

THE  
**Free Presbyterian Magazine**  
AND MONTHLY RECORD

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Vol. LXVIII

July, 1963

No. 3

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THE ASSEMBLIES

**The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland**

This General Assembly opened once more on Tuesday, the 21st day of May, 1963.

*The Lord High Commissioner's Address to the Assembly.* The Duke of Gloucester said that the Queen had commanded him to assure the Assembly once more of Her Majesty's deep sense of its "unfailing loyalty and steadfast zeal for her service, and of her continued determination to maintain Presbyterian Church Government in Scotland." The reference to the Queen's determination to maintain Presbyterian Church Government in Scotland as Her Majesty, in law, is bound to do, runs counter to past and present indications within the ministry of the Church of Scotland of a desire for change and a tendency towards Episcopacy and even Romanism. The Duke also asserted that "the Church holds the eternal truth of God which time cannot change. Eternal truth cannot be changed to please passing whims and fashions." This statement is indeed a basic and profound one as applicable to the true and faithful Church of Christ; and if appreciated by the Duke himself and the large concourse of ministers and elders before him must have constituted a severe rebuke to the modernism in doctrine which prevails in the Church of Scotland.

*The Retiring Moderator.* The Rev. Dr. N. Davidson, before the actual Assembly began, preached in St. Giles' Cathedral, and his theme was one which he is determined to proclaim, that is ecclesiastical unity. He spoke of disunity and said that we talked about the Church when in fact there were many Churches, each with its own kind of service and flaunting its own denomination. Dr. Davidson did not explain, as far as the report of his sermon goes, the Scriptural and spiritual meaning of "the Church." His above remarks refer to the visible aspects of the professing Christian Church. But he uses the term "Church" later to suit his own advanced outlook, when he said: "Thank God the

Church has begun to see in our time the evil of disunity . . . even the centuries-old barbed-wire barrier between the Roman Catholic and the non-Catholic Church has been lowered a little . . . This is perhaps the most significant thing in religious life in the twentieth century." God-fearing and discerning Protestants who belong to Christ's redeemed and regenerated "Church" disown the views of Dr. Davidson as welcoming the abandonment of a steadfast adherence to the Reformation and a drawing closer to the Roman Church. Dr. Davidson incidentally refers to "the non-Catholic Church." He should have said the non-Roman Church. The spiritual and believing Church of Christ is Catholic—universal. In his sermon he also found fault with indifference in the Church, that is the Church of Scotland, and declared that there were those who like their names to appear on the Communion Roll, but only appear very occasionally in God's house. This state of matters has existed to our knowledge for many years. And who is to blame for thousands of indifferent communicants who live on Sabbath as on the weekday, and have a positive distaste for the public worship of God? The leaders and clergy and Courts of the Church of Scotland. The Communion Rolls bear the names of unconverted, ignorant sinners, and their conduct is not subjected to Scriptural discipline. But Dr. Davidson did say that the Church's power came from the presence of Christ in its midst. But he did not say that a backsliding and worldly branch or denomination of the Christian Church could not expect the presence and power of Christ in their midst.

*Retiring Moderator's Address to the General Assembly.* In this Address he makes it clear that he is not satisfied with the present "order" of things in his denomination; but that he is a clergyman out for change, not on the basis of God's Word—the rule by which the godly churchmen of bygone days in Scotland were guided—but for the sake of change to suit the ecclesiastical "whims and fashions" of modern churchmen and laity and also the ancient and dark religious practices of the Papacy. He said: "We are called to do some radical rethinking in the patterns of our Church life, in our forms of Christian witness, our modes of evangelism, and our customs in public worship." Patterns, forms, modes, customs! Does Dr. Davidson mean a return to Apostolic New Testament patterns, forms, etc., etc.? We know that he does not mean that; but he does not say out and out what he means. And he, with his contemporaries, at times make a great noise about contact with and impact upon "the man in the street." What does "the man in the street" understand by empty words as far as lack of explanation is concerned? Little or

nothing. The Rev. Doctor used an unusual and strange phrase. He said: "There was also a large amount of what might be called buried Christianity in the hearts and minds of many people." Does the Doctor use the phrase "buried Christianity" as a change from the words "a spark of the divine"? Such expressions are always calculated to deceive the unconverted and the ungodly who are living in their daily practice without God, without Christ and completely devoid of the Spirit of Christ: yet they are made to understand that there may be a good amount of Christianity hidden away in their hearts. This is the deplorable type of teaching which causes thousands to be communicants and yet to live ungodly lives. The blind are leading the blind here. Dr. Davidson has with others said that this is a semi-pagan country; yet in his Address he waters down this view by stating that it is a superficial judgment. He said. "Beneath all the materialism, . . . moral rebelliousness and religious carelessness, there lay still in the great majority of men and women, a dim sense of the eternal realities," etc. In other words, the ex-Moderator would have his hearers to accept that man is not totally ruined by the Fall and that he is much better spiritually and morally than he appears to be. No wonder that religion is at a low ebb in Scotland.

*The Archbishop of Canterbury's Address to the Assembly.* Dr. Ramsey received a great ovation from this professed Presbyterian Assembly when invited to address them. He made the following statement among others: In connection with the quest for Christian unity he said: "In that quest the Church of Scotland and the Church of England are determined to play their part; a part that needs to be more widely shared within the membership of both our Churches . . ." We would here ask any clergyman or layman in the Church of Scotland or in the Church of England to inform us of any one single, practical step which the Church of England has taken to forward in actuality the quest for so-called Christian unity between these two Churches. We know of none, no more than on the part of the Roman Catholic Church. But the Church of Scotland is being flattered and assailed to abandon her moorings such as they are to-day. Dr. Ramsey also said: "Our ecumenical discussions between the Church of Scotland and the Church of England are entering a new phase in which contact and discussion . . . is going to be far more widely advanced between our Churches." To us, these words mean nothing, absolutely nothing as far as any change upon the views and practices of the Church of England are concerned. After referring favourably to the form

of monastic vocation and monastic orders bearing witness to the "other-worldly strain in Christianity," Dr. Ramsey mentioned the Iona Community and that such movements were very significant for Christendom. And so the propaganda proceeds apace from all quarters to loosen the ties which the Scottish people have with such as Knox. In these remarks we do not intend any criticism of Columba who came to Iona.

*Discipline Criticised.* It seems that an Act of Assembly had been passed some years ago *anent* Communion Rolls. Those whose names appeared on Communion Rolls and did not attend Church and did not take Communion for three years or more, after due notice, were to have their names removed from the Communion Roll. Rev. George G. Campbell, Moffat, severely condemned the removal, during the last four years, of 24,000 members from Communicants' rolls of the Church of Scotland. He declared this was because of an "outmoded form of discipline" which had caused the Church more harm than good. And so we have Dr. Davidson complaining of indifferent members and the Rev. G. Campbell here complaining at disciplinary measures being taken against those indifferent members. The discipline here referred to is no discipline at all, but a cutting off from membership on paper of those who have been living like heathen over a set period of three years. And yet Rev. G. Campbell mourns over the loss to the Church by this mode of discipline. He complained: "If you remove a husband from the roll, you lose a wife, etc." In his further arguments, Mr Campbell said: "The man in the street may not know his Bible, but he knew the parable of the lost sheep." Whatever Mr Campbell meant by this, we are sure that the man in the street knows how to go astray from God, from the public worship of God, and to treat with contempt Church privileges and sacraments which should never have been given to him in the first place. The penitent sinner is the one whose name can be put on a communion roll; and not the man who is ignorant of the Bible.

*The Panel on Doctrine anent the Ministry.* The Church's Panel on Doctrine prepared a statement on the Christian ministry to be sent to Presbyteries for comment and criticism. The statement deals with Apostolic Succession and says that it is properly related to the Word and Sacraments that are ministered. "Therefore, the emphasis is not on the persons or ministers in their succession, but upon the Word faithfully preached and the sacraments faithfully administered from generation to generation in a continued ministry." The Archbishop who addressed the Assembly would

not agree with this view of Apostolic Succession. The statement declares that "The minister is a man of God and must in his life and conversation conduct himself as such." This view of the minister of Christ is foursquare with the Scriptures. Would that all who hold this Office in Scotland to-day were men of God and godly in life and conversation!

*Assembly Letter to The Queen.* In this letter the Assembly write: "Your Majesty's assurance of your intention to uphold the historic rights and liberties of the Church of Scotland has been noted with satisfaction." It would seem that some members of Assembly have little regard for the historic rights and liberties of the Church of Scotland when they can so act as to further official fellowship with astute dignitaries of the Church of Rome in Scotland. Any rights and liberties which the present Church of Scotland still possesses as inherited from the Scottish Reformers are rights and liberties which the Roman Church would dearly desire to filch from the said Church, even by a long, protracted process of undermining the links with times of Reformation.

*Inadequate Supply of Candidates for the Ministry.* The Committee concerned with Education for the Ministry reported that the intake of divinity students fell far below the number required if the work of the Church was to be adequately maintained. It was observed by one member regarding the congregations from which candidates for the Ministry were coming, "These Churches," he said, "on the whole are evangelical." So by implication the speaker further said: "If we are not producing ministers, we are not preaching the kind of gospel that can call forth ministers." Apart from the serious and spiritual question of converted men being called by the Lord, through His Word, to the holy office of the Ministry—the Church of Scotland have a great problem with hundreds of congregations to provide with Christian ordinances and no men to fill the vacant places. But a graceless ministry has been a heavy plague upon Scotland for many years now; and the want of a God-sent ministry is an indication of the divine displeasure for manifold sins by the people of Scotland, among which sins there ranks high, the rejection of the pure gospel for generations now, and that on the part of multitudes.

