

Free Church Witness



JUNE 2004

PICTURES OF CHRIST
THE RAISING OF THE WIDOW OF NAIN'S SON
CHRIST THE VINE
LADY JANE CAMPBELL
LIFE OF JAMES BEGG — PART II
BILLY GRAHAM
LETTER FROM AFRICA



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Today marriage is under attack as never before. Divorce used to be rare but now almost every second marriage ends in divorce. A recent survey revealed that only 3% of couples are virgins when they marry. Many, rejecting God's law, argue that if they try out living together before getting married their marriages are more likely to be successful. This is utter nonsense as statistics show. If people treat the marriage bed so lightly that they are prepared to live together before getting married, is it any wonder that, when they feel the desire, they will indulge in adultery after marriage? God meant the union between a husband and wife to be for life. Those who marry promise to be loving, faithful and dutiful to one another through troubles, poverty or ill-health, "till death us do part". How much heartbreak and how many disturbed and delinquent children are the product of immoral parents? Millions in today's world are dying of AIDS but if God's pattern were followed there would have been no epidemic and even now this terrible disease could be quickly brought under control.

The Need for Marriage

The first few chapters of Genesis are foundational to all the rest of Scripture. Genesis 1 gives a general account of the origin of man who is made in the image of God, male and female, and given dominion over the whole world. Chapter 2 describes that creation in more detail. There is no contradiction between the two accounts. God formed Adam from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul (Gen.2:7). There are two parts to man. He has a body like the animals and a soul like God. Having created Adam, God brought to him the animals. Adam showed the divine image in him in naming the animals. He is a rational creature who has insight into all of life and thinks God's thoughts after Him. For Adam there was not found "an help meet for him" (v.20), a suitable partner. A pet like a dog can provide some companionship, but it is far below man and cannot rationally communicate with him. On the other hand, God offers fellowship to man and this is indeed a wonderful condescension on the part of God and an amazing privilege for man, but God is high above man. God saw that it was good for Adam to have a wife. Marriage is best for most people. Some may have the gift of singleness and not need to marry, but they still need the company of their fellowman. There is something seriously wrong psychologically or theologically with a person who chooses to live the life of a hermit.

The Creation of Woman

The account is fascinating. God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam and then performed an operation on him. He removed a rib and then closed up and healed the wound. Around that rib he built the woman, very like the man and yet distinctive and complementary. He brought her to Adam and it was love at first sight. Aware of where she had come from he exclaimed, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man" (v23). As Matthew Henry comments so beautifully: "The woman was made of a rib out of the side of Adam; not made out of his head to top him, nor out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved". The first woman was born from a

man and ever after, every man is born from a woman. Paul comments that the man has a certain headship over the woman, "For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man" (1Cor.11:8-9).

The First Marriage

God performs the first marriage. He takes Eve to Adam and joins them in wedlock. This takes place in the sinlessness of man's unfallen state. God, since then, has been present and active in every marriage, for Jesus says: "They twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Mk.10:8-9). We are assured that "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" (Heb.13:4). There are several requirements for marriage. Firstly, it involves a separation for "a man shall leave his father and his mother" (Gen.2:24). This is vital. Parents must be careful not to come between the married couple. It can be hard for the older couple because of the strong love that they have for their children, the natural desire to be with them, their judgment that their son or daughter's spouse is not good enough for them, the concern to advise them as in the past, the feeling that the children should be indebted to them for all they have done for them, and the parents' felt need of their children's labour. Scripture makes plain that while children should continue to honour and lovingly care for their parents their first responsibility now is to their spouses. A new home has been set up. So, secondly, there is to be a "cleaving" to their spouse. This involves a deep and growing love, a faithfulness that will let no one else come in between or break the "one flesh" bond, and a dutifulness which involves the individual in serving his wife, her husband, to the best of his/her ability. Our Lord said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35) and that is true in marriage too.

"Gay Marriage"

Lastly, marriage is to be between one man and one woman. Jesus stressed this when he said "From the beginning of the creation God made them male and female" (Mk.10:6). In today's world there is agitation from the homosexual lobby for "gay marriage". Although homosexuality has been practised in many cultures in the past "gay marriage" is something totally new. They say, "Homosexuality is simply a form of love. Why should we prevent two people who love each other from getting married?" But even apart from Scripture, the basic definition of marriage which has evolved through the centuries is that it is a legal union of two adults of the opposite sex who are unrelated to each other. Society has had good reasons for defining marriage in that way. Gay activists are not saying, "Let's get rid of all these definitional constraints. Let's legalise polygamy, incest, bestiality, and gay marriage". Rather, they want to take down one of the fenceposts defining marriage, while keeping all the others. Scripture describes homosexuality as "vile affections" to which God gave up the wicked (Rom.1:24-27) and to which Christians have turned their back and from which they have been washed by the blood of Christ (1Cor.6:9-11).

Pictures of Christ

Professor John Murray



... what is at stake in this question is the unique place which Jesus Christ as the God-man occupies in our faith and worship ...

Is it right to make pictures of the Saviour? It must be granted that the worship of Christ is central in our holy faith, and the thought of the Saviour must in every instance be accompanied with that reverence which belongs to His worship. We cannot think of Him without the apprehension of the majesty that is His. If we do not entertain the sense of His majesty, then we are guilty of impiety and we dishonour Him.

It will also be granted that the only purpose that could properly be served by a pictorial representation is that it would convey to us some thought or lesson representing Him, consonant with truth and promotive of worship. Hence the question is inescapable: is a pictorial representation a legitimate way of conveying truth regarding Him and of contributing to the worship which this truth should evoke?

We are all aware of the influence exerted on the mind and heart by pictures. Pictures are powerful media of communication. How suggestive they are for good or for evil and all the more so when accompanied by the comment of the spoken or written word! It is futile, therefore, to deny the influence exerted upon mind and heart by a picture of Christ. And if such is legitimate, the influence exerted should be one constraining to worship and adoration. To claim any lower aim as that served by a picture of the Saviour would be contradiction of the place which He must occupy in thought, affection, and honour.

The plea for the propriety of pictures of Christ is based on the fact that He was truly man, that He had a human body, that He was visible in His human nature to the physical senses, and that a picture assists us to take in the stupendous reality of His incarnation, in a word, that He was made in the likeness of men and was found in fashion as a man. Our

Lord had a true body. He could have been photographed. A portrait could have been made of Him and, if a good portrait, it would have reproduced His likeness.

Without doubt the disciples in the days of His flesh had a vivid mental image of Jesus' appearance and they could not but have retained that recollection to the end of their days. They could never have entertained the thought of Him as He had sojourned with them without something of that mental image and they could not have entertained it without adoration and worship. The very features which they remembered would have been part and parcel of their conception of Him and reminiscent of what He had been to them in His humiliation and in the glory of His resurrection appearance. Much more might be said regarding the significance for the disciples of Jesus' physical features.

Jesus is also glorified in the body and that body is visible. It will also become visible to us at His glorious appearing. "Unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Heb.9:28).

No description of Jesus

What then are we to say of pictures of Christ? First of all, it must be said that we have no data whatsoever on the basis of which to make a pictorial representation; we have no descriptions of His physical features which would enable even the most accomplished artist to make an approximate portrait. In view of the profound influence exerted by a picture, especially on the minds of young people, we should perceive the peril involved in a portrayal for which there is no warrant, a portrayal which is the creation of pure imagination. It may help to point up the folly to ask: what would be the reaction of a disciple, who had actually seen the Lord in the days of his flesh, to a portrait which would be the work of imagination on the part of one who had never seen the Saviour? We can readily detect what his recoil would be. No impression we have of Jesus should be created without the proper revelatory data, and every impression, every thought, should evoke worship. Hence, since we possess no revelatory data for a picture or portrait in the proper sense of the term, we are precluded from making one or using any that have been made.

Second Commandment – No Pictures

Secondly, pictures of Christ are in principle a violation of the second commandment. A picture of Christ, if it serves any useful purpose, must evoke some thought or feeling respecting Him and, in view of what He is, this thought

or feeling will be worshipful. We cannot avoid making the picture a medium of worship. But since the materials for this medium of worship are not derived from the only revelation we possess respecting Jesus, namely, Scripture, the worship is constrained by a creation of the human mind that has no revelatory warrant. This is will-worship. For the principle of the second commandment is that we are to worship God only in ways prescribed and authorized by him. It is a grievous sin to have worship constrained by a human figment, and that is what a picture of the Saviour involves.

No worshipping with pictures

Thirdly, the second commandment forbids bowing down to an image or likeness of anything in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. A picture of the Saviour purports to be a representation or likeness of Him who is now in heaven or, at least, of Him when He sojourned upon the earth. It is plainly forbidden, therefore, to bow down in worship before such a representation or likeness. This exposes the iniquity involved in the practice of exhibiting pictorial representations of the Saviour in places of worship. When we worship before a picture of our Lord, whether it be in the form of a mural, or on canvas, or in stained glass, we are doing what the second commandment expressly forbids. This is rendered all the more apparent when we bear in mind that the only reason why a picture of Him should be exhibited in a place is the supposition that it contributes to the worship of Him who is our Lord. The practice only demonstrates how insensitive we readily become to the commandments of God and to the inroads of idolatry. May the churches of Christ be awake to the deceptive expedients by which the archenemy ever seeks to corrupt the worship of the Saviour.

In summary, what is at stake in this question is the unique place which Jesus Christ as the God-man occupies in our faith and worship and the unique place which the Scripture occupies as the only revelation, the only medium of communication, respecting Him whom we worship as Lord and Saviour. The incarnate Word and the written Word are correlative. We dare not use other media of impression or of sentiment but those of his institution and prescription. Every thought and impression of Him, should evoke worship. We worship Him with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God. To use a likeness of Christ as an aid to worship is forbidden by the second commandment as much in this case as in that of the Father and Spirit.

This article first appeared in *Reformed Herald*, February, 1961

The Raising of the Widow of Nain's Son

(Lk.7:11-17)

Dr Paul Hoole, Sri Lanka

Remember, fellow-Christian, God rules every event of our life in mercy. He is not against us. He does not hate us and He will not desert us. When the widow of Nain was in depths of need, misery, loss and helplessness, God sent His Son to her. He lovingly and savingly met with her as she was going to bury her only son. How important it is for us to have right thoughts of God and to get to know Him better!

The Bible is a book full of tears. Abraham wept. Joseph wept. Hannah wept. David wept. The old priests of Ezra's time wept. Jesus wept. And the widow of Nain was weeping. She wept emotionally having first lost her husband and now her son. She wept for the loss of her security. The staff on which she was leaning was now broken seemingly beyond repair – her son was dead. She cried, feeling abandoned by God. She was broken down and felt that God was her enemy. Are you struggling with such tears? Remember that the same Jesus stands with us through the Holy Spirit and says to you and to me, "Weep not".

The Lord Jesus Christ is fully God. He is the God of the Old Testament, of creation and of judgment, but He is also the Redeemer full of tender compassion. Do not weep, He said to her. He touched the coffin in which her dead son lay. Jesus came to taste death for our sin. We must receive life and forgiveness from Him. Against death comes the Lord Jesus who is the Resurrection and the Life. Life in Christ will triumph over death. In Revelation 7:14-17 we read that there will come a day when the Lord's people shall dwell in heaven with God, serving Him day and night. Jesus will be with them forever and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more sin, no more death, no more weeping. We shall live with God forever. Are you looking forward to that day and to that country?

The Lord Jesus Christ is God whose word is full of triumphant power. It is this word which created all things (Gen.1). Jesus gives life. The need of our day is for the church to have full confidence in the word of God. We must proclaim it with boldness, authority and grace. The word of Jesus raised to new life the young man. Death was defeated. The soul that had departed into the kingdom of death returned at the voice of Jesus and entered the body of the young man. He arose alive.

Are you spiritually alive? Sit up and look at Jesus more and more. Speak to God in prayer. Speak to your family and neighbours, lovingly and truthfully, the words of God to bless them. Will you do this more and more in the days that lie ahead? Jesus gave back this young man to his mother. Jesus restores broken family ties. He also helps us to serve Him in our family and in our spiritual mother church.

THE WATERS OF MARAH

Exodus 15:23-26

Bitter, indeed, the waters are
Which in this desert flow;
Though to the eye they promise fair,
They taste of sin and woe.

Of pleasing draughts I once could dream;
But now, awake, I find,
That sin has poisoned every stream,
And left a curse behind.

But there's a wonder-working wood,
I've heard believers say,
Can make these bitter waters good,
And take the curse away.

The virtues of this healing tree
Are known and prized by few:
Reveal this secret, Lord, to me,
That I may prize it too.

The cross on which the Saviour died,
And conquered for His saints;
This is the tree, by faith applied,
Which sweetens all complaints.

Thousands have found the blessed effect,
Nor longer mourn their lot;
While on His sorrows they reflect,
Their own are all forgot.

When they, by faith, behold the cross,
Though many griefs they meet;
They draw a gain from every loss,
And find the bitter sweet.

John Newton (1725-1807)

Christ the Vine

Rev Alasdair Johnston



Union with Christ is a wonderful reality for every true Christian. It involves the personal experience of God's love and joy. This union is presented in the parable of the vine and the branches. Jesus said "I am the true vine" (Jn.15:1) – the genuine and excellent vine.

How is Christ like the vine?

The vine is not so stately as other trees. It cannot be compared to the oak or cedar for height and strength. It is not fit for woodwork (Ezek.15:2-4). Nor is it to be compared to the palm tree for beauty. Christ in this world appeared in a mean and low condition, "as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness" (Is.53:2). Hence He is despised and rejected of men.

Although the vine is weak and slender, it is an honourable tree. It can be called a noble vine (Jer.2:21) and a goodly vine (Ezek.17:8), so, although Christ appeared in a low condition, yet He has a name above every other name (Phil.2:9). He infinitely excels angels and men in glory and greatness and the sun and stars are dim beside His brightness.

The vine is full of sap, bearing and nourishing many branches which spread out. All the branches depend on sap from the vine to make them flourish and be fruitful. Even so Christ is full of life and supplies all His people with strength and growth to enable them to bring forth fruit.

The vine is a most fruitful tree (Ps.128:3) having many grapes on one cluster, and several clusters on one branch, and several branches in the one vine. But how much more fruitful is Christ! Consider His earthly life going up and down

doing good to the bodies and souls of sinners. Think of His death purchasing redemption, favour with God, victory over sin and the devil, and bringing in everlasting righteousness. The grace of His Spirit, granted by Him, produces fruits in this heavenly vine.

The vine brings forth fragrant, sweet, pleasant fruit. It makes glad the heart of man (Ps.104:15). Solomon says "Give ... wine unto those that be of heavy hearts (Prov.31:6) but how much more does Christ rejoice the heart! His fruit is sweet to the believer's taste (Song of Sol.2:3). No cup is so refreshing as the cup of Christ's consolation. What comforts are like the love of Christ, peace with God, and the pardon of sin? Oh how they cheer a drooping, languishing soul!

The vine possesses not only flavoursome fruit but also deliciously tasty wine and this is stimulating and supports us in our weakness. Paul advises Timothy to take a little wine for his stomach's sake. And the good Samaritan poured in oil and wine into the wounds of the one who was attacked by thieves. But how much more profitable to the soul is Christ, the true vine! He heals, restores and strengthens His people.

The vine's branches spread and its leaves give a delightful shade but how much more does the true vine provide His church with shadow (Song of Sol.2:3). He is a hiding place from the wind, a covert from the tempest and a shadow of a great rock in a weary land (Is.32:2). He defends from the rage of Satan, from the persecution of man and from the wrath of God. Were it not for this blessed hiding place and the shield of His righteousness we should be utterly consumed.

How is Christ different from the vine?

The vine is of earthly origin, but Christ is from heaven. He is a vine planted by God.

The vine is not always green. Its leaves fall and fade in season, but Christ is always full of life and abounding with fruit. The true vine knows no winter or off season.

The fruit of the vine taken to excess is offensive to God, harms the soul, disturbs the reason, and brings depression. But Christ's fruit never hurts. There is no danger of excess and the more we partake of His fruits the more we will desire and delight in them.

The vine may be stripped of its fruit – not so Christ. However much we receive of His fruits there is still abundance in Him, for in Him dwells all fullness.

The vine must be propped up and supported, not being able to bear the weight of its own branches, but Christ needs no supports. He has enough strength in Himself to bear up all His spiritual branches.

Lady Jane Campbell, Viscountess of Kenmure

Christiana

Lady Kenmure was one of the most eminent of the religious ladies who lived in Scotland in the 17th Century, as well as being one of the best-known of the Rev Samuel Rutherford's correspondents. Of the over 150 letters of Rutherford published, 48 were addressed to her. Her name, at one time, was well-known in godly Scottish homes even although she left neither autobiography nor diary containing a record of the Christian graces which adorned her character. Rutherford's letters have immortalised her memory.

Birth and youth

She was the 3rd daughter of the 7th Earl of Argyll, and her mother's father was the 6th Earl of Morton, so, on both sides, she was descended from ancient and noble Scottish families; and also the Campbells of Argyll were renowned for the zeal with which they supported the cause of the Reformation. The date of her birth is uncertain – it would be around 1600. She lost her mother when she was very small and it would appear that, in her early life, she was very delicate. Judging from her correspondence with Rutherford, this seems to have been the means of bringing her to a saving knowledge of Christ. Rutherford, writing to her, says, "I am glad that ye have been acquainted from your youth with the wrestlings of God". In youth, too she formed a strong attachment to Presbyterian principles which distinguished her during the whole of her future life. Her first husband was Sir John Gordon of Lochinvar, who afterwards became Viscount of Kenmure. Sir John was a man of culture and piety, and, like his wife, a warm friend to the Presbyterian cause.

Rutherford

Lord and Lady Gordon lived in the parish of Anwoth, and he was successful in getting Samuel Rutherford as the minister there. The Gordons considered it a great privilege to sit under such a ministry. From the beginning, Lady Gordon formed a very high opinion of Rutherford's talents and piety, and, as the course of his ministry advanced, she appreciated, in an increasing degree, his pastoral diligence and faithfulness. Rutherford, for his part, highly esteemed her for the kindness of her nature as well as her humility and holiness of life. He would also appreciate her warm attachment to the Presbyterian cause. An intimate Christian friendship was thus soon formed between them, and they kept up a regular correspondence on religious subjects till the death of Rutherford. All of his letters to her evidently indicate his conviction that he was writing to one whose attainments in religion were of no ordinary kind. He took a deep interest in her spiritual welfare and comfort. He also gratefully acknowledges the many tokens of kindness and generosity which he had received from her.

Her sincere piety

None of her letters to him have survived but, from the

allusions to them in his letters, we gather that they show a spirit of sincere and humble piety, of genuine friendship, and of warm Christian sympathy. She complained that, in spite of all the methods her Saviour used in order to teach her, she was still a poor scholar. In all her difficulties, doubts and trials she sought Rutherford's advice and comfort, and there were few people who could give these as well as he could. Of all his friends none took a deeper interest in his welfare than she did. She sympathised deeply with him in his domestic trials, in the loss of his children and his wife. She was also ready to use her influence on his behalf when he was subjected to public abuse in the cause of truth, and we have instances of people in high places befriending him from a knowledge of the Christian intimacy which existed between him and this excellent lady. And, when her influence was not sufficient to shield him from persecution, he was confident of being remembered by her at the Throne of Grace. Writing to her from Aberdeen, where he was exiled, he says, "I am somewhat encouraged in that your Ladyship is not dry and cold to Christ's prisoner, as some are". Writing to another correspondent he says, "I know also that ye are kind to worthy Lady Kenmure, a woman beloved of the Lord, who hath been very mindful of my bonds. The Lord give her and her child to find mercy in the day of Christ".

Ill-health and bereavement

Lady Gordon, who had suffered a great deal from ill-health in the previous part of her life, became ill again in July 1628. On this occasion Rutherford reminded her that He who knew the frame and constitution of her nature, and what was most healthful for her soul, held every cup of affliction to her head with His own gracious hand; and that her tenderhearted Saviour, who knew the strength of her stomach, "would not mix that cup with one dram weight of poison". About the end of that year or the beginning of 1629 she lost an infant daughter. Rutherford visited her to give Christian comfort, and, in a letter, suggested to her considerations, so finely expressed and so well-fitted to strengthen the sad heart of a mother under such a trial: "Ye have lost a child; nay, she is not lost to you who is found to Christ; she is not sent away, but only sent before like unto a star, which going out of our sight, doth not die and vanish, but shineth in another hemisphere. Ye see her not, yet she doth shine in another country. If her glass was but a short hour what she wanteth of time, that she has gotten of eternity; and ye have to rejoice that ye have now some plenishing up in heaven. Show yourself a Christian by suffering without murmuring. In patience possess your soul".

Move to London

In the autumn of 1629 the Gordons moved to London. This was less than two years after Rutherford's induction to Anwoth, and her departure was regarded by him as one of the heaviest trials he had met with since the Lord had called him to the ministry; but, says he, "I perceive God will have us

to be deprived of whatsoever we idolise, that He may have His own room". During her absence she and Rutherford kept up a regular correspondence. He assured her of how greatly he longed to hear of her spiritual welfare, and that it was his constant prayer at the throne of grace that, while deprived as she then was of the comfort of a lively ministry, God might be to her as a little sanctuary; and that, as she advanced in years and stealed forward insensibly towards eternity, her faith might grow and ripen for the Lord's harvest. In her letters to him she complained of bodily weakness and sickness, but Rutherford reminds her that "it is better to be sick, providing Christ come to the bedside and draw by (aside) the curtains, and say, 'Courage, I am thy salvation', than to enjoy health, being lusty and strong, and never to be visited of God".

Temptations of Edinburgh

She and her husband appear to have returned to Scotland about the end of 1631. In May 1633 her husband was created Viscount of Kenmure, and she was with him in Edinburgh when he attended King Charles I at the parliament in June that year. During that parliament, legislation was brought forward which Lord Kenmure could not conscientiously support, but, instead of opposing it, as others did, he pretended he was ill and went back to his castle at Kenmure for fear of incurring the displeasure of the king, who had already elevated him to the peerage, and from whom he expected further honours – a dereliction of duty for which, at the time, as he afterwards confessed, he felt "fearful wrestlings of conscience", and which caused him the most bitter remorse in his dying moments. When in Edinburgh, Lady Kenmure had the opportunity of witnessing the imposing splendour and gaiety of a court, but scenes which have so often dazzled and intoxicated others only served to impress on her the empty and passing nature of all the glitter and pageantry of the world. "I bless the Lord Jesus Christ", says Rutherford to her, on her return, "who hath brought you home again from that place where ye have seen with your eyes that which our Lord's truth taught you before, to wit, that worldly glory is nothing but a vapour, a shadow, the foam of the water, or something less and lighter, even nothing; and that our Lord hath not, without cause, said in His word, the countenance or fashion of this world passeth away".

Husband's backsliding

Worldly honour and splendour had, however, more attractions for her husband. So great an influence had they got on his mind that, though there is every reason to believe he was a converted man, he had fallen into a state of comparative indifference both as to personal religion and the public interests of the Church. Rutherford, it would seem, noticed this, and, with his characteristic faithfulness, urges it upon Lady Kenmure as a part of the truth of her profession, to drop words into the ears of her noble husband continually, of eternity, judgment, death, hell, heaven, the honourable profession, the sins of his father's house. "I know", says he, "he looketh homeward and loveth the truth but I pity him with my soul because of his many temptations".

Death of another daughter

In the spring of 1634 she lost another year-old daughter, and, in a letter Rutherford comforts her, saying, "I believe faith will teach you to kiss a striking Lord, and so acknowledge the sovereignty of God in the death of a child to be above

the power of us mortal men, who may pluck up a flower in the bud and not be blamed for it. If our dear Lord pluck up one of his roses and pull down sour and green fruit before harvest, who can challenge Him".

Husband's deathbed

She met with a still more severe trial in the autumn of 1634 when Lord Kenmure died at the early age of thirty-five years. Having neglected his Christian duties for some time, he was painfully conscious of his lack of preparation for death and, at first, the most poignant remorse took hold of his conscience, causing him many a bitter tear. Among the sins that caused him the greatest agony was his deserting the parliament the previous year. He confessed to the Bishop of Galloway that in doing so he had denied the Lord his God. But with Rutherford resident in the Castle almost from the start of his illness till his death, he came to have full assurance that God, in His great mercy, had pardoned his sins. As can be imagined, it was to Rutherford that the sorrowing widow turned, and he did not fail her. "I dare say", he writes, "that God's hammering of you from your youth is only to make you a fair carved stone in the high upper temple of the New Jerusalem". In another letter he writes, "In this late visitation that hath befallen your ladyship, ye have seen God's love and care in such a measure that I thought our Lord broke the sharp point off the cross".

Second marriage

Some years later Lady Kenmure married Sir Henry Montgomerie, a son of the 6th Earl of Eglinton. This second marriage was a very happy one. Sir Henry was an excellent man and is described as an active and faithful friend of the Lord's kirk, but, sadly, their happiness was short-lived and, again, she was widowed, and, in this state lived to a good old age. How happy she and Rutherford would have been to see Christ's cause once more prospering in Scotland, but this was not granted to either of them. Indeed, she saw something very different – the persecution and death of the ministers and members of Christ's church in Scotland.

Closing years

Rutherford died in 1661 and she survived him by eleven years. We know from correspondence which has survived that she showed kindness to his widow and young daughter. Lady Kenmure had known much sorrow in her life but her greatest sorrow was to be deprived of true Gospel preaching, because the faithful preachers had, by now, been ejected from their pulpits. She gave generously to those who were suffering for the sake of the Gospel, even sending money to the Scottish exiles in Holland. She was now far advanced in age, and, during her long life, she had seen many changes in the beloved church of her native land. The precise date of her death is uncertain. She was still alive in August 1672, for an old friend of hers, who died in that month, spoke of her on his death-bed as the "oldest Christian acquaintance I now have alive". It would be interesting to know the circumstances connected with the last days of a lady so eminent for piety but she could certainly say with Paul, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2Tim.4:7-8).

News Desk

Metropolitan Washington

Our congregation in Washington DC has recently been delighted to obtain the use of a very suitable church building shown in the accompanying picture.



Washington DC Church

Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary Groundbreaking

Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary (PRTS) held a groundbreaking ceremony for its new building on March 18, 2004. The new site is located at 2965 Leonard NE, Grand Rapids. The ceremony was attended by students, faculty, and friends of PRTS. Rev Mark Kelderman, chairman of the Theological Seminary Committee, opened with prayer and reading of Psalm 90:14-17 and Hebrews 3:1-6. Dr Gerald Bilkes, Professor of Old and New Testament, gave a short address on Psalm 90:16-17 and provided a dedicatory meditation. John DeBlaay, the Office Project Manager at Dan Vos Construction, explained the seminary's layout on the construction site. For the actual groundbreaking, Mr DeBlaay was joined by Mr Kevin Ash (chairman of the Building Committee), Dr Joel Beeke (President), Dr Gerald Bilkes, Rev Kelderman, Mr Jake



Groundbreaking men

Sinke (chairman of the Seminary Education Committee), and Mr Dan VanRee (Dan Vos Construction on-site supervisor). Dr Beeke closed the ceremony with prayer. We ask that you would continue to remember PRTS and the building project in prayer, asking the Lord for safety for the construction crew and for His grace and blessing to rest on the seminary and its students. If you are interested in donating to the building project, please contact the seminary secretary, Kate Timmer, at 616-977-0599, PRTS@hnr.org.

Vietnam (Barnabas Fund)

It is estimated that more than 400 Vietnamese Christians were killed over Easter Weekend in a brutal repression of peaceful and prayerful demonstrations by Christians in the Central Highlands of Vietnam. On Saturday 10th April up to 400,000 Vietnamese Christians, from the Degar people, gathered in several Vietnamese cities to demonstrate against the government's refusal to allow them to follow the Christian faith freely. The demonstrators in the cities, which included the Central Highland city of Buonmathuot, were attacked by soldiers, police and other Vietnamese civilians. The Christians were shot at, beaten with electric batons and bombarded with rocks and stones. Hundreds were killed and many others have suffered broken bones. In a press release on 9th April an organisation representing the largely Christian Degar people, known as the Montagnard Foundation, drew attention to the planned demonstrations, which were to include a specific call for the Vietnamese government to lift the embargo on international human rights monitoring in the Central Highlands area. In a word of warning concerning the demonstrations the Foundation cautioned that "Without the direct intervention of law abiding states, the UN and the European Commission, the repression against the Montagnards will be bloody". How tragically accurate was this prediction. In a statement issued after the demonstrations had begun, the President of the Montagnard Foundation said that no attempt was made by the Christians to use violence. He also stated that the Christians are not seeking independence, merely the right to worship freely.

Nigeria (British Church Newspaper)

Religious violence which erupted in the Nigerian state of Plateau some weeks ago has resulted in the deaths of eight ministers, 1500 Christians and the destruction of 173 churches. They belonged to a number of different denominations including Anglican, Baptist, Assemblies of God and Evangelical Reformed. About 50,000 displaced persons who escaped the hostility have had to be temporarily relocated in other parts of the state.

Stornoway Church

The new church building in Stornoway is now in use by the congregation. The first service of



Stornoway church building

thanksgiving for the local congregation was held on Thursday 8th April. The following day a wedding took place. The public opening is planned for 14th May.

Spring Conference

Around 175 folk gathered for this year's Spring Conference. Under the general theme of "Profiting from the Prophets" the Rev David Silversides from the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Loughbrickland spoke on the "Judgement of God". He expounded the first few chapters of Amos in a most helpful manner. In the afternoon the Rev Maurice Roberts addressed the gathering on the "Mercy of God" and based what he said on Isaiah 35. He encouraged us to look and pray for revival when the "desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose". It was a most profitable occasion and it was good to meet with old friends again as well as make new ones.

Iraqi Church Faces Many Difficulties (MERF)

The Reformed congregations in Iraq are struggling amidst much turmoil. The well-financed activities of new Christian groups and cults which have recently entered Iraq have eroded the membership of long-established Reformed congregations in Baghdad, Kirkuk and Basra. Elders in Baghdad report significant losses of families and individuals to a new group with ample resources to rent large meeting places and purchase buses for transporting people. This group also distributes significant amounts of relief supplies. The Jehovah's Witnesses and the Mormons – banned by the previous government – have recently launched aggressive campaigns to win Iraqi converts and establish their own churches in the country. Jehovah's Witnesses appear to be attracting nominal Christians with little understanding of the Bible and basic Christian doctrines, such as Christ's deity and the Trinity.

Update from the West Bank (MERF)

The overall situation in the Palestinian territories continues to worsen. Suffering is mounting among Christians as well as the rest of the people. A striking change from just a year ago is that, among believers and others, the majority of able-bodied men have now become jobless. Pastor George Awad reports that despite the hardship of the situation, outreach among young people in Bethlehem and neighbouring Beit-Jalla is bearing much fruit. He requests fervent prayers for peace and a lasting settlement of the devastating conflict between the Israelis and Palestinians.

Retirement Presentation (Andrew Allan)

Some 150 persons gathered at Kiltearn Free Church, Evanton on Friday 23rd April to mark the retirement of the Rev Daniel M Mackinnon MA from the pastorate of Kilmorack and Strathglass (Beauly) Free Church (Continuing). The evening was hosted by the Presbytery of Ross and began with worship conducted by the Rev John MacLeod (Tarbat). At the close of the worship service most of those gathered retired to the nearby Diamond Jubilee Hall where refreshments, prepared by the ladies of the Beauly, Evanton and Portmahomack congregations, were enjoyed by all, and where a number of warm-hearted speeches and presentations were made. The chairman at the after-meeting was the Rev James Frew (Kiltearn) who introduced various speakers who in turn warmly thanked Mr MacKinnon for his 24 years of service at Beauly and for his wider work in the Church. Mr Mackinnon, centre,

left, is pictured as the Rev Robert Josey (rtd Resolis), left, Presbytery Moderator, presented Mr Mackinnon with a gift on behalf of the Presbytery of Ross. Looking on is Mr Martin Kirkwood, treasurer of Kilmorack & Strathglass, who presented a gift to Mr Mackinnon on behalf of the congregation. With them is Mrs Dolina Mackinnon who was presented with a bouquet of flowers by Mrs Kenann Price, right, wife of the late John Price, a former and esteemed elder of the Beauly congregation.

Persecution of Students (British Church Newspaper)

At Hull University, the main Student Union passed a motion in January disaffiliating the Christian Union (CU) from the Student Union because it was "discriminating against non-Christians". Similar action has been taken against the CU at University College, London. New National Union of Students' anti-discrimination policies require that all executive posts in an affiliated university society should be open to all regardless of race, sex, sexual orientation and religion. The Union reportedly objected most strongly to the clause in the CU's constitution which states: "The Lord Jesus will return in person, to judge everyone, to execute God's just condemnation on those who have not repented and to receive the redeemed into eternal glory". It appears that other university CUs will also be disaffiliated from the Union and so be unable to use Student Union rooms for meetings and to run stalls during Fresher's Week. Colin Hart of the Christian Institute stated, "The Union would not dare tell the Muslim society that it must be run by non-Muslims".



From left to right: Rev R Josey, Mr D Mackinnon, Mr M Kirkwood, Mrs D Mackinnon, Mrs K Price

Life of James Begg – Part II

Rev James Clark (teacher, Edinburgh)

Dr Begg was just as vehement in denouncing social evils as he was ecclesiastical inconsistencies, but while praised for the former, he was denounced for the latter. But to Dr Begg evil was evil, in Church, state or anywhere else. He was sensitive to the spiritual inconsistencies of state and church, and had the courage of his convictions. Mr Mechie's comment is worth repeating: "It is clear that Dr Begg never regarded religion as separate from the daily life of men, but as bearing upon all educational, economic and social relations". While Dr Begg held a conservative view in ecclesiastics, he was not conservative regarding the prevailing social policy.

A worldly ecclesiastic

In 1849 he published a pamphlet, "Pauperism and the Poor Laws", setting forth how to provide more employment for the poor. Shortly afterwards he produced another pamphlet on how to improve Edinburgh. In a United Presbyterian Church in Edinburgh, on January 10th 1850, he expounded his own "Charter", containing eight points: improvement of education in quantity and quality; suppression of drunkenness; better dwellings for working people and the poor; public washing houses and bleaching greens; reform of the land-laws; simplification of the transference of land; treatment of crime and pauperism; and greater justice to Scotland in Parliament. Dr Begg was labelled "a worldly ecclesiastic" by Robertson Smith, but on all accounts he seems to have been a man ahead of his time. Such ideas were new and radical in those days, especially coming from a minister, though Dr Begg was really following the same lines as Dr Chalmers in his concern for the moral and sanitary improvement of society. A few days later, on January 18th 1850, he was involved in the institution of the Scottish Social Reform Association, formed to promote the economic care of the community. His speech was with customary vigour: "You will never get the unclean heart of Edinburgh gutted out until you plant it all round with new houses". "What is a bothy? – A human stable". He also spoke for the improvement of Model Lodging Houses, having personally inspected these houses of neglect.

Homes for the working classes

In 1858 the Free Church Assembly appointed a Committee to make inquiry regarding the state of the dwellings of the

working classes. Dr Begg was appointed Convener. In 1861 a tenement in the High Street collapsed during the night, killing 29 sleeping occupants. Dr Begg immediately held a public meeting followed by a lecture. *The Witness* magazine comments, "We are glad to see that our townsman, Mr Begg, prompt as usual in his philanthropy, is coming forward in this emergency". Dr Begg spoke on the bearing of good houses on the comfort and morals of their occupants, the need for improvement and the ways by which it might be effected. The following year, Town Councils came under his rebuke for lack of discussion on how to improve the housing of the poor. He sought to make the public aware of the plight of the working classes as a foundation to actual practical improvement.

**... he attempted to apply
Scriptural principles
to every part of life,
ecclesiastical and social.**

Edinburgh Corporation Building Society

The 1860s saw the peak of Dr Begg's activities regarding social improvements. In 1861 the Edinburgh Corporation Building Society was formed, which built and sold houses to the working classes, making them their own landlords. By 1863, 117 houses had been erected. In 1863 Dr Begg gave the Committee report at the Assembly, showing that about 1 million people were living in one-apartment houses (which the Doctor also pointed at as being unscriptural from the text, "When thou prayest, enter into thy closet...", which definitely implies two rooms available) and pointed to the lack of sympathy on the part of the upper classes. The Committee, with Dr Begg's approval, was discharged in 1867 as "public attention was thoroughly alive on the subject". However, Dr Begg soon realised that the view of the Assembly had been too optimistic. In 1866 he published "Happy Homes for

Working Men”, in which he asserted that the family system, as the Sabbath, was an institution of Paradise, and that families needed homes, not just “coverings”. In 1874 and 1875 he spoke at public meetings in Glasgow against the “bothy” and other rural abuses, urging the Scriptural warrant and application of the sixth and eighth Commandments ie to use all lawful endeavours to preserve the life of others and to procure and further their wealth and outward estate.

Education Bill

His Scriptural principles also led to the expression of his dissatisfaction at the proposed Education Bill of the Lord Advocate. In 1870 he spoke against it in the Assembly because it provided for no religious instruction in the school timetable, and he did not hesitate to expound the same views in public meetings, held in opposition to the Bill proposed in 1871. In 1872 the Bill became law. Dr Begg rose in the Assembly and declared that, while he welcomed the preamble to the Bill concerning religion, he was still dissatisfied that teaching in religion was not compulsory for schools. It must be remembered that the schools founded by the Free Church had before provided religious instruction as a compulsory part of the curriculum, but this was now lost when the State took over. Dr Begg saw this as a tragedy and many today would agree with him.

Applies Scriptural principles to every part of life

The prevailing opinion of Dr Begg’s labours is that he is to be commended in the sphere of social improvement but deserves censure for his resistance to constitutional change in the Church towards the end of his life. The two attitudes are thought by some to be irreconcilable, yet both attitudes were quite in unity in the man’s character. The significance of Dr Begg was that he attempted to apply Scriptural principles to every part of life, ecclesiastical and social. He earned the name “evil” because of his obstruction to a party within the Church who desired to change the Constitution, a party who, on entering the ministry, took solemn ordination vows to “assert, maintain and defend” the Free Church Constitution and Confession of Faith. Dr Drummond’s comment is to the point: “His (Dr Begg’s) popularity suffered in his lifetime because he did not care whom he offended if his cause was just, and his reputation has suffered ever since because he had a bad biographer who was embarrassed by his social aims”, because Dr Begg “was especially bent upon improving the condition, physical, mental, moral and spiritual, of virtuous and intelligent working-men and their families”. In ecclesiastical controversy Dr Begg was not popular, but he was not inconsistent, and that in a ministry lasting 53 years. He was unpopular because he was a “Constitutionalist”, who held that sworn oaths could not be rendered null because of passing time and a general desire for change.

Death

Dr Begg died in 1883. His funeral sermons were preached by Dr John Kennedy and Dr George Smeaton in Newington Free Church on 7th October 1883. Dr Kennedy went to be with his friend in heaven just seven months later.

Last Surviving Titanic Ticket



Archivists at the Merseyside Maritime Museum have researched the story behind the only known surviving first-class Titanic ticket. The unused ticket, which belonged to a Liverpool minister, went on display as part of the North West Archives Festival in September 2003.

The Rev John Stuart Holden was unable to use his first-class ticket when his wife fell ill the day before the luxury liner was due to make its maiden voyage from Southampton on the 10th April 1912. Mr Holden stayed in England to nurse his wife, and four days later more than 1,500 passengers and crew died when the ship sank after hitting an iceberg in the North Atlantic. After the ship sank, he mounted the ticket in a frame on which he wrote: “Who redeemeth thy life from destruction” (Ps.103:4). The ticket carried the warning: “The company’s liability for baggage is strictly limited, but passengers can protect themselves by insurance”. The document hung in his study to remind him of his escape and following his death it was donated to the Museum in 1970. It was considered too valuable to display and was instead placed in the museum’s archive. The ticket was unveiled after being included in a collection of the most unusual and valuable archives in the North-West.

John Holden acknowledged that God had preserved him and that no insurance policy could provide the same protection. That same God still rules and reigns today. May each of us be led to know personally that:

A Sovereign Protector I have, unseen, yet forever at
hand;
Unchangeably faithful to save, almighty to rule and
command:
He smiles, and my comforts abound; His grace as the
dew shall descend
And walls of salvation surround the souls He delights to
defend.

JPS, Friendly Companion: March 2004

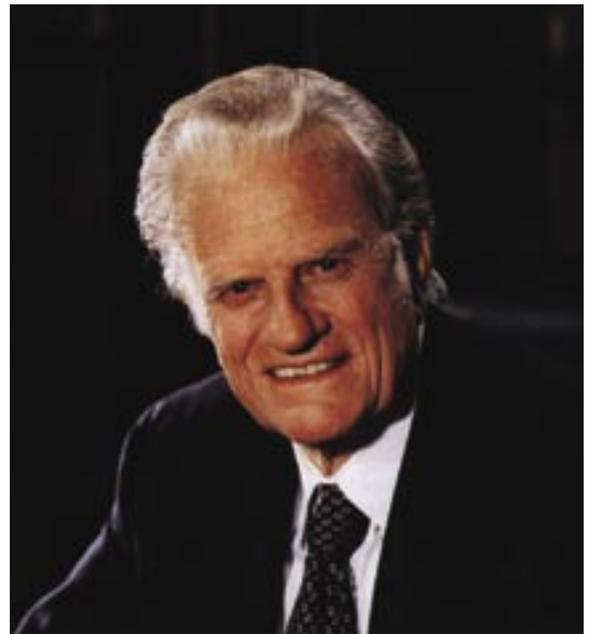
Billy Graham

Rev William Macleod

The best known evangelical Christian of the Twentieth Century is undoubtedly Billy Graham. Because of the Depression and the Stock Market crash of 1929 his father lost all his money and young Billy was brought up in relative poverty. As a schoolboy he would be up at 2.30am to help with milking and other tasks on his dad's dairy farm before going to school. He had to survive often on three or four hours sleep which did not help his schooling but trained him for his busy schedule in later life. His first visit to the White House was in 1950 when he met President Truman. He learned from that experience not to divulge private conversations to the press. He became a friend of all the later presidents of the United States from Eisenhower on to the Bushes. He found himself in all sorts of high places – Buckingham Palace, the Kremlin, the Vatican – and even visited President Kim in the most isolated nation on earth, North Korea. He preached all over the world and on one occasion to over a million people in Yoido Plaza in South Korea. He used every medium to get the Gospel message across: Radio, TV, film, video, internet, books and magazines. His *Decision* magazine eventually had a circulation of over 4 million. The amount he achieved in a lifetime (he is now 85) is staggering but then he was supported by a gifted and dedicated organisation which at one time employed 1000 people, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA).

Arminianism

Not all is good however. Billy Graham's theology is decidedly Arminian. His typical Gospel presentation was: "God loves you, Christ died for you, you must decide to believe on Him". Universal atonement was preached and an individual's faith was seen as that which made the difference between who was saved and who was not. A person was viewed as having free will, and faith was regarded as something within the power of any whenever they wanted. This involved a denial of total inability. Also it meant that some for whom Christ died ended up in hell. So essentially it is not Christ's death that saves but a man who saves himself by his faith. From his earliest days Billy Graham issued the invitation to come down to the front to record your decision. Without the new birth or God's saving grace individuals can walk down to the front, they can repeat a prayer and they can sign



a decision card. Having done this they were assured that they were now saved. How many thousands were deceived into thinking they were Christians when they were not? How many will end up in hell as a result of this deception? How many have been hardened to the Gospel by trying out this man-made one and finding it did not work? No doubt multitudes were converted through the preaching of the Gospel despite the false teaching mingled with it.

Pragmatism

Billy Graham's approach in evangelism was pragmatism – if it works do it. The invitation system produced lots of converts, therefore it must be good. He associated with liberal ministers and Roman Catholic bishops in his crusades because this guaranteed larger audiences and so more success. He invited powerful and popular people to sit on the platform at his crusades and to endorse his crusades as this generated greater crowds. Some of the leaders with whom he associated were of very shady morals or vicious oppressors of their people but this made no difference providing the crusades were successful in drawing the thousands.

What has been the long term effect of this type of crusade evangelism? It does not appear to have encouraged personal evangelism or indeed other forms of evangelism because of their relative lack of "success". Crusades such as took place in Britain in the 1950s and 1960s are no longer possible and would not draw the crowds night after night as they did then. The result of the crusades has been something like the scorched earth which followed certain greedy farming practices. Many have been immunised to the Gospel. Christians feel they need a big name and a big event but no name is big enough to draw the cynics of today. The last hope for gathering the crowds to hear preaching seems to be pop concerts with a short slot for preaching. Indeed the BGEA has begun moving down that road. In 1994 78,000 fans packed a stadium in Atlanta. The music belted out at top volume and the high-tech lights flashed and pulsed as Billy Graham stepped onto the platform. (Nine trailer loads of equipment had been brought in for the occasion). He says that he talked to them "not as a preacher but as an older man sharing what he had learned with a group of younger people". The attempt is

being made to carry people into the kingdom on the back of entertainment. Yet the Scriptures say, "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1Cor.1:21) and Paul adds "I ... came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom declaring unto you the testimony of God" (1Cor.2:1).

Ecumenicity

As a boy, Billy once, without realising what he was doing, locked up the cat with the dog in the kennel. Next morning they came out the best of friends and remained so. This he saw as the way to deal with the various churches and it was his ecumenical philosophy. Just get them together and they will be in harmony. He failed to see the importance of truth and that some things are not negotiable eg the idolatry of the mass, the worship of the wafer as the real body of Christ and the necessity as seen by the Church of Rome for a continued sacrifice to take away sin. Graham saw the value of support from the Roman Catholics in his crusades. He thought the place of the cross was essentially the same for both Protestants and Catholics. But Catholics bow down to an actual sculptured cross in blatant transgression of the Second Commandment. To him the way of salvation was the same in both bodies though there were things the RCs did with which he was not totally happy. Fairly early on he made friends with Cardinal Cushing of Boston who told the press that if he had half a dozen Billy Grahams he would not worry for the future of his church. Later he visited the Pope and said that within a few minutes he felt as if he had known him for years. He brought him a present of a wood carving of a shepherd with his sheep. Perhaps it would have been more appropriate to present him with one of a wolf. He took a message from the Pope to the President of North Korea. He preached in various RC churches and visited the Shrine of the Black Madonna in Poland. He was quite happy to work with liberals who denied the authority and inspiration of the Scriptures because it increased his congregations. He argued that they were the ones who were compromising their own position. But then after the crusades were over poor "converts" would be sent to churches of such individuals where they would get no Gospel.

Over-Charitable

Especially when describing various dignities whom he got to know Billy Graham was very ready to regard them as true Christians. He speaks highly for example of Nixon of Watergate fame. He said Clinton was a Christian who had "in his heart a desire to serve God and do His will". We cannot help but remember the Monica Lewinski affair and the attempted cover-up. He sees Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox members as brothers in Christ along with those who believe in justification by faith alone.

Changing Gospel

Billy Graham asserts that although his methods often changed in order to get the ear of men yet his message remained the same. However when one looks a little more closely it is obvious that the message has changed with the passing years. In his early days there was, for example, a great emphasis on the danger of hell and the need to escape from the wrath to come. However latterly that disappears. The love of God is stressed and the hunger of the human heart for God. It has become a more man-centred Gospel. His message has become, "If you want to be happy, believe the Gospel".

Diligence

There are however many positive things to be learned from Billy Graham. One thing that stands out is his diligence. He is tremendously dedicated and has served the Lord sacrificially over the years. In preparing himself for the ministry he used to row out to an island near his college where he would for hours preach to the trees and flowers. In the early days he put long, hard hours into sermon preparation. Not only was he concerned to have good material for the people but also to make it as interesting and clear as he possibly could. We have a fuller Gospel and we ought to be even more diligent in striving to catch the attention of our fellow men.

Evangelistic Zeal

Early on in his ministry he was visiting an important businessman. Feeling somewhat intimidated or perhaps concerned that he would alienate him by appearing too religious he said nothing to him about Christ. Afterwards, back in his hotel room, he felt convicted and got down on his knees and repented before God. He begged God for another opportunity to speak to this man which he surprisingly had two weeks later. He vowed after that to always speak of his Saviour to those whom he met. In this he is a great example to us. Why are we so slow to make the Gospel known? We are terrified of being thought of as foolish or Bible-thumpers. We ought to be the light of the world and if we were more ready to speak to people about their souls we would see more conversions. He writes: "I never go to see important people – or anyone else – without having the deep realisation that I am – first and foremost – an ambassador of the King of kings. From the moment I enter the room, I am thinking about how I can get the conversation around to the Gospel".

Watchfulness

Finally, in a world where so many ministers and particularly so called "televangelists" fall into immorality he has lived a spotless life. Early on he recognised the danger. He determined that he would never be alone with a member of the opposite sex. Also he ensured that the finances of the BGEA were put on a secure footing and that he was only paid a salary comparable to other ministers. The accounts of the BGEA were freely available to all to scrutinise. Surely there are lessons for us in this too. The minister must be above reproach and must not even allow a hint of corruption or the devil will latch onto it with malicious gossip.

Humility and Hope

Despite his obvious popularity and success in worldly terms he remains a remarkably humble man. Prayerfulness played a large part in his Christianity. He was diagnosed some years ago as suffering from Parkinson's disease. He stated: "Suffering is part of the human condition and it comes to us all. The key is how we react to it, either turning away from God in anger and bitterness or growing closer to him in trust and confidence". He says "I look forward to heaven ... reunion with friends ... freedom from sorrow and pain ... to serve God in ways we can't begin to imagine ... and most of all ... to seeing Jesus and bowing before Him in praise and gratitude for all he has done for us, and for using me on this earth by His grace".

(The above information has been drawn from Dr Billy Graham's interesting autobiography: *Just as I am*, Harper Collins, pbk, 760pp)



The Day God Made

Glen C Knecht, Banner of Truth, pbk, 101pp, £5.50

Under the above title we have an accomplished work on a neglected theme. While but a small book, its content, scope and application are such that it does justice to its important subject. The author is Associate Pastor of Fourth Presbyterian Church, Bethesda, Maryland. He has served as a missionary in Iran and as pastor of several Presbyterian churches. That he is of superb theological competence, of wide experience and mature judgment, quickly becomes apparent. His style is lucid, flowing and engaging. Substantial instruction is imparted.

The book begins with a chapter on the importance of the Sabbath. This is mainly laid out by bringing to notice the injurious consequences of misuse of the Lord's Day by families, communities and country. Recognition dawns anew as to just how real and present these evils are. No dubiety is allowed as to the fact of Divine displeasure. For long it has been evident that with respect to the national consciousness it is as though the Fourth Commandment never was sounded from Sinai's height or was written into the moral law. True, all the other nine commandments of the Decalogue also suffer violence to a greater or lesser degree, but an intuitive knowledge of them manifests itself in various excuses. The Sabbath commandment, however, is omitted from all that, except it be thrust upon man's notice.

Dr Knecht demonstrates the perpetuity of the Sabbath from its origin as a creation ordinance to its alteration to a first day of the week observance. The utter appropriateness of this change is affectingly set forth and the reasoning is of incontrovertible force. The purpose of the Lord's Day is elaborated along the line of the principle found in the Saviour's words: "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath". Thus many of the benefits for man, through the blissful Eden to the sorry present, are enumerated. This approach effectively blasts the deep-seated misconception that Sabbath-keeping is a doleful, soul-destroying pursuit: admirably illustrates the loving-kindness of our God and Maker: shames us into a perception of our brutish unappreciativeness when cavalier concerning the Lord's Day; and urges us to make the most of every such day.

The Day God Made is a book of especial pertinence. It will enhance a Christian's esteem of the Sabbath and move him or her to greater carefulness in regard to it. It is also excellently crafted to disabuse the unbeliever of his illusory and damaging prejudices. Read it. Lend it. Gift it.

Rev Robert Josey

The Basis of Christian Unity

D Martyn Lloyd-Jones, Banner of Truth, pbk, 77pp, £4.50

The last hundred years has seen the emergence of the Ecumenical Movement and the development of the World Council of Churches. Increasingly nowadays there is a down-playing of doctrine and a stressing of love and the need to co-operate in prayer and evangelism. A commonly quoted verse is "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (Jn.17: 21). Another one is: "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph.4:3). Dr Lloyd-Jones carefully explains these two passages showing how they have been misinterpreted. He states that it is fascinating to contrast the ecumenical councils of the first centuries of the Christian era with the present day World Council of Churches: "The great concern of the former was doctrine: definition of doctrine and denunciation of error and heresy. The chief characteristic of the modern movement is doctrinal indifference and the exaltation of a spirit of inclusivism and practical co-operation". This is a valuable little book.

William Macleod

Pastor in Prayer

C H Spurgeon, Banner of Truth Trust, hbk, 159pp, £8.50

C H Spurgeon believed that the Prayer Meeting was the best heating system any church could have and this was replicated in his own devotional life. D L Moody was more impressed with his prayers than with his preaching – good though that was – and said that he believed this to be the great secret of his influence and success.

This collection of prayers were mainly offered at morning services on the Lord's Day in the Metropolitan Tabernacle. These exercises are deeply spiritual. He is concerned for his own soul and his witness and also that of the whole church, whether in Missionary Enterprises, Ministerial Training, Orphanages etc.

There is a great reverence in his approach to God: there is unquestioning faith as he makes much use of Scriptural promises: in fact Scripture permeates his whole prayer life. These prayers are very wide ranging and fresh. They are free from the "ruttness" that is common when we trot out well-known phrases and texts.

There is great devotion, meaning and warmth in his prayer life which we would do well to emulate. Oh to have a lively heart and such intimacy as would come from a close walk with the Lord. This book is highly recommended and will surely be a challenge and a stimulant to inspire Christians in approaching the Lord and a rebuke to our coldness and dryness in prayer at times.

Allan I M Maciver



Romans: Liberty and Conscience
D Martyn Lloyd-Jones, Banner of Truth,
hbk, 271 pp, £16.50

These sermons, expounding Romans 14: 1-17, form the 14th and final volume in Dr Lloyd-Jones' monumental series on Romans, preached on Friday evenings in Westminster Chapel, London from October 1957 until March 1968. The influence of the series, with well over a million volumes sold, has been incalculable, opening up the teaching of the epistle to multitudes and encouraging ministers everywhere to rediscover consecutive expository preaching.

Most of the virtues of the previous volumes are again evidenced, as Lloyd-Jones expounds the apostle's teaching on how to handle differences within the church over matters, not sinful in themselves, about which Christians frequently disagree. He warns against the extremes of legalism and licence, provides sane ground-rules for discussing controversial issues, and urges the primacy of brotherly love and the need for a balanced perspective on what the kingdom of God really involves. Believers who absorb this wise, realistic advice will be less likely to stumble into the civil wars which so often mar the church's witness to the watching world.

Not everyone will agree with every detail of Dr Lloyd-Jones' interpretations or with all of his, occasionally idiosyncratic, opinions. Nor should his method of preaching be followed slavishly by budding expositors. 372 sermons on Romans would be too many for most ministers to preach and most congregations to hear. But this is a masterly achievement – clear and illuminating, heart-searching and energising – and the Lord's people will profit richly from the material which these messages contain.

Illness prevented Dr Lloyd-Jones from completing his exposition. His own assessment was that he had been stopped before finishing verse 17, because he was not yet ready to preach on "joy in the Holy Ghost". Whatever the limits of his understanding may have been – fewer now – he has been used to convey much of that joy to believing readers.

Edward Donnelly

Moladh Tìodhlacan Dhè

Dòmhnall MacAoidh, nach maireann (Seisiadar agus Cille Bhrìghde an Ear)

Nuair a chluinn' mi fonn ceòlmhor aig na h-eòin fos mo chionn
 'S a chì mi beanntan is cluaintean is cuan nam mòr-thonn;
 Nuair a chì mi na speuran, 's gealach 's reultan na h-oidhch'
 Bidh mo smaointean, le iongnadh, ortsa Thighearna, gach àm.

'S Tu chruthaich an saoghal is gach nì th' ann ri fàs;
 'S Tu bheir deoch dhan an tartmhor, 's treòir is neart an àm càs;
 Dh'fhàg Thu againne d' Fhirinn a mhaireas fìor-ghlan gu bràth
 Gus ar ceum chumail dìreach ann an Slighe nan Gràs.

Thug Thu fradharc dhuinn 's claisteachd, thug Thu neart dhuinn is slàint',
 Thug Thu tuigsinn is cainnt dhuinn à mòr-shaoibhreas Do Ghràidh;
 Thug Thu Tìodhlac do-inns' dhuinn a tha prìseil thar chàich –
 Do Mhac Siorraidh mar Ìobairt gus ar saoradh tre 'Ghràs.

Tha Thu nochdadh Do Thròcair ann an tomhais nach gann:
 Tha Thu sgeadaicht' le Mòrachd, 's Crùn na Glòir air Do cheann.
 Ma dh'iarras sinne, le dìcheall, an Tairgse Shaor th' agad dhuinn,
 Mar a gheall Thu, sin nì Thu, bidh àit' nad Rìoghachd-sa leinn.

Nuair a thadhail am bàs sinn 's chaidh bean mo ghràidh a thoirt bhuainn,
 'S mi gu brònach nam inntinn 'g ionndrainn coibhneas mo Luaidh,
 Thug Thu saors' dhomh gu gràs-mhor 's mi an àmhghair bha cruaidh,
 Nuair a dh'fhoillsich Thu 'n Gràdh sin, is an t-Slàinte tha buan.

'S doirbh rim faighinn tha briathran leis an dèan mi seo inns';
 An àit' a' bhròin bha air m' inntinn fhuair mi aoibhneas nam chrìdh';
 Nuair a bha mi gun dòchas, rinn Thu sòlasach mi,
 Fhuair mi Cuireadh dhad Ionnsaigh, 's m' uallach trom is mi sgith.

Tha Thu, Dhè uile-bheannaicht', 's tha Thu pailt ann an Gràs,
 Tha Do Thròcair buan-mhaireann 's cha tig gainn' air Do Ghràdh.
 Tha Thu cuireadh gach anam thighinn dhad Ionnsaigh gun dàil
 'S gheibh na dh'iarras Do Thròcair seilbh le còir air Do Shlàint'.

Glòir is moladh gu bràth dhan t-Slànaighear shuas
 A dh'fhuing dòrainnean bàsmhor ann an àit' a mhòr-shuaigh;
 Gus an là bhios mo chnàmhan air an càradh san uaigh
 Dh'iarrainn Gràs mar mo chuibhreann gu bhith seinn cliù AN UAIN.

NET INCOME FROM CONGREGATIONS — 2004

	2004 Apr	2004 Total	2003 Total to April		2004 Apr	2004 Total	2003 Total to April
Presbytery of Caithness & Sutherland				Presbytery of Lewis			
Brora	900	4,200	5,593	Cross	1,714	7,750	7,040
Assynt & Scourie	810	2,740	4,680	Harris - Leverburgh	1,000	4,000	3,783
<i>Total Caithness & Sutherland</i>	1,710	6,940	10,274	Harris - Scalpay	1,300	5,200	7,159
Presbytery of Inverness				Knock & Point	825	3,300	3,591
Duthil-Dores	1,813	6,473	7,408	Stornoway	3,994	16,402	15,529
Inverness	3,842	7,510	7,376	<i>Total Lewis</i>	8,833	36,653	37,102
<i>Total Inverness</i>	5,655	13,983	14,784	Presbytery of Lochcarron			
Presbytery of Ross				Glenelg & Arnisdale	183	601	491
Kilmorack & Strathglass	0	4,000	6,529	Lochalsh & Glenshiel	898	3,873	4,169
Kiltearn	1,760	6,651	7,018	Poolewe & Aultbea	661	2,601	3,448
Tarbat	0	2,700	3,372	<i>Total Lochcarron</i>	1,742	7,075	8,109
<i>Total Ross</i>	1,760	13,351	16,919	Presbytery of Skye & Uist			
Presbytery of Edinburgh				Bracadale	1,000	4,000	4,487
Aberdeen	200	2,350	2,955	Duirinish (Waternish)	400	1,600	1,662
Edinburgh	3,150	9,150	8,390	Kilmuir & Stenscholl	700	2,800	2,919
<i>Total Edinburgh</i>	3,350	11,500	11,345	North Uist	1,800	4,900	5,067
Presbytery of Glasgow				Portree	2,202	8,643	9,775
Ayr	0	0	0	Snizort	1,650	5,950	7,272
Arran	831	1,800	2,299	Strath	1,370	6,090	7,468
Dumfries	220	840	1,187	<i>Total Skye & Uist</i>	9,122	33,983	38,650
Glasgow - Partick	2,300	10,000	12,023	Total From Congregations			
Glasgow - Shettleston	0	0	1,000		37,023	142,960	161,294
Glasgow - Thornwood	1,500	6,220	7,602	Private Donations			
Rothesay	0	616	0		714	6,594	8,318
<i>Total Glasgow</i>	4,851	19,476	24,111	TOTAL			
					£37,737	£149,554	£169,612
				Included in the above:			
				Tax Recovered on Gift Aid			
						0	£21,078

Letter From Africa

Dear Friends,

I remember going through one of the Frasers' boxes late one evening in December 2003 at our home in Villiersdorp, South Africa and discovering a whole pile of "Witness" magazines. I read all the "Letters from Africa" written by Marion Fraser, till the early morning hours. How vividly she could describe the scenes and happenings here in the Eastern Province of Zambia, at Covenant College, Petauke.

First Visit

Although born and bred in Africa (South Africa from Dutch descendants), Central Africa and Zambia is quite different in many aspects. I came with Jan, my husband, for the first time during September 2003 for four weeks. I still have pleasant memories of that time when we worked and served God together with the Frasers and others at the old Kawere Mission. The things I found most difficult to cope with were the dust, the heat and the insects, as well as the

condition of the roads we travelled.

New Mission

Now we are at the new Mission, which the locals call Abweno Farm. There are a number of differences and new challenges we have to face as we are living here right in the middle of the bush. It is not an established mission station as the old site was. Buildings and facilities are all in progress and not completed. This takes a lot of our time and energy. We are most grateful for what has been done and achieved by our brothers and sisters from Scotland, England and South Africa who came a few weeks before the opening of the College. We do now have running water in the house, with bathroom and kitchen fitted; but not electricity or bush-mail functioning at the moment. We get along with a lamp and candles and thank the Lord for the Cleggs in town from where we can do our e-mails to the outside world.

Lord's Day

We usually join them on the Lord's Day for lunch and have a late afternoon service when a few local Zambians join us in worshipping our Great and Glorious God. From their verandah, where we mostly meet because of the heat, one can hear the Muslims' call to prayer. Yes, Islam is a real threat to Eastern Zambia as they infiltrate through Malawi and build their mosques everywhere. They persuade the poor and desperate to join them by offering clothes, food and money in return for a false religion. On a Thursday we also visit the Cleggs with the students after their chaplaincy at the local District Hospital. Then we have a lecture on health and nutrition.

Developing Work

The Lord has been most gracious to Jan, to be able to persevere and do all the lecturing on his own up till now from Tuesdays to Fridays, five lectures per day. The students are participating well and we praise the Lord for their openness and zeal to receive and give. All nine 2nd and 3rd year students from last year are present. Three new ones (from Lusaka and Petauke) are still very young men. One is from the Reformed Church and another is a Pentecostal and both are eager to learn from God's Word. We are still expecting more to come; some have been enquiring; some will only join in the second semester and some next year (Kenneth Moya, who worked in the Frasers' house is one of them). The first two weeks were difficult as the second chalet, next to our house, had to be used for lecturing by day and sleeping accommodation for the students at night. Thanks to God, the Lecture Hall is now completed and classes continue there. It is a real African style building with a thatch roof and low walls on three sides with an open space between roof and walls. This makes it cool inside but sometimes there's a battle with insects around your face all the time. Please pray that the students' accommodation will soon be completed, as we will need the second chalet for visiting lecturers and volunteers.



Children's work

We started with children's Bible Classes on Wednesday afternoons. The first week only seven children came; the second week 21 and the third week 35 appeared. We now reach the children from two villages near to this new mission, who were not reached with the Gospel previously, as the Kawere Mission was too far away for them. Different students help with interpreting English into Nyanja (Chichewa) and I teach them Bible verses to memorize in their own language, and English songs. We started with Genesis and are busy with the Creation and the Fall at the moment. They also hear a true-life missionary story every second week. The children listen attentively. Please pray that the Lord would open their hearts to receive the truth that is written in the Bible; that they would repent of their sin and turn to Jesus and put their trust in Him as their Saviour and Lord.

Many tasks

Much sorting, admin and other tasks have taken my time as well. We had quite a number of visitors coming to our house; local pastors, teachers and graduates from last year. We were much encouraged by their visits as we could join hands and hearts in prayer and vision. Students also knock on the door for help, medicine and many other reasons. Life in the African bush is not easy, but the Lord lifts our spirit with His presence, His Word and the joy of being able to serve Him and the people of Zambia in this place, at this time. The Zambians are friendly, peaceful people in general and we love them with the love of the Lord Jesus Christ. Thank you for supporting this ministry at Covenant College through your prayers and offerings.

"Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth" (3Jn.2).

Yours in Him,
Fransa van Straaten

When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water.

Isaiah 41:17-18