently pray that the ministry now begun, will be attended by Divine power and accompanied with spiritual signs following, to the glory of God.

Fraser Macdonald, Presbytery Clerk.

Glasgow Manse Address

From 29th August Rev. D. MacLean's address will be 104 Baronald Drive, Glasgow G12 0HY. Tel: 041 357 2315.

Edinburgh Services

From 15th September (D.V.) it is expected that our services will be held in Gilmore Place Church.

Acknowledgment of Donations

The General Treasurer wishes to acknowledge with sincere thanks the following donations:-

Larne per J. C. W. S. Friend of the Cause, £60 where most needed; £20 for Foreign Mission; £20 for Russian Bibles/Psalm Books per D. A. R.; £20 for Congr. Funds; Friend, Applecross per D. A. R., £5 for Sust. Fund; Envelope in plate, £20 for Sust. Fund; Envelope in plate, £30 for Sust. Fund; Envelope in plate, £20 for Foreign Mission; Envelope in plate, £5 for Building Fund; Envelope in plate £10 for Building Fund; Envelope in plate, £10 for Missionary work in Africa; K. & A. M. Glendale per G. G. H., £100 for Larne Congregation; A Friend, £5 for Free Distribution Fund; Mrs M., £20 for Free Distribution Fund; Anon., £10 for Rumanian Fund; Miss K. MacD., Vancouver, \$100 (Can.) for Dominions & Overseas Fund; Mrs J. & Miss W. S. per A. E. W. M., £50 for Kyle Congregation; Anon., Lochcarron per D. J. M., £12 for Kyle Congregation; Anon., £2 for Trinitarian Bible Society.

Zimbabwe per N. M.: Mrs C., Edinburgh, £10; Mr G. B. Wilts., £20; Bethel Strict Baptist, Luton, £55; Mr D. C., Luton, £20; Ullapool meeting, £222; Dingwall meeting, 343.80; Miss MacK., Laide, £50; N. Tolsta congregation, £106; Anon., £800; Glasgow congregation £715; Friend, Glasgow, £5; Mrs G., Bournemouth, £30; Mr C., Bath, £25; Larne congregation, £200; Lochcarron meeting, £300; Edinburgh meeting, £50; Mrs McP., Glasgow, £10; Miss N. M., Edinburgh, £10; Miss B. C., Edinburgh, £10.

The Treasurers of the following Congregations acknowledge with sincere thanks the following donations:-

Beaully: M. M. (Beaully), £20 for Comm. Exp.; Anon., £10, Inverness Postmark for Sust. Fund.

Bracadale: Anon., £10 per J.C.; Anon., £20 per Rev. G. G. H., both for Induction Exps.

Breasclete: Anon., £10; P. J. MacL., Tolsta Chaolais, £50, both for Sust. Fund; Friend of the Cause, £40 for Sust. Fund and £40 for Door Coll.

Edinburgh: Harris Friend, £10 for Congr. Fds, Anon., £1000 for Sust. Fd.

Glasgow: Matth. 6: 3, £10; Anon., £10; Anon., £5, all for Bus Fund; Anon., £5; Miss N. H., £5 per Rev. D. M.; Anon., £20, all for Sust. Fund.

Inverness: Anon., £20 for upkeep of church minibuses; Anon., £30; Anon., £10; Anon., £20, last three for Sust. Fund, all per envelopes in plate.

Lochcarron: J. L., £10 per R. Matheson for Door Coll.; Friend, Carnoustie, £60 for Church Funds.

Portree: Friend, £500 for Sust. Fund per N. B.; Wick Friends, £50 for Congr. Purposes per F. M.; Anon., £4.50; Anon., £20, both for Bus Fund, both by envelope in plate.

Raasay: In memory of dearly beloved ones, £20 by envelope in plate; Envelope in plate, £22; M. M., Beaully, £20, all for Comm. Exp.; Wellwisher, Inverarish, £25; Envelope in plate, £10, both for Car Fund.

Staffin: J. N. D., Portree, £100 "where most needed" (envelope in plate); M. M., Beaully, £20 for Comm. Exp. per A. M. I.

Uig: Mrs J., £20 per P. A. M.; Mrs C. MacR., £10; Anon., £20; Anon., £20; Anon., £15; Anon., £10, all for Comm. Exps., last five by envelope in plate; Friend, Stornoway, £10 per Rev. D. J. MacD.; From the estate of the late Miss M. Morrison, Valtos, £515.33, per MacDonald, MacIver & Co., Solicitors, last two "where most needed".