

THE  
**Free Presbyterian Magazine**  
AND MONTHLY RECORD

---

Vol. LXXII

August, 1967

No. 4

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**SYNOD SERMON**

Delivered at the Synod on 23rd May, 1967, at Inverness,  
by Rev. A. M. Cattanach, M.A., retiring Moderator.

*“ And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired  
house, and received all that came in unto him:*

*Preaching the Kingdom of God, and teaching those  
things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all  
confidence, no man forbidding him.”*

—Acts xxviii: 30, 31.

With these noble words the Book of the Acts of the Apostles comes to a close, and we take our leave of the great Apostle of the Gentiles. The greater part of this precious Book is taken up with the life and labours of that noble servant of Jesus Christ, who, on the road to Damascus, had been apprehended by that glorious Person, whom he was thereafter to call Lord and Master, as perhaps never any other, in like manner, did, and who now, after “ journeyings oft,” over land and sea, waited patiently on the will of the Master in the great capital of the ancient world, the city of Rome. To this centre of the Roman Empire he had come at last, not perhaps indeed as he would himself have wished to come (a prisoner), yet nevertheless to Rome he had come, and here, in these two short verses, we see in what spirit he had come, with what aim in view, and in what manner he was to occupy his time, during his sojourn there.

Some years before, in writing to the Church at Rome, from Corinth, he had expressed the wish, the longing of his heart, to visit the metropolis and see the saints there face to face: “ But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you: whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come unto you . . . I will come by you into Spain. And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ ” (Romans xv: 23-29).

Before he could go, however, as he intimated to them then, he had first to go up to Jerusalem, "to minister unto the saints"—This journey is also referred to in this book itself (Chapter xix: 21). In that verse we have an account of Paul's words: "After I have been there (in Jerusalem) I must also see Rome." That journey from Greece to Jerusalem did not turn out as Paul had expected and, in the events which followed, he found himself forced to appeal to Cæsar, against the charges laid at his door by his fellow countrymen, and so, at last, as we read in this chapter itself, the little company of disciples, after much peril, on sea and by land, "came to Rome" (verses 13 and 15). At last, his wish had been fulfilled—his eyes would rest upon the city built upon her seven hills; a city famous in history, teeming with multitudes who had never heard the glad tidings of great joy unto all people; a city filled with a pagan culture, in itself of a high order, yet side by side with it, that vice and immorality, that darkness and ignorance of the things by Jehovah, which were to bring it to an inglorious end. In view of this, how touching are the remarks of the inspired historian, in verse 14, where the brethren are said to have come out to meet them at Appii Forum—"whom, when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage." The sight of these brethren rejoiced his heart more than any other sight that day, as he entered the great city, at the heart of the Empire, for these were the very people whom he had longed to see. How different his entry now, from what he might have dreamt of, many years before! Yet surely, Fathers and Brethren, we can say, looking back over the centuries, that Paul, the bond-slave and prisoner of Jesus Christ, still came to Rome, as he had originally hoped and prayed that he would come, even thus, "in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ."

Is it too much then to say that here, in these two verses, we have him set before us in the pages of the Divine Record, ministering in Rome, for the space of two years, in that wondrous fulness of which he had written? Truly, as we meditate upon these words tonight, let us think of him as one who was receiving, out of the fulness of the Head, grace for grace, and seek to learn from what is written of him here, that we too, if we are ever to be true followers of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, whom he followed so faithfully, even unto death, must exhibit the same spirit of earnestness in the service of the Lord, and find the source of our strength in the same fulness.

We would, therefore, wish to take Paul here as one who, in his own person, represents for us the pattern for the true Church to follow, in her witness in the world. As he was, so must she strive to be—in purpose, in spirit, in aim. As the Lord may

graciously assist, then we would draw your attention for a short time to four main points, in considering Paul here as the subject of this evening's meditation:

- Consider Paul—firstly, as a prisoner of Jesus Christ
- secondly, as a wise man of God.
- thirdly, as a faithful witness for truth.
- fourthly, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

*I. Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ.*

Paul came to Rome, as a prisoner, under appeal to Cæsar, guarded by a centurion named Julius, and accompanied by a few faithful friends. Paul dwelt at Rome for two full years, as a prisoner, not indeed confined to prison, yet, nevertheless, a prisoner, under open arrest, bound to a soldier by a chain, day after day. His abode in Rome was a "hired lodging," a place he might have called his own, yet a place from which he could not move, without special leave, and even then, never on his own. In a word, he was indeed confined, restricted, hemmed in on every hand. Yet, behold him as the prisoner, whose bonds are light, because they are the bonds which the heavenly Master has called him to wear—they are his insignia—that he is not his own but the Lord's, as he had said to them on the ship, in the midst of the storm, "Whose I am, and whom I serve." He had served him long, in many places, and in different ways and varied situations; now he was called to serve Him in the quiet confinement of his own quarters in the great capital. Had he any word of complaint to utter? Was this to be the way in which he was to serve the Lord, at Rome, so differently from what he had at first purposed it to be? Did such a thought as this arise in his heart, think you, dear friend? If it did, it would have been as quickly dispelled, as he, by Divine grace, rose above his present circumstances and with his wonted enthusiasm, in the spirit of his "God forbid" of Galatians vi: 14 (God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ . . .) he cried out, "for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain" (verse 20).