*Report of Special Committee on Baptism.* This Committee had taken ten years to prepare a long document on the Doctrine of Baptism and presented it to the Assembly for adoption as an Act of the Church. Rev. Dr. D. P. Thomson, Crieff, moved a

counter-motion to the effect that the Assembly merely take note that the work on the Doctrine of Baptism has been accepted by a majority of Presbyteries as a valid statement of the Biblical and Reformed Doctrine of Baptism as contained in the primary and subordinate standards of the Church, etc. His objections were that the work failed to be simple, clear and unambiguous. It was for the post-graduate school of theology to study and not for the plain, ordinary minister or the man in the pew. We have seen a part of this work in past years and it must now be a rather long theological treatise. Rev. Dr. Thomson also opposed it being made an Act on account of a minority of 30 per cent. of the members of Presbyteries having moved disapproval. This was an impressive minority, he said. The Rev. Professor T. F. Torrance, Convener of this Special Committee, replied. He asserted that the main points in the doctrine occurred again and again in Calvin's own words. It was not something that had been done lightly or inadvisedly. The Professor's exposure of three types of opposition to the Report was revealing. He said: "There was one type which rejected it because it did not teach baptismal regeneration." We assume from this that there are those in the Church of Scotland who believe in that dangerous and erroneous view of baptism. He further stated: "There are people in the Church who disagree with it because they agree with the Bishop of Woolwich—because they do not like the basic question of incarnation." Of course readers may remember that the Bishop of Woolwich wrote and published the heretical book "Honest to God." We may pause here to interpose the remark that the more we survey the proceedings of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, the more we discern, not unity, but disagreement, on many issues within her borders; albeit the prevailing theme of the Church leaders in their prominent addresses is unity with other Churches.

*Ministers' Stipends.* Discussion on ministers' stipends arose after the acceptance of an Overture on the question. The Overture suggested that the stipend should be appropriate to the needs of the ministry rather than the resources of the individual congregations; and that there should be a fixed minimum on ordination, rising by regular increments, etc. It was said that stipends range from £900 to £2,000 a year and this aroused critical and heated comment during the debate. The spiritual integrity of a man receiving a call to a vacant charge was unnecessarily tested by disparities in stipends, one speaker suggested. A drastic survey of the whole stipend system was to be undertaken. Some of the ministers who took part in the debate spoke wisely, as in the

case of Rev. J. T. Lang, Bridgeton, Glasgow, who said: "It was essential that the ministry be maintained, but he did not agree that it must be maintained at a standard of living higher than was necessary." Mr Lang said that he was on the minimum stipend and had a family of five.

*The Church and Nation Committee Statement on the Use of the Lord's Day.* Last year the Church and Nation Committee in their statement on observance of the Sabbath proposed the acceptance of a freer mode of conduct and indulgence in recreations as on other days, their proposals clearly departing from the teaching of The Confession of Faith. Their statement was sent down to Presbyteries and the Law and Administration Committee. The question was raised as to whether the Committee's views were an interpretation or an alteration of the Confession of Faith. At this year's Assembly it was made known that the views of the Church and Nation Committee were a departure from the teaching of the Confession of Faith; but in the view of the Panel on Doctrine the substance of the faith was not affected. Presbyteries in the north and west of the country were critical of the proposals for laxity in conduct on the Sabbath; and an Overture from the Presbytery of Caithness, presented by Rev. W. N. Scott, Wick, carried the discussion against the Church and Nation deliverance. Mr Scott said last year's decision took old people by surprise and left young people troubled. Many of them feared that the report was strengthening the hand of those who had shamelessly commercialised the Lord's Day. The report had not increased the world's respect for the Church but had rather diminished it. This latter statement of Mr Scott's is indeed true, and applies to all the foolish efforts of the modern Church to compromise with worldlings who have no spiritual regard for the Christian Church in any case. Rev. Donald Macfarlane, Inverness, brought the discussion to a head by moving that the Assembly recall last year's deliverance and instruct the Church and Nation Committee to revise the Report after conferring with the Panel on Doctrine. He averred that there was growing doubt about the legality of the present position and that this had got the Church into its present difficulties on this vital question. The following notes on this debate have been contributed by Rev. D. MacLean, who heard the debate:—

"He also pointed out that there had been no expression of what must be acknowledged to be a minority point of view. Mr Macfarlane argued that minorities had in the past been responsible for saving the Church from falling into doctrinal error and their views should not be ignored. He was supported by Rev. David

Torrance, Bathgate, who alleged that the former statement by the Committee was not only contrary to the Westminster Confession but contrary to the Word of God. The value of Mr Torrance's speech was that he insisted that the keeping of the Lord's Day must be tied to the fourth commandment.

"The usual arguments about the Sabbath being a Jewish institution were aired as though such a view had any biblical value, especially since the Saviour said in the clearest possible way that 'the Sabbath was made for man' not for the Jew, although, the Jews, being the custodians of the divine oracles had the privilege of the Sabbath among them. One of the speakers who pursued this line of argument appealed to the Assembly to avoid the charge of hypocrisy. What possible justification could there be for locking up the swings in a children's playground and then going home to watch television? The answer to this is that neither of these things should be done. Several other speakers spoke against the former deliverance from various points of view and one of the ministers made it quite clear that he considered the Westminster statement of the Sabbath to be the mind of the Lord on the point.

"Although the decision of the Assembly represents a momentary set-back for the Church and Nation Committee's viewpoint, there were ominous signs that the new statement is unlikely to be much of an improvement when it appears. Professor T. F. Torrance, who is a prominent member of the Panel on Doctrine said in his speech that the Westminster Confession statement on the Sabbath was 'quite wrong' and neither Biblical nor Reformed because it was founded in the light of nature and the law rather than on justification through the righteousness of Christ. This strange confusion of ideas ignores the simple fact that the Lord's Day now keeps in remembrance the resting of the Lord of glory from the great work of salvation. The step being now taken to interfere with the Confession of Faith will have very serious repercussions all round. It would seem, therefore, that while there has been a set-back to the anti-Sabbatarians, other issues may now be raised of a much more far-reaching nature."

On the result of this debate, the Convener of the Church and Nations Committee, Rev. J. R. Gray, spoke somewhat unadvisedly. He told reporters that he tried to have the debate continued until the evening as a large number of members had left the Assembly that afternoon for a Garden Party at Holyrood. He said: "We were left with a handful of members, including those of the Lord's Day Observance Society who had been specially summoned to wait and vote. The decision reached is quite unrepresentative of the Assembly." Rev. Mr Gray is a

man who should have known better than to express such views because he lost the day. He should have seen to it, if he could, that Church business should not be interfered with to such an extent by a worldly garden party. It seems that a garden party on a weekday even can affect the conduct of the affairs of the Church and annoy Rev. Mr Gray, the anti-strict Sabbatarian.

*The Ne Temere Decree.* The debate on this Roman Catholic decree was something new for this Assembly and especially when the decree was considered because of strong objections to it, inside the Assembly. Again, it was surprising that this matter was raised when so much friendliness between Church of Scotland leaders and R.C. priests has been evident of late. The substance of the *Ne Temere* decree is as follows: It declares that no marriage of a Roman Catholic is valid unless celebrated before a priest. Also, it refuses to permit a mixed marriage unless the non-Roman Catholic partner promises in a written statement to have the children of the marriage baptised in the R.C. Church, and brought up in the knowledge and practice of the Roman Catholic religion. The sworn statement concludes thus: "All this I promise and swear to observe in the Holy Name of God and in witness of this my sworn promise I sign . . ." This matter was brought up by the Church and Nation Committee. The decree was declared by the Assembly to have no legal standing and was described as "wholly obnoxious," and the Assembly agreed by a large majority to urge the Government to make representations to the Vatican to have the decree withdrawn. It was said that the decree leads to the breaking up of homes, sometimes in very cruel circumstances. The Assembly declared that it should be made plain to all members of the Church of Scotland, and to young people especially, what was involved in marriage with a Roman Catholic. Of course we may remark here that the Church of Scotland are right in again giving such a warning. They did so in 1947. This has been done repeatedly by others and by Protestant Societies in Britain and elsewhere. It was stated that no member of the Church of Scotland had any moral right to make such a promise. But young people of both sexes in our land do make this promise in order to get the partner of their choice, having no true religious convictions of their own. The Assembly also stipulated that those who had signed the *Ne Temere* undertaking should realise that it could not be spiritually and morally binding in view of their prior promises as members of the Church of Scotland. This view-point is not so simple to understand. A member of the Church of Scotland, who professes to be an informed Christian, in signing this decree before marriage,

does so with "open eyes." If not, such cases are what we fear they are, persons who are members in full communion in the Church of Scotland and are not converted and enlightened believers and so see no difficulty in promising to bring up their children as Roman Catholics. It is past time for the Church of Scotland to speak out in exposing the whole range of evils bound up with the R.C. Church, instead of fraternising with that Church, and then when deplorable cases of broken homes arise involving Church of Scotland members, cry out against the iniquitous decree of Rome. Rev. W. D. Maxwell described the decree as "wholly obnoxious and an affront to Reformed Scotland." Rev. Mr Maxwell is Vice-Convener of the Church and Nation Committee, and would do well to bring up (D.V.) next year a whole list of things within the R.C. Church which are "wholly obnoxious" in the light of the Word of God and the Reformed faith of Scotland, and thus deal a blow at the Romeward trend within his denomination. Rev. Dr. Nevile Davidson, former Moderator of Assembly, asked the Assembly whether it could possibly contemplate sending to the Roman Catholic authorities, a document which encouraged the breaking of a promise, solemnly made in writing. We did not read that Dr. Davidson said anything by way of criticism of this evil decree. Rev. J. Maycock said he was sure that a promise obtained under duress had no ethical value in any case. We leave this subject with the observation that those who do wrong and see their error and repent of it sincerely, may cease to keep such a promise involved in the *Ne Temere* decree.

*A New Church Hymn Book.* The Assembly approved a proposal that a new Church hymn book be prepared in conjunction with the Presbyterian Churches of England, Ireland and Wales. The Committee on Public Worship are to undertake this task. The Rev. Thomas H. Keir, Convener of the Committee on Public Worship and Aids to Devotion, said the issue was controversial. He said the present hymn book was published in 1927, and the very mention of the year took them back to a different world. The present hymn book was good enough for its time. And so the case for a change was argued out. A youth organiser said that many young people found it difficult to understand the worship of the Church in the idiom of the Church Hymnary. It seems the repeated cry is for change when men are not relying on the unchanging Word of God. Good and satisfying it is for those who know and love the Psalms of David, the divine manual of praise for the Church of God—a manual which never changes and does not require to be replaced, having the stamp of divine inspiration throughout from Psalm 1 to Psalm 150.

*Roman Catholic Talks with Members of Church of Scotland.* The Assembly gave overwhelming approval to the continuance of informal meetings with Roman Catholics by ministers and laymen of the Church of Scotland. It was the expressed view that such meetings would improve relationships and promote better understanding between the two Churches. Rev. Thomas M. Doun, Duthill, Carr Bridge, moved against the deliverance which set forth the above views on this vexed question and for the deletion of this particular section of the deliverance. His speech, in our opinion, was good in places, but his expressed opposition to these meetings was intermingled with statements which revealed a lack of forthright condemnation. For example, he said that deletion of this particular section would help to remove perhaps *unfounded* but nevertheless real suspicion which existed in the minds of many of their members. The Assembly should prefer to await the results of these meetings before expressing approval. Mr Doun certainly made a point which many are determined to ignore, viz., "Despite all disclaimers to the contrary, it had been made plain by the Roman Catholics, who initiated these meetings, that their sole purpose was to promote the return of non-Roman Catholics to Romanism." We do not think the Roman Catholics in Scotland have been "letting out" their attitude as described by Mr Doun; but it was made plain by leaders of the R.C. Church at the time of Dr. Craig's visit to the late Pope. Church of Scotland leaders are just turning a deaf ear to and ignoring the facts as stated by Mr Doun, and that wilfully and with determination. Is this supreme design of the R.C. Church less "obnoxious" than the *Ne Temere* decree? The Lord alone can deliver these confused and deceived leaders of the Church of Scotland who are wandering in a wilderness wherein there is no way.

*Church Unity.* Rev. Professor W. S. Tindal submitted the Report of the Inter-Church Relations Committee; and the secretary of the Committee spoke of the work regarding Anglican-Presbyterian relations. He spoke of success at conferences. There were on the agenda for further discussion: the meaning of unity, the meaning of validity as applied to ministerial orders, the doctrine of holy communion, and the meaning of Apostolic Succession. To take the last point mentioned by Rev. R. Barbour, surely the time is long overdue when Church of Scotland theologians should have made up their minds about this point, so tenaciously held by the Church of England, and so absurd and untenable in the view of reasonable and intelligent students of the Bible and the New Testament and the history of the Church from Apostolic times. As far as the discussion on this matter affects

the Church of England representatives, it will be a question of bringing over the Church of Scotland men to accept their view of Apostolic Succession, involving no ordination without a bishop. Professor Tindal told the Assembly of relations with other Churches in Scotland. He said the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland had remitted to a committee the matter of conference with the Church of Scotland and to report next year. The United Free Church were to discuss the suggestion of entering into conversations with the Church of Scotland. The Methodist Church were at the stage of selecting representatives to enter upon informal talks with members of the Church of Scotland. Conversations with the Congregational Union were to be resumed after a pause of two years. And the Free Church of Scotland was not left out by Professor Tindal. He reported on relations with the Free Church of Scotland and pointed out that while this Church had expressed disagreement with the Church of Scotland on findings *re* Sabbath observance and meetings with Roman Catholic clergy, they had received an address from Professor Stewart (the Moderator of the Church of Scotland Assembly), and had referred to points of agreement which they hoped would grow in number. Our readers will perceive here that Professor Tindal looks upon Professor Stewart's visit to the Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland as something more than merely a "courtesy visit." From the foregoing notes it can be seen that the "grand design" is to link up and draw together all the Churches in Scotland and then draw them under the wing of the Anglican Church. And the Roman Church is prepared to wait until there will be a large scale apostasy from the Protestant faith to the bondage of the Papal fold. There was one Scottish Church which Professor Tindal did not mention, and that was the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. And as a Church we have nothing to boast of; but as we may boast in the Lord who has until now kept us in adherence to the Word of God and the practice thereof according to New Testament and Apostolic example, and in line with Reformation principles, and in adherence to the doctrine and practice of the Church of Scotland in its best days and to all that the Disruption fathers stood for in 1843. Thus we have been kept to this present day from compromising our principles and stand. This is all of the sovereign kindness of the Lord from 1893 until now.

*The Moderator's Closing Address.* Rev. Dr. James S. Stewart, the new Moderator of the Assembly, took as the subject of his closing address, "Repent and Believe." In reading the press

report of this address, which we have reason to conclude was a full report, references to the spiritual and evangelical nature of repentance and believing were conspicuous by their absence. At the very outset Dr. Stewart admitted that as a Church they were not making anything like sufficient impact to-day on the man in the street. And in reading the thoughts expressed and the language used in this address we are not surprised that the man in the street is not affected by or interested in the utterances of such as Dr. Stewart and many of his brethren. We do not discount intellect or literary skill; but the following excerpt from the address will indicate our point: "Can you measure Christ? Have you a calculus for the Cross? Have you an equation for the power of the resurrection? Have you a standard gauge for the Holy Spirit?" Among other things he asserted that the impact of the Church was felt outside the Church walls altogether because Christ was there. "... in the angry criticism of multitudes who never darkened the door of a Church, it was His (Christ's) voice that was echoing still." This point he developed when he said: "Surely we do not imagine, when we send missionaries into *unevangelised* territory, that Christ has not been there before them." If Dr. Stewart refers to territory where heathen are who never heard the gospel until missionaries brought it to them, then we must differ from him as to fundamental facts in such a case. Such are, before the gospel came to them, without God, *without Christ*, and without hope in the world. Christ was not there as Saviour before the gospel came. Although in the way of Christ's providential government—Yes. But then it is for the Moderator to explain to the man in the street exactly what he means, when he addressed the Assembly. He referred to the unsearchable riches of Christ, and that God bears the sins of the world, and alluded to the grace of the eternal, freely offered in the living Christ. If these truths briefly stated by the Moderator were preached and taught throughout the Church of Scotland, as explained and set forth in detail throughout the Word of God, then Scotland would not be in such a low and pitiable state religiously as it is to-day.

### The General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland

The Assembly met on Thursday, 21st May, in Edinburgh.

*New Moderator's Address.* Rev. Robert C. Christie, Saltcoats, the new Moderator of Assembly, addressed the Assembly on "The Relevance of the Christian Ethic." According to press reports he dealt with the lack of moral principles and practice in these present times. He said: "The tragedy and dilemma of this age

was that both the popular and Church-going types of morality had tended to slip into disuse." What the popular type of morality is, we are not quite sure, although the Moderator may well have made a valid observation in his own choice of words. He referred to intemperance, immorality and the rise in criminal offences, the lack of honesty and the publication of literature of doubtful moral value. The Moderator declared "In this day of confusion and uncertainty, the only relevant message was the Gospel."

*Visit to the Assembly of the Church of Scotland Moderator.* It was reported that the Church of Scotland Commission of Assembly, which of course met quite a while before the date of the Church of Scotland and Free Church Assemblies, had appointed Professor J. S. Stewart as a delegate to the Free Church Assembly, subject to an indication from the Free Church Assembly that he would be welcomed by them. This matter was no doubt in the hands of the Clerk and an appropriate Committee of the Free Church before their Assembly met. When the Assembly met, in due course, the Clerk, Professor W. J. Cameron, introduced the matter and moved that, "while expressing strong disagreement with recent findings of the Church of Scotland on Sabbath observance and disturbed by official recognition of discussions with the clergy of the Roman Catholic Church, they should as an act of courtesy, resolve to invite Professor Stewart (the Moderator of the Church of Scotland Assembly) to the Assembly and ask him to address them." The Rev. C. Graham, Tain, seconding the motion said: "We are making it abundantly clear that there are matters of fundamental importance which separate us from the Church of Scotland, and we are not prepared to have them obscured, and we are not prepared to do anything in the name of courtesy to undermine our fidelity to our own standards." Professor Cameron and Rev. C. Graham, of course, had nothing to say on the fact that Professor Stewart was indeed the Moderator of the Assembly of the Church of Scotland, *a modernistic and backsliding Church* in many more ways, in addition to loose views on Sabbath observance and a Romeward trend within her borders—that he was the highest official representative of such a Church. We presume that some Church of Scotland representatives when they enter into conference with and are lectured by Roman Catholic representatives, assert that they also are not obscuring or parting with their principles. "Courtesy" is a word much in use to-day in ecclesiastical circles. In the other direction, so to speak, it was a "courtesy visit" which the Rev. Dr. Craig, ex-Moderator of the Church of

Scotland, paid to the late Pope at the Vatican, and any criticism was to be quietened down by emphasis on "Courtesy." As we have already hinted in our notes on the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Professor Tindal, Convener of their Inter-Church Relations Committee, referred to this visit in terms that were not confined to the "courtesy" view of it. Rev. Duncan MacLeay, Fearn, with more discernment, in our opinion, than Professor Cameron and Rev. C. Graham together, spoke against the invitation. Mr MacLeay said: "I feel it a duty to my Church to oppose this . . . We are protesting against a Church that has shown herself antagonistic to many of the doctrines which have been the very foundation of our Christian heritage in Scotland." The matter went to the vote; and the Free Church Assembly was split exactly into two parties—36 voting for the visit and 36 against inviting Professor Stewart to attend and address the Assembly. Rev. Robert C. Christie, the Free Church Moderator, thereupon gave his casting vote in favour of inviting Professor Stewart, and the matter was thus carried. His vote was a vote for the Church of Scotland, in our opinion. This case is indicative of a deep cleavage within the Free Church of Scotland on certain matters of principle and practice. Are there after all an advanced party and a conservative party as to Church practice in the Free Church of Scotland?

*Professor Stewart's Address to Free Church Assembly.* Professor Stewart in his address revealed that he had been baptised in the Free Church, and that he was ordained in the United Free Church. He referred to expository preaching and that he had spoken to Free Church students at their College and found they had a "passion" for this. He said: "I think in Inter-Church relations, you have a great service to do to the rest of Scotland in recalling us all to this, the only kind of palpable preaching—direct from the Word of God." His address was continuously punctuated by applause and his final note of thanks to the Assembly, according to report, was drowned in applause. The Free Church Moderator of Assembly assured Professor Stewart that his strong words had warmed their hearts. "We," he said, "were happy to see your Church and Nation Committee and our Social Questions Committee agreeing about the effect of the Canon Law Code and the *Ne Temere* decree. There are other points of agreement, and I trust they will grow and that this visit you paid us will perhaps be the beginning of a closer stand together, in defence of the eternal truth of God's Word." What a change will have to be wrought by the mighty power of the

Holy Spirit in the midst of the Church of Scotland before that Church will even *return* to the truth of God's Word, not to speak of that Church engaging in the defence of God's holy Word!

*Faulty Enunciation from the Pulpit.* Criticism of faulty enunciation from the pulpit was made by Rev. J. Calvin MacKay, Inverness, who said: "I believe that in too many cases much of the message being told is lost through faulty enunciation of words or through other causes which could well be corrected." The students were advised to apply the rules of elocution taught them. On this question we take the opportunity of stating that Rev. C. MacKay's remarks ought to be seriously pondered by every man who enters a pulpit. The Word of God should be read in such a manner that every person present who has their hearing should comfortably hear what is read. Of course the same applies to preaching. For men to preach the gospel in such a way, that the people cannot hear him properly or follow his actual words continuously, is inadmissible in a student and especially a minister. For one to announce psalms and chapters of the Bible from the pulpit in a manner in which many cannot hear what is announced, is most unbecoming in the service of God's sanctuary.

*Religion and Morals.* Rev. Murdo A. MacLeod, London, presented the Report on Public Questions, Religion and Morals. He said it would seem imperative that the Government should take greater cognisance of moral character in the appointments to places involving the security of the realm. Mr MacLeod here put his finger upon a sordid state of affairs partly revealed by the Radcliffe Enquiry. He also referred to the State's duty to uphold the Law of God and to enforce morals within certain limits, this having Scriptural authority. This was an unpopular conception of the State's duty, he said. We agree fully with Mr MacLeod in his view of the obligations of the State. But we noticed recently that the well-known Rev. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, London, in a Paper on "Puritan Perplexities," makes it clear that he does not agree with Mr MacLeod's point of view. Rev. Lloyd-Jones writes, *inter alia*: "I venture to assert that once more we are dealing with a standpoint which is based upon a fallacy, which is Old Testament thinking again rather than New Testament; and it always leads to trouble. . . That kind of 'enforcing' of morals by Act of Parliament instead of by moral and spiritual suasion . . . is bound to produce a reaction against itself." Mr MacLeod also gave a warning against the ecumenical movement as one of the evils that bodes ill for the progress of the Gospel. And let the Free Church take this warning. Rev.

G. N. M. Collins—now Professor Collins—repeated regarding the Papacy, that which requires to be repeated by true Protestants, viz., that there is no change upon the Church of Rome. “It still has as its own purpose, the winning back of its former power in this country.”

*Moderator's Closing Address.* Rev. Robert C. Christie said in his closing Address, that men and women to-day were living in a moral and spiritual vacuum, and that they were looking for a lead, listening for some voice of authority, desperately seeking some firm basis for life. These words just do not make sense to some of us, in the plain, practical light of Scripture doctrine regarding man and the Fall of man and the desires of the natural man. What the aforesaid “spiritual vacuum” means, we haven't the least idea. Maybe we are out of touch with the up-to-date way of expressing things. Maybe the Moderator was speaking of a specific class of men and women, but we just do not know from the press report of his address. Before leaving this, we would state that men and women to-day generally are desperately seeking to satisfy the lusts of the flesh and anything but a firm basis of life. The Moderator spoke of the activities of the R.C. Church and groups propagating false religions. In addition to the preaching of the gospel, he suggested the use of well-written, well-produced tracts for which there would be a market. Finally, he exhorted to personal evangelism, and suggested that young men might take up work in colportage.

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## “THE SAINTS' STRENGTH, WHERE IT LIES”

By W. Gurnall, A.M.

The Christian's strength lies in the Lord, not in himself. The strength of an earthly general lies in his troops; he flies, as a great commander once said to his soldiers, upon their wings; if their feathers be clipped, their power broken, he is lost. But in the army of saints, the strength of every saint, yea, of the whole host of saints, lies in the Lord of Hosts. God can overcome His enemies without their hands; but they cannot so much as defend themselves without His arm. 2. It is one of God's names, “The Strength of Israel” (1 Sam. 15: 29). “Without Me ye can do nothing.” (John 15: 5). Thinking strength is of God: “Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God.” (2 Cor. 3: 5). We apostles, we saints have habitual grace; yet this lies like water at the bottom of a well, which will not ascend with all our pumping, till

God pours in His exciting grace, and then it comes. To will is more than to think; to exert our will into action, more than both; these are of God. "It is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." (Ph. 2: 13). He makes the heart new; and having made it fit for heavenly motion, setting every wheel (as it were) in its right place, then He winds it up by His actuating grace, and sets it going, the thoughts stirring, and the will moving toward the holy object presented; yet here the chariot is set, and cannot ascend the hill of action till God puts His shoulder to the wheel: "To will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not." (Rom. 7). God is at the bottom of the ladder, and at the top also, the Author and Finisher; yea, helping and lifting the soul at every round, in his ascent to any holy action. Well, now the Christian is set on work, how long will he keep close to it? Alas, poor soul! no longer than he is held up by the same hand that impowered him at first. He hath soon wrought out the strength received; and therefore to maintain the tenure of a holy course, there must be renewing strength from Heaven every moment; which David knew, and therefore, when his heart was in as holy a frame as ever he felt it, and his people by their free-will offering declared the same, yet even then he prays that God would "keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart" of His people, and establish their hearts to Him. (Chron. 29: 18). The Christian, when fullest of Divine communications, is but a glass without a foot; he cannot stand, or hold what he hath received, any longer than God holds him in His strong hand. Therefore Christ, when bound for Heaven, and ready to take His leave of His children, bespeaks His Father's care of them in His absence—"Father, keep them." (John 17). As if He had said, "They must not be left alone; they are poor, helpless children that can neither stand nor go without assistance: they will lose the grace I have given them, and fall into those temptations which I kept them from while I was with them, if they be out of Thine eye or arm but one moment; and therefore, *Father, keep them.*"

Again. Consider the Christian as addressing himself to any duty of God's worship; still his strength is in the Lord. Would he pray? Where will he find matter for his prayer? Alas! *he knows not what to pray for as he ought.* Let him alone, and he will soon pray himself into some temptation or other, and cry for that which were cruelty in God to give; and therefore God puts words in our mouths: "Take words with you, and say." (Hos. 14: 2). Well, now He hath put words in his mouth, alas, they will freeze in his very lips, if he hath not some heart-heating

affections to thaw them. And where shall this fire be had? Not a spark to be found on his own hearth; except it be some strange fire of natural desires, which will not serve. Whence then must the fire come to thaw the iceiness of the heart, but from Heaven? The Holy Spirit must stretch Himself upon the soul (as the prophet on the child), and then the soul will come to some kindly warmth and heavenly heat in his affections; the Spirit must groan, and then the soul will groan; He helps us to these sighs and groans, which turn the sail of prayer; He dissolves the heart, and then it bursts out of the heart by groans of the lips, by heavenly rhetoric; out of the yes, as from a flood-gate with tears. Yet farther, now the creature is enabled to wrestle with God in prayer, what will he get by all this? Suppose he be weak in grace, is he able to pray himself strong, or corruption weak? No, this is not to be found in prayer, as an act of the creature; this drops from Heaven also: "In the day that I cried, Thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul." (Ps. 138: 3). David received it in duty, but had it not from his duty, but from his God. He did not pray himself strong, but God strengthened him in prayer. Well, cast your eye once more upon the Christian as engaging in another ordinance, of hearing the Word preached. The soul's strength to hear the Word is from God; He opens the heart to attend. (Acts 16: 14). Yea, He opens the understanding of the saint to receive the Word, so as to conceive what it means . . . Now how becoming this is to both, that saints should have all their ability from God for every step they take in the way to Heaven, will soon appear.

1. This way of communicating strength to saints gives a double accent to God's love and mercy.

First. It distils a sweetness into all that the believer hath or doth when he finds any comfort in his bosom, any enlargement of heart to duty, any support under temptation: to consider whence come all these, what Friend sends them in: "They come not from my own cistern, or any creature's: O it is in my bosom; my God, that hath been here, and left this sweet perfume of comfort behind Him in my bosom; my God, that hath (unawares to me) filled my sails with the gales of His Spirit, and brought me off the flats of my own deadness, where I lay aground! O it is His sweet Spirit that held my head, stayed my heart in such an affliction and temptation, or else I had gone away in a fainting fit of unbelief!" Can this but endear God to a gracious soul—his succours coming so immediately from Heaven: which would be lost if the Christian had any strength to help himself, though this stock of strength came at first from

God? which, think you, speaks more love and condescension, for a prince to give a pension to a favourite, on which he may live by his own care; or for this prince to take the chief care upon himself, and come from day to day to this man's house and look into his cupboard, and see what provision he hath, what expense he is at, and so constantly to provide for the man from time to time? Possibly some proud spirit, that likes to be his own man, or loves his means better than his prince, would prefer the former; but one that is ambitious to have the heart and love of his prince, would be ravished with the latter. Thus God doth with His saints;—He comes and looks into their cupboard, sees how they are provided, and sends in accordingly as He finds them. He knows you have need of these things, and you shall have them. He knows you need strength to pray, hear, suffer for Him, and in that very hour it is due.

Secondly. This way of God's dealing with His saints adds to the fulness and stability of their strength. Were the stock in our own hands, we should soon prove broken merchants. God knows we are but leaking vessels; when fullest, we could not hold it long; and therefore to make all sure, He sets us under the streamings forth of His strength; and a leaking vessel, under a cock, gets what it loseth. Thus we have our leakage supplied continually. This was the provision God made for Israel in the wilderness: He clave the rock, and the rock followed them. They had not only a draught at present, but it ran in a stream after them; so that you hear no more of their complaints for water: this rock was Christ. Every believer hath Christ at his back, following him with strength as he goes, for every condition and trial. One flower with the root, is worth many in a posy, which, though sweet, do not grow, but wither as we wear them in our bosoms. God's strength, as the root, keeps our grace lively; without which it would die.

2. The second design God hath in His saints' happiness is that He may so express His mercy and love to them as may rebound to Him in the highest advance of His own glory therein (Eph. 1, 4: 12); which is fully attained in His way of empowering saints by a strength not of their own, but of their God's sending. Had God given His saints a stock of grace to have set up with, and left them to the improvement of it, He had been magnified indeed, because it was more than He owed the creature; but not as now, when not only the Christian's first strength to close with Christ is from God, but he is beholden to Him for the exercise of that strength, in every action of his Christian course. As a child that travels in his father's company, all is paid for, but his father

carries the purse, not himself; so the Christian's shot is discharged in every condition, but he cannot say, "This I did," or, "That I suffered," but, "God wrought all in me, and for me." The very comb of pride is cut here; no room for any self-exalting thoughts. The Christian cannot say, when his faith is strong, "This is the child of my own care and watchfulness." Alas, poor Christian! who kept thine eye waking, and stirred up thy care? Was not this the offspring of God, as well as thy faith at first? No saint shall say of Heaven, when he comes there, "This is Heaven which I have built in the power of my might." No, *Jerusalem above is a city whose Builder and Maker is God.* Every grace, yea, degree of grace, is a stone in that building, the topstone whereof is laid in glory; where saints shall more plainly see how God was not only Founder, to begin, but Benefactor also to finish the same. The glory of the work shall not be crumbed and piece-mealed out, some to God, and some to the creature; but all entirely paid in to God, and He acknowledged All in all.

## POINTS FROM THEOLOGY

### No. 12—The Personality of the Holy Spirit

It has generally always been recognised by all professing the Christian name that the Holy Spirit is at least a divine influence, but it has not always been acknowledged that He is a Divine Person within the God-head. There is a great danger at the present time in the fact that, although much is said about the Holy Spirit, many deny His personality.

Professor Smeaton puts the position very clearly in his book on *The Holy Spirit*:—

"The Scriptures distinctly recognise the Spirit as a Person. We have only to recall the language used in reference to THE COMFORTER to be convinced of this. To compensate for the loss incurred by the departure of the Lord Jesus to the Father, He promised that He would send another Comforter, who should take His place as their immediate Teacher, Helper and Protector, and thus supply the want of His own presence, the anticipated loss of which filled them with trouble and dismay. When we look at the Persons referred to in that promise, it would be a perversion of language to suppose that a mere quality or influence is meant in any of the personal allusions. The sender is certainly different from the person who is sent: for we do not speak of sending a quality on an errand. Nor does ANYONE SEND HIMSELF FROM HIMSELF, as the Sabellian must put it when he interprets the words: "When THE COMFORTER is come,

whom I WILL send to you from the Father " (John xv. 26). Whether we accept one rendering or another of the word Comforter, whether we make it TEACHER with Ernesti, or HELPER, or ADVOCATE, or PATRON with others, it is obvious to every mind that He who was to compensate the disciples and the Church, of which they were the first-fruits, for the loss of Christ's visible presence, was certainly a Person. The refusal to accept the Spirit's personality in that text compels the interpreter, if consistent with himself, to DENY THE PERSONALITY OF CHRIST in whose room He came. That is the alternative before him which no ingenuity can evade. And the absurdity is not less obvious of identifying the title Comforter or Paraclete with the impersonal gifts which the apostles subsequently received. That such a comment is untenable, is clear from the explicit announcements that the Spirit should teach them all things (John xix. 26); guide them into all truth (xvi. 13); bring all things to their remembrance (xiv. 26); glorify Christ by receiving of His, and showing it to His disciples (xvi. 14). It is not possible more explicitly to distinguish a person from the works which he performs. Nor ought we to omit a noteworthy peculiarity in the THREE passages which refer to the Comforter. A change of gender in the use of the masculine demonstrative pronoun (*'ekeinos*) forestalls the possibility of putting any other sense than a personal reference upon the words. Thus it is said: " The Comforter, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, He (*'ekeinos*) shall teach you all things " (John xiv. 26); " When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceedeth from the Father, He (*'ekeinos*) shall testify of me "; " Howbeit, when He (*'ekeinos*), the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: For He shall not speak of (better: from) Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak, and He will show you things to come. He (*'ekeinos*) shall glorify me " (xvi. 13: 14).

The unbiassed sense of unlettered men, who are beyond the influence of the theological currents, is alive to the fact that the meaning of many passages is lost, unless we think of the Holy Ghost as a Person, and not a mere influence or energy. To lie to the Holy Ghost (Acts v. 3), to grieve the Holy Spirit of God (Eph. iv. 30), are expressions which, as every reflecting mind perceives, imply a Person who is pleased or displeased; and they cannot, with any propriety or fitness, be referred to what is impersonal.

The Book of Acts, specially prepared, as we have seen, to exhibit historically the Spirit's operations in the Church after the Lord's ascension, contains allusions to the personal leading of the Spirit on the mind of all Christ's servants, and in the formation of the various Churches. Thus He said to Philip, who had been directed to the way along which the chamberlain of the Ethiopian Queen was returning home: "Go near and join thyself to this chariot" (viii. 29); and after that mission was successfully accomplished, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip (viii. 39). To Peter, when the deputation for Cornelius arrived at Joppa, the Spirit said: "Behold, three men seek thee" (x. 19). When Saul of Tarsus was set apart to his great Gentile commission, which made him in a peculiar sense the apostle of the Gentiles, the Holy Ghost said to the prophets and teachers who were ministering to the Lord in the Church at Antioch: "Separate to me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them" (xiii. 2). When Paul and Timothy attempted to go into Bithynia, the Spirit suffered them not (xvi. 7). When the members constituting the council at Jerusalem gave forth the result of their deliberations for the guidance of the Churches in reference to the observance of the Jewish rites, they said: "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us" (xv. 28)—language which could not have been used if the Holy Spirit were nothing but an influence. When He commissioned the apostles, and either directed or forbade them to do this or that according to His will, the language attests a free and sovereign agent, unless we are prepared to abandon the literal sense of words and the style of historic narrative. Fritzsche, in his learned treatise on the Spirit, correctly maintains—though the treatise is unsatisfactory as a statement of ecclesiastical doctrine—that it is clear as noonday that Scripture speaks of a Person or subsistence, not of a divine influence or energy; and the Christian Church from the beginning, notwithstanding the deflections of individuals, may be said to have asserted the Spirit's personality, and to have based it on the Scriptures. Collecting the evidence supplied by the survey of Scripture, we may put the arguments for the personality of the Spirit under the six following heads:—

1. The personal actions ascribed to Him abundantly prove it. (John xiv. 26; 1 Cor. xii. 11).

2. His distinction from the Father and the Son, and His mission from both, prove it. (John xv. 26).

3. The co-ordinate rank and power which belong to Him equally with the Father and the Son prove it. (Matt. xxviii. 19; 2 Cor. xiii. 14).

4. His appearance under a visible form at the baptism of Christ and on the day of Pentecost proves it.

5. The sin against the Holy Ghost implying a Person proves it.

6. The way in which He is distinguished from His gifts proves it. (1 Cor. xii. 11).

The glorification of the Holy Ghost in connection with the Church is still future. Passage after passage might be adduced to show that He occupies a co-ordinate rank with the other Persons. But the completion of the Church opens a vista into the future. The appearance of Christ among men ushered in a full historical revelation of the Son in word and deed; and the abasement to which He stooped was followed by an equally conspicuous exaltation. With the Holy Ghost it is not so yet. He dwells in redeemed hearts bought with a price. He occupies a co-ordinate rank. *But His work is still unseen.* The personality and Deity of the Spirit are, however, one day to be displayed in conspicuous glory in connection with His work upon the Church, when He shall have completed the marvellous transformation. The final issue in the glory reflected from every redeemed and perfected saint, and from the entire body of Christ now scattered over every country, and visited from hour to hour with new communications of wisdom, grace, and power, but then seen to be united to their glorious Head, will be worthy of the divine workman who is carrying on His transforming work, and raising up a temple in which the Godhead shall dwell forever. At present the divine personality of the Spirit is less perceptible, because it is not beheld in connection with the accomplished work. The redeemed are not yet perfect; the Church is not yet complete. There is still another stage of revelation, when the Spirit shall be glorified in connection with the work which He shall have finished and brought to its destined completeness."

Note.—The aforesaid article is the last of a series of twelve sent in by Rev. D. MacLean, Glasgow. Thanks is due to Mr MacLean.—*Editor.*

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### SOME MARKS OF GOD'S CHILDREN

Poor, sensible, awakened sinner, who art ready to languish under the sentence of a broken law, and under all manner of discouragements arising from the corruptions of thy heart, in the face of ten thousand difficulties and fears, as enabled by the Eternal Spirit to venture on the mighty Mediator; as thou art a poor and vile sinner, having nothing but what is loathsome and burdensome; cast thyself and thy ponderous load upon the great

Redeemer, Who is mighty to save. There is not one word in the Bible against thee; yea, every part thereof, if rightly understood, encourages thee so to do. And take this one rule, whenever thou thinkest any part of the oracles of eternal truth seemeth to be against thy immediate venturing upon the Lord Jesus Christ by faith, that part of God's Word is misinterpreted to thee, or misunderstood by thee. For whatever has a tendency to bring thy soul to God, through Christ, is from the Spirit of Christ; whatever tends to keep thee back in unbelief is from the flesh and the devil, in hearing, in reading, meditating or praying. This rule will be found of great use to thee, if the Holy Spirit is pleased to teach thee to use it rightly. Once more remember, that every soul that is born of God is as desirous of being saved from sin, all sin, as to be delivered from the lowest hell. Again, that person who has no love to, regard for, nor delight in the law of God, is a great, a very great stranger to real Christianity and vital godliness.—*Anon.*

The dear children of God must never forget their desert days and their desert trials. They must be ever rising before them, not only preserved in memory like the manna in the ark, but brought forth to feed upon every day. In this way deep sorrows may be most profitable to them long after the bitterness has passed away. It will be a mine of gold to them all their days. Oh, let them ever pray that they may remember past trials, and carefully treasure them up as the choicest of their earthly possessions. The dear child of God who has many of these to look back upon has some reason to glory in his inheritance.—*H. Bonar.*

Precious Lord Jesus! I am come to Thee in my present visit, as empty and as poor as ever. My first act of faith, and my last act of hope are, and will be to the close of my life, just the same. Yea, Lord, I am only learning more and more my nothingness. Indeed, indeed, Thou dear Lord, I delight so to do; for by it I discover more and more Thy fulness, suitableness, and all-sufficiency. Truly, Lord, it is blessed to come to Thee; blessed to visit Thee; blessed to receive of Thee, and blessed to live upon Thee. And I can truly say that Jesus is the Alpha and Omega of all my thoughts, affections, and desires.—*Hawker.*

## GLEIDHEADH A CHRIDHE

*Leis an Urr. Iain Flavel*

(Air a leantuinn bho t.d. 56)

V. Tha cur am feum ar gràsan an crochadh air gleidheadh ar cridheachan. Cha b'aithne dhomh riamh gràs a bhi fàs ann

an anam dearmadach agus mì-chùramach; tha cleachdaidhean agus freumhan gràis air an cur anns a chridhe; agus mar is doimhne tha iad air am freumhachadh an sin, 's ann is motha tha gràs a fàs agus a tighinn fodh bhlaith. Ann an Ephes. iii: 17, tha sinn a leughadh mu bhi air ar freumhachadh ann an gràs; 's e gràs anns a chridhe freumh gach focal gràsmhor anns a bheul, agus gach uile obair naomh anns an laimh, Salm cxvi: 10, Cor. iv: 13. Tha e fìor gur e Crìosd f'reumh a Chriosduidh; ach is E Crìosd am Freumh a tha tòiseachadh; agus gràs am freumh a bha air a thòiseachadh, air a chur, agus air a chur an cleachdadh le Crìosd. A reir mar a tha so a fàs fodh bhuaidh na Diadhachd, mar sin tha gnìomharan gràis nì's motha ann an toradh na ann am beothalachd. Nis, ann an cridhe nach eil air a ghleidheadh le cùram agus dìchioll, tha na buaidhean torrach so air an stad na air an gearradh dheth, tha sloigh de dhiamhanasan a briseadh a stigh air, agus ag itheadh suas a neart; 's e'n cridhe, mar gu'm b'eadh, an t-ionaltradh, anns am bheil sloigh de smuaintean a beathachadh gach latha; tha cridhe gràsmhor gu dìchiollach air a ghleidheadh, a beathachadh iomadh smuaint luachmhor air Dia ann an latha: "O cia luachmhor leamsa do smuainte-sa, a Dhé. cia mòr an aireamh" (Salm cxxx: 17). Agus mar a tha'n cridhe gràsmhor ga'n ionaltradh agus ga'm beathachadh, mar sin tha iadsan ag ùrachadh agus a toirt cuirm do'n chridhe. "Mar le smior agus le saill sàsuichear m'anam, agus le bilibh aobhneach molaidh mo bheul thu; 'n uair a chuimhniceas mi ort air mo leabaidh, a bheachd-smuainticheas mi ort ann am fairibh na h-oidhche" (Salm lxiii: 5, 6). Ach anns a chridhe th'air a dhearmad tha sgaoth de smuaintean diomhain agus amaideach a ghnàth ag oibreachadh, agus a tilgeadh a mach na beachdan spioradail sin, agus na smuaintean air Dia, leis am bu chòr do'n anam a bhi air ùrachadh.

Mar an ceudna, cha dean an cridhe mì-chùramach nì air bith de bhuannachd a dleasdanas air bith na òrdugh a choilionas e, 'n a fhritheileas e air, agus gidheadh 's iad sin na pìoban bho neamh, bho bheil gràs air uisgeachadh agus air a dheanamh torach. Faodaidh neach le spiorad mì-chùramach a dhol bho òrdugh gu òrdugh, fuireach fad a laithean fodh'n teagasg is fallaine, agus gidheadh gu'n e dh' fhaotainn feum dhiubh; oir is e dearmad anns a chridhe toll anns a bhonn, agus cha'n eil buadhan neamhaidh air bith, a dh'aindeoin cho saobhir 's ga'm bi iad, ri còmhnuidh a ghabhail 's an anam sin, Mata xiii: 3, 4. Ma tha'n cridhe fosgailte agus cumanta, mar an rathad mòr, saor do gach neach a bhitheas ga ghabhail; cha'n ioghnadh, an deigh do'n t-sìol tuiteam air, ged a thigeadh an eunlaidh agus

gu'n itheadh iad suas e. Mo thruaigh! cha'n eil gu leoir ann a bhi'g eisdeachd, mar a toir sinn an aire do'n a dh'eisdeas sinn ris; faodaidh neach a bhi'g ùrnuigh, agus gu'n a bhi ni's fearr dheth sin, mar a dean e faire chùm ùrnuigh. Ann an aon fhocal, tha na h-òrduighean, meadhonan, agus dleasdanasan air am beannachadh chum fàs gràis a reir a chùram agus an geur-fhaire chleachdas sinn ann a bhi gleidheadh ar cridheachan annta.

VI. Bi seamhachd ar 'n anamaibh ann an uair a bhuaireadh gle mhòr a reir a chùram agus a choguis a tha sinn a deanamh de ghleidheadh ar cridheachan. Tha'n cridhe mì-chùramach 'n a chreach fhurasda do Shatan ann an uair a bhuaireadh: tha ghunnachan mòra sònraichte air an cuimseachadh an aghaidh na daingnich sin, an cridhe: ma choisneas e sin, coisnidh e 'n a h-uile; oir tha e thairis air an duine gu h-iomlan, agus mo thruaighe! cia cho furasda 's a tha cridhe air a dhearmad, buaidh a thoirt air. Cha'n eil e ni's duiliche fàth fhaotainn air, na tha e do namhaid a dhol a stigh do bhaile aig am bheil a gheatachan fosgailte agus gun faire. Is e'n cridhe air fhaiceal a dh'fhoillsicheas agus a cheannsaicheas am buaireadh mu'n tig e gu làn neart. Tha'n a diadhairean a toirt fa'n ear gur e so an doigh anns am bheil buaireidhean ag abuchadh agus air an toirt gu làn neart.

Tha ann, 1. Buaidh a chuspair buaireidh, na an cumhachd a th'aig gu bhi'g oibreachadh air, na a brosnachadh ar nàdur truailidh; ni a tha air a dheanamh aon chuid le dearbh làthaireachd a chuspair, na le bhi beachd-smuainteachadh air, 'n uair a tha'n cuspair, ged a tha e a's làthair, air a chumail leis a mhac-mheanmhuinn, fodh chomhair an anama. 2. Tha a leantuinn sin gluasad na càil gheur, a tha air a gluasad agus air a brosnachadh leis a mhac-mheanmhuinn, ga chur fodh ar comhair mar ni a tha maith air mhodh feolmhor, mar ni anns am bheil buannachd na sonas. 3. An sin tha co-dheasbaireachd anns an inntinn mu thimchioll, a reusanachadh mu thiomchioll an dòigh is furasda a thoirt mu'n cuairt. 4. An sin tha a leantuinn taghadh, na roghainn na toil. 5. Agus mu dheireadh, am miann, na làn cheangal na toil ris. Faodaidh so àite a ghabhail ann am beagan mhionaidean, oir tha co-reusanachadh an anama clis, agus gu luath air a chrìochnachadh. 'N uair a thig e cho fad so, tha'n cridhe air a chosnadh, tha Satan air a dhol a stigh gu buadhach, agus a bhrataichean air an cur usas air ballachan na daingnich rioghail sin. Ach na'n robh an cridhe air fhaire gu maith 's an toiseach, cha robh e riamh air tighinn a dh'ionnsuidh an àirde so: bhiodh am buaireadh air a stad aig a cheud, na aig an dara ceum. Agus gu dearbh tha e an sin furasda a stad; oir tha gluasad anam a tha air a bhuaireadh gu

peacadh, mar ghluasad cloiche a tuiteam le mala cnuic; tha i furasda a stad an toiseach, ach 'n uair a tha i air a cur air ghluasad, tha i glacadh an tuilleadh neart mar a tha i dol air adhart. Mar sin 's e'n gliocas is motha anns an t-saoghal beachd a ghabhail air ceud ghluasadan a chridhe, bacadh a chur agus am peacadh a stad ann an sin. Tha gluasadan a pheacaidh ni's laige anns an toiseach, faodaidh beagan cùram agus faire, an sin, stad a chur air mòran olc, ni nach do ghabh an cridhe mì-chùramach suim dheth, a tha ga thoirt an taobh a stigh de chumhachd buairidh; mar a bha na Sirianaich air an toirt dall do mheadhon Shamaria, ma's robh fhios aca c'ait an robh iad.

Aig an am so, a leughadair, tha mi'n dòchas gu'm bheil thu làn-riaraichte thaobh cho cudthromach agus cho feumail 's a tha'n obair a bhi gleidheadh a chridhe, air dha bhi'n a dhleasdanas a tha gabhail a stigh ann an urad de nithean a tha dlùth do chùisean an anama.

'S an treas aite. A reir an dòigh a chuir mi fodh 'r comhair, tha mi dol air adhart a nis gu bhi comharrachadh a mach na h-amaibh sònraichte sin ann am beatha a Chriosduidh, a tha'g agradh ar n-uile dhìchioll ann an gleidheadh a chridhe: oir ged, mar a mhothaich sinn a cheana, a tha'n dleasdanas so ceangailte oirne a ghnàth, agus cha'n eil am na suidheachadh anns a bheatha so anns am faod sinn stad dheth'n obair so; gidheadh tha amaibh sònraichte, uairibh cunnartach, a tha'g iarruidh tuilleadh agus caithris chumanta thairis air a chridhe, Gabhadh-mid beachd air cuid dhiubh.

Am I. Am soirbheis, 'n uair a tha'm freasdal coibhneil ruinn, agus ga'r luasgadh air a ghluinnean. Nis, a Chriosduidh, gleidh do chridhe leis an uile dhìchioll; oir bithidh e anabarrach ullamh gu fàs tearuinte, uaibhreach, agus talamhaidh. Tha *Bernard* ag ràdh gur e aon de na nithean is teirc anns an t-saoghal, duine iorsal agus e soirbheachadh. Cha b'urraim eadhon Heseciah diadhaidh nàdur anns an robh glòir dhiamhain fholach fodh a bhuaireadh, agus mar sin tha'n rabhadh do Israel: " Agus an uair a bheir an Tighearna do Dhia thu do'n fhearann a mhionnaich e do t'aithrichean, do Abraham, do Isaac, agus do Iacob, gu'n tugadh e dhuit bailtean mòra agus maithe, nach do thog thu fein, agus tighean làn de gach ni maith nach do lion thu, agus tobraichean cladhaichte nach do chladhaich thu, fion-liosan agus liosan-ola nach do shuidhich thu, 'n uair a dh'itheas tu agus a bhitheas tu air do shàsachadh; an sin thoir an aire air eagal gu'n di-chuimhnich thu an Tighearna, a thug a mach thu a tìr na h-Eiphit, a tigh na daorsa " (Deut. vi: 10-12), agus gu dearbh mar sin thachair e, oir " Dh'fhàs Iesurun reamhar, agus bhreab

e; tha thu air cinntinn reamhar, tha thu air fàs tiugh, tha thu comhdaichte le saill; an sin threig e an Dia a rinn e, agus rinn e dimeas air carraig a shlàinte ” (Deut. xxxii: 5).

(R'a leantuinn)

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### The Pope's Death

One thing about the illness and death of Pope John, on 3rd of June, 1963, is that the British Broadcasting Corporation gave the Protestant British public the full measure of Roman propaganda. We were even informed when the Pope's hands turned blue in colour. The R.C. religion is quite unabashed still regarding the “need” to pray even for a dead Pope. For the religion of the Papacy will not “permit” even a Pope to go straight to heaven. But God's dear, believing people when they die go straight to be with Christ according to His teaching.

### Christian Activities in Israel Approved by Jews

The following note is from “Life and Work” for May, 1963:—

“*Christian Settlement in Galilee.*—Construction of a Christian settlement at Ness Anim in West Galilee is expected to start soon with the rejection by the Israel Parliament's Interior Committee of demands from Orthodox Jewish groups to halt the project. After two lengthy meetings, the committee approved the project, noting that the settlement's founders had pledged the Christian village, which will be modelled after the Jewish *kibbutz*—or co-operative agricultural settlement—would not undertake any missionary activities and would bar converts from Judaism.”

The Orthodox Jewish attitude to Christianity to-day seems to be as in the past; one of active opposition. The promised day of divine power will bring the Jews to look upon Him whom they pierced and to mourn for Him.

## CHURCH NOTES

### Communions

*January*—Fourth Sabbath, Inverness. *February*—First Sabbath, Dingwall; third, Stornoway; fourth, North Uist, Kyle of Lochalsh. *March*—First Sabbath, Ullapool; second, Ness, Portree and Tarbert; third, Finsbay and Lochinver; fourth, Kinlochbervie; fifth, North Tolsta. *April*—First Sabbath, Breasclete, Portnalong and Fort-William; second, London; third, Greenock; fourth, Glasgow, Wick. *May*—First Sabbath, Kames and Oban; second, Scourie; third, Edinburgh and Broadford. *June*—First Sabbath, Applecross; second, Shieldaig; third, Lochcarron, Glendale, Helms-

dale, Dornoch and Uig; fourth, Gairloch; fifth, Inverness. *July*—First Sabbath, Lairg, Raasay and Beaully; second, Staffin, Tomatin and Tain; third, Halkirk, Rogart, Flashadder and Daviot; fourth, Achmore, Bracadale, North Uist and Plockton. *August*—First Sabbath, Dingwall; second, Portree and Stratherrick; third, Bonar, Finsbay and Laide; fourth, Vatten, Stornoway, Thurso. *September*—First Sabbath, Ullapool, Breasclete; second, Strathy; third, Tarbert, Stoer and Vancouver (Canada); fourth, Applecross. *October*—First Sabbath, Tolsta, Lochcarron, Fort-William; second, Gairloch and Ness; fourth, Greenock, Lochinver and Wick. *November*—First Sabbath, Oban and Raasay; second, Glasgow and Halkirk; third, Edinburgh, Dornoch, Staffin and Uig. *December*—First Sabbath, London.

### Communions at Grafton and Gisborne

Rev. Wm. MacLean writes to say that the Communion will be held at Grafton, Australia, on the fourth Sabbath of August (the 25th), and he expects (D.V.) to cross over to Australia at the beginning of August for a two months visit. The Communion will also be held later at Gisborne, New Zealand, on the fourth Sabbath of October (the 27th), the Lord willing. Mr MacLean is well and active.

### Home of Rest Committee

As intimated in last month's magazine, we have now purchased Ballifeary House, Ness Walk, Inverness, to be our Church Home of Rest. In addition to the purchase outlay of over £6,000 we have to anticipate expenditure in altering, equipping and preparatory work. It is desirable to be debt free and ready for occupation without much delay.

Donations and legacies will be much appreciated and can be sent to the General Treasurer or Convener, also to members of local Sub-Committee, Inverness; Rev. A. F. Mackay or Mr A. Mackenzie, C.A., Bank Lane, Inverness.

W. Grant, *Convener*.

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF DONATIONS

The General Treasurer, Mr Wm. D. Fraser, 20 Daleview Avenue, Kelvindale, Glasgow, W.2, acknowledges with sincere thanks:—

**Sustentation Fund.**—Miss A. MacDonald, Raasay, £2; Anon, U.S.A., £10; J. MacDonald, Tockavaig, £50.

**Home Mission Fund.**—Mrs Morrison, Ness Villa, Tarbert, £1; Anon, Glasgow collection plate, £5.

**Foreign Mission Fund.**—Mr and Mrs Livingstone, Ardheslaig, £6; Anon, U.S.A., £7 14s 2d; Mr Kitchen, Winnipeg, £330; J. MacDonald, Tockavaig, £50; Anon, "In loving memory," £5; Free Presbyterians of Farr, Bettyhill, £2; M. MacGregor, N.S.W., £2; A. Shaw, N.S.W., £2; Anon, Lewis, £4 11s 3d; Mrs J. M., Barvas, £3 7/-; K. Huibregtse, Holland, £9 1s 6d; Mr M. MacAulay, Lower Largo, £4 2s 6d. The following for Mission Hospital: F.P. Friend in U.S.A., £1 15s 5d; I. MacA., £1; Mrs Munro, Glenmoriston, £1.

**Aged and Infirm Ministers', etc., Fund.**—G. R. R., 3/10d.

**College and Library Fund.**—F. F., Glasgow, £5; Friend, per Rev. D. MacLean, £5; C. M., Gisborne, £5.

**Mission to the Jews Fund.**—C. M., Gisborne, £5; D. A. R., Gisborne, £2; Miss J. MacKessock, Elgin, £1 18s 8d.

**Home of Rest Fund.**—Mrs M., Gisborne, £2; Mrs Munn, Oban, £10.

Mr J. Grant, Publications Treasurer, 4 Millburn Road, Inverness, acknowledges with many thanks:—

**Publications Fund.**—Mrs E. G. F., MacLean, N.S.W., Australia, 3/-; Mrs M., Oban, £9 2s 6d; Mrs McG., Tarbert, £1 2s 6d; the following for sending books to hospitals, hostels, etc.: Miss J. McK., Elgin, £2; Anon, Lewis, £4 11s 3d.

**On behalf of the Trinitarian Bible Society.**—Tolsta Friend, £2; Mrs Aitken, Timaru, New Zealand, £1; Mrs MacP., Gisborne, £5; North Harris Congregation, per Mr D. Morrison, £29 5s 1d.

**Welfare of Youth Fund.**—Friend, Daviot, 10/-.

**Free Distribution and Magazine Fund.**—Friend, Ullapool, 5/6; Mrs A. McG., Kishorn, 10/-; Mr J. D. McA., Inverness, £1 2s 6d; Mrs J. McD., Ardmail, 8/6; Mrs C. McD., Stockinish, 2/6; Mr J. M., Plockton, 8/6; Mrs C. McL., Lochmaddy, 2/6; Mr I. McL., Lochinver, 2/6; Mrs M., Oban, £9 2s 6d.

**Halkirk.**—Rev. W. Grant gratefully acknowledges for Home of Rest Fund, "A Friend," £4; I. Y., £5, per Mrs Grant.

The following lists sent in for publication:—

**North Harris Congregation.**—Mr D. Morrison, Treasurer, acknowledges with sincere thanks: £185 17s 10d from "A Lover of the Cause" for Home Mission Fund; also, per Rev. A. F. MacKay, Inverness, £43 from the late Mrs Annie MacLeod, Bayhead, Miavaig, Harris, for Sustentation Fund.

**Staffin Congregation.**—Mr D. Gordon, Treasurer, acknowledges with sincere thanks: £5 from Wellwisher, Staffin, for Sustentation Fund, and £2 from Friend, Stornoway, per Rev. J. Martin, for Congregational purposes.

**London Church and Manse Fund.**—Mr J. Campbell, Treasurer, acknowledges with grateful thanks: Gairloch Friend, £1; Lover of the Cause, Canada, in memory of Rev. F. MacLeod, £9 17s 6d; Friend, Glasgow, £2; Wellwisher, Glasgow, £5; Sojourner, Glasgow, £2 5/-; Anon, Bonar Bridge postmark, £20; Dator Hilaris, Glasgow postmark, £5.

**Hilton, Fearn, Church Building Fund.**—Mr W. MacDonald, Treasurer, acknowledges with sincere thanks: A. MacLennan, Tomich, £10; I. MacDonald, Clunes, £1; Mr and Mrs Forbes, S. Clunes, £1; C. MacKellar, Laggan, 10/-; S. & M. Shaw, L. Achnagairn, £1; Mrs A. MacKenzie, Dunballoch, £5; D. MacKenzie, Chapelton, £5; J. MacKenzie, Auchmore, £4; Mrs Fraser, Redcastle, 10/-; W. C. MacKintosh, Belladrum, £2; Mr and Mrs J. MacKenzie, Kiltarlity, £10; Marianne MacKenzie, Kiltarlity, £3 6/-; Donald MacKenzie, Kiltarlity, £3 2s 6d; Kathleen MacKenzie, Kiltarlity, £3 7s 3d; K. Campbell, Beaulay, £1; A. M. D., Beaulay, 10/-; T. Y. Clark, £1; Miss Murray, 10/-; Mr and Mrs MacLarty, 10/-; M. MacLennan, £1; Mr and Mrs G. MacDonald, £2; A. MacDonald, £1; M. MacDonald, £1; Mrs P. G. MacRitchie, 10/-; M. MacDonald, Inverness, £1; H. MacKenzie, Breakachy, £2; A. & A. MacRae, Ardachy, £2; M. MacKenzie, Breakachy, £2; Mrs Grant, Broallan, £1; Mr and Mrs Alick Campbell, £2; Wm. Fraser, Farley, £1; Jessie Fraser, Farley, 10/-; John Beaton, £1; D. J. MacLean, £1; G. MacDermid, 10/-; Mrs Fraser, Leanach, £1; C. MacKenzie, Dunballoch, £5 4s 3d; M. Morrison, Maryburgh, £1, all per Miss Catherine MacKenzie, Beaulay (total £80).

**Applecross Congregation.**—Mr C. Gillies, Treasurer, acknowledges with grateful thanks, £10 from Anon, Inverness postmark, for Sustentation Fund, and 10/- from Friend, North Coast, per Rev. A. Murray, for Motor Cycle Fund.

**Auckland, New Zealand, Congregation.**—Mr Ed. Christensen, Treasurer, acknowledges with sincere thanks: Anon, £93 (four donations); R. Vette, Gisborne, £5; J. Van Dorp, Gisborne, £5; Mr and Mrs L. Dunn, Otorohanga, £5; Mr and Mrs Hablous, North Shore, £8 10/-; Mr and Mrs A. MacKenzie, Green Lane, Auckland, £4 12s 6d; Friend, Papakura, £2; Miss Cath. MacKenzie, Green Lane, Auckland, £1 12s 6d; Friend of the Cause, £10; I. Beaton, Matiere, £100.

**Bracadale Congregation.**—Mr D. Morrison, Treasurer, acknowledges with sincere thanks: £2 from Friend at Communion, per Mr D. MacCaskill, and £2 from Mr and Mrs Tully, Edinburgh, per Rev. D. A. Maclean, both for Manse Extension Fund; the following donations, all per Rev. D. A. Maclean, for Car Fund: Interested, £5; Miss J. Macleod, Trein, £2; Mr D. J. MacCaskill, Toteardor, £5; Mr P. Stewart, Toteardor, £5.

**Dingwall Congregation.**—Mr D. S. Kelly, Treasurer, acknowledges with grateful thanks, for Congregational Funds, Friend, £7, and Mrs MacSween, Beaully, £1.

**Lochbroom Congregation.**—Mr A. Corbett, Treasurer, acknowledges with sincere thanks, £6 from Mr Roderick Graham, Greenhill, Achiltibuie, for Sustentation Fund.

**Lairg Church Renovation Fund.**—Mr Wm. Sim, Treasurer, acknowledges with sincere thanks, £50 from Stornoway Congregation, per Rev. D. M. MacLeod.

**Rogart Congregation.**—Mr D. J. MacLeod, Treasurer, acknowledges with sincere thanks, £6 11s 8d (20 dollars) from "A Lover of the Cause," for Congregational Fund.

**Hilton, Fearn, Church Building Fund.**—Mr Wm. MacDonald, Treasurer, acknowledges with sincere thanks: Skye Friend, £10; A Friend, £7; Skye Friend, £10, all three per Mr W. Byers; Inverness Friend, per Mrs Byers, £1; Passer-by, Lochcarron, £15; Friend, Gairloch, per Mr J. Grant, 10/-; North Tolsta postmark, £1; North Tolsta postmark, £1; Mr A. MacIntyre, Inverness, £1, and Miss C. Sutherland, Hilton, £1 10/-, both per Miss MacAngus; Stornoway Congregation, per Rev. D. M. MacLeod, £50; Tain Congregation, per Mr A. Robertson, £20; Mr J. MacLennan, Muir-of-Ord, £5; Macaskill Family, Tain, £10; the following per Mrs Wm. MacKenzie, Inverness: Miss M. A. Nicolson, Gairloch, £20; Mr and Mrs R. P., Newmill, £10; Miss S. MacKenzie, Munlochy, £1; Miss Morrison, Tarbert, £1; Mrs D. Beaton, Inverness, £1; Gairloch Friend, £5; A Friend, £4; Friend, Edinburgh, £5.

**St. Jude's Congregation, Glasgow.**—Mr D. MacPhaill, Treasurer, acknowledges with sincere thanks: £1 from I. MacA., per W. F., for Sustentation Fund; £10 from Anon, "In loving memory of Rev. D. J. Matheson," per J. C., for carpet on Hall platform; £5 from Well-wisher, Glasgow, per Rev. D. MacLean, for Communion expenses.

**St. Jude's Ladies South African Clothing Fund.**—The Treasurer, Miss C. C. Sinclair, 68 Kent Road, Glasgow, has pleaser in acknowledging: Collection at Meeting, £41 4s 6d; Mrs MacKinnon, Dixon Avenue, 5/-; Friend, Edinburgh, £1; Five donations, £5.

**Mbumba Mission Hospital.**—Mr J. Van Woerden acknowledges with grateful thanks, Toronto Ladies, per Mrs Campbell, 54.95 dollars (April), 46.95 dollars (May); Friends in Holland, per Mrs Mijnders-van Woerden, Lisse, £300 (March), £300 (April), £300 (May); Oud Gereformeerde Geneente (Old Reformed Congregation) at Hendrik Ido Ambacht, Netherlands, Pastor Ds. G. v/d Breevaart, per Mrs Mijnders-van Woerden, £500.