He is a prisoner—for the hope of Israel; for the messianic hope, for the Messiah Himself, yea, for Jesus of Nazareth, whom the Jews crucified, but whom God, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, had made both Lord and Christ. From Rome he was to write these wonderful letters which we are accustomed to call the Epistles of the Captivity, and in the Epistle to the Ephesians he describes himself thus: "I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles" (Chap. iii: v. 1). He is a prisoner for two whole years, but, dear friends, what a wealth

of instruction is given by him, through the Spirit, to the Church in all ages, during these two years of confinement! The Word of God truly is not bound—he may be, but *not* the message of Redeeming Love. His bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace and in all other places (Philippians i: 13) but what a manifestation! What a message they bore! We know not how many may have heard of these bonds, only to be savingly affected and effectually called. We know that in Cæsar's household, during these years of Paul at Rome, were to be found such as are called "saints" (see Philippians iv: 22). Had they, perhaps, been serving in the Prætorian Guard, and taking their turn in guarding this noble prisoner? Is it too much to say that, in the spirit of this verse, Paul would indeed have taken every opportunity to speak a word in season, a word for the Master whom he loved so well, in the hope that it would be blessed to some poor soul, as soldier after soldier took his place beside him in "his own hired house"?

His wanderings were over, for the time being, at least, and he could now rest. Yet his mind would never cease to explore the hidden mysteries of the kingdom; his lot still fell unto him in pleasant places; his whole bearing was a silent testimony for the Redeemer. Grace was given him to be content with such things as he had—the chain, the confinement—because he had, with it all, the sense of Christ's love shed abroad in his heart. That which he had written to the brethren at Rome was now fulfilled in himself "who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation (such as this chain, this confinement)? . . . Nay, in all these things, we are more than conquerors, through Him that loved us" (Romans viii: 35-37).

A prisoner of Jesus Christ; yes, Paul is all that, yet more—a conqueror, through Him that loved him. Is there, then, no message for us tonight? The Church of Christ may be called upon to pass through the fires of persecution or the waters of affliction—at times she may feel herself to be a prisoner; her usefulness hampered, she herself hemmed in on every side. Yet, at such times, and in such situations, let her take courage from Paul's example here: let her know that the Word of God is not bound. Who knows but that such restrictions may yet fall out into the furtherance of the Gospel? (as Paul himself believed, when he could thus tell them at Philippi (Chapter i: verses 12-14). To come down nearer to our own hearts, fathers and brethren, who knows but that such may be true of many of the Lord's dear people among ourselves, especially His servants in the ministry of the Word? We live in sad and perilous times, when many may feel that they are being called to pass through this

same experience. Take courage, then, dear friend, and look up for strength to bear whatever burden be laid upon you, for the Gospel's sake, in the full assurance that He is able to make you more than conqueror too. Make use of every opportunity; be not ashamed of Christ's Cross; display your banners wherever you are, and God will own and acknowledge you, as He did His servant Paul. May you indeed find, with Paul, that Jesus' yoke is easy and His burden is light.

## II. *Paul, a wise man of God.*

Paul came to Rome, not only as a prisoner of Jesus Christ, but also as he had ever been, as a wise servant of Christ, a steward of the mysteries of the kingdom, one who knew how to occupy his time profitably and who could, therefore, write from Rome to the Ephesians believers, "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time because the days are evil" (Ephesians v: 15, 16). He himself appears in this verse, we feel, as one who was a living example of that injunction. Consider, then, the Apostle Paul now as a wise man, redeeming his time, in evil days. He might very well have succumbed to his depressing circumstances: become a prey to every false doubt and fear. He might have sat in his own hired house, refusing to see anyone, filled with self-pity or regrets, fretting against the Providence of God. Is this the way he spends his time and passes his days in Rome? Far from it. On the contrary, he is here "receiving all that came in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ."

In the exercise of these three duties, he was busy redeeming the time—buying up every precious opportunity of doing good, much as a merchant would buy up some precious jewel at a favourable market, as the original verb would seem to imply—busy also, giving heed, by divine grace, to the Master's charge to all stewards: "Occupy till I come."

Let us therefore pause for a little to consider him engaged in this precious work.

(a) "He received all that came in unto him." Time was when he had gone from place to place, carrying the great message of redeeming grace. O how faithfully and diligently he had fulfilled that duty! From Damascus to Jerusalem, to Antioch, Macedonia, Achaia, Galatia and back, he had gone, led by the Spirit, filled with a love for souls which all the waters of tribulation, affliction and persecution could not quench, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ. Now that phase was over; for the time being at least. In the

Divine Providence he was now confined to his own hired house, and could no longer go out to his fellowmen. Was the time of opportunity now gone for ever? No, indeed, for here we see him receiving all that came in unto him—he could no longer go out to men, but men could come in to him.

We may not know for certain who they were that came, but we can expect that his own friends and companions would come. Men like Luke, the good physician; Timothy, his own son in the faith; Arictarchus, "his fellow-prisoner," so oft was he with him it seems; Tychicus, from Ephesus, with news to cheer his heart; Epaphroditus, from Philippi, with the generous gifts of the Church of Christ there; Epaphras, with news of the heresies beginning to creep into the churches of Laodicea, Hierapolis and Colossae, and Mark also, despite his former defection. They came and were made welcome. The brethren at Rome would also come in, no doubt—these all came, out of love. Others there were who came because he sent for them to come. His own kith and kin, men of Abraham (as he used to say), his dear fellow-countrymen, were summoned and to them he expounded, perhaps not in his own hired house, but that of a friend, for he had but come to Rome then (verse 23), "The kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses and out of the Prophets, from morning till evening." Yet not only they, but the Gentiles also (verse 28) were called to hear God's word from his lips.

The servant of God was confined, but his mouth was still open to speak of things concerning the King, and every opportunity was taken to "put in a word" for them, whom his own soul loved. The effect of his witness was as might be expected—"Some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not." One thing, however, is certain; Paul, the sower, continued to sow the good seed of the kingdom, beside all waters, and left the increase to Him who alone can give it.

Can we not, therefore, learn from this, dear friends, that the duty of each child of God among us and, in particular, of each public servant of the Lord, is to redeem the time, for the days are evil. The ways in which they may best do this are many, but they must always seek to seize every opportunity of speaking for Jesus, whatever be their outward circumstances. Many of them have been laid aside, at times, from active duty in the service of the Lord, only to be more useful in other ways. Instead of repining or being filled with self-pity, they have often received those who came to see them, in such a beautiful spirit, and shown them the beauty of Christ, and spoken of the love of Christ so sweetly, that those who heard and saw could truly say "It is

good for us to be here." We used to think of the truth often in connection with the late revered father of our Church, so recently removed from our midst to the sanctuary above, Rev. D. N. MacLeod, Ullapool. Though set aside latterly from active duty for several years, yet nevertheless he was able to receive graciously such as went to see him, and the latter invariably came away realising how great had been their privilege to spend some time with the aged saint. His memory is blessed. May we all be possessed of such earnestness in the service of the Master, that we, like Paul, may spend our time profitably.

(b) The second duty in which he was engaged was that of "preaching the kingdom of God." He was a faithful herald of the Cross—the preacher of the Gospel is conceived of in, New Testament though, as one who, like the herald making a royal proclamation in the market place, stands among his fellows, calls for attention, and delivers the right royal proclamation from Heaven's King, that salvation is of the Lord. How fearlessly and how often had Paul already done that, but here, towards the end of his earthly journey, he is still engaged in the joyous work, albeit he is bound with chains for the hope of Israel. His theme, on this occasion as on many previous ones, was the "Kingdom of God." This expression was often used by Jesus Himself in His public ministry, and it is clear that He did not intend it to be always understood in the same way. His manner of speaking, as you will remember often was, "The kingdom of heaven is like . . ." or again, "Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God?" It is obvious, from certain of these passages, that the kingdom of God is to be understood as the Church, or the Israel of God, the company of believers in all ages who shall yet be gathered into one. This kingdom is opposed to the kingdom of the Devil, or the kingdom of the world, as light is opposed to darkness. When standing before Pilate, He Himself could openly declare "My kingdom is not of this world." It was a spiritual kingdom of which He was the King, and for this very reason His own people, the Jews, who had long waited for the kingdom of God to be inaugurated on earth, with the coming of the Messiah, failed to discern in them the true Messiah, because their ideas of that kingdom were altogether carnal. They were, at that time, groaning under the yoke of Rome (even as their fathers had groaned under the yoke of Pharaoh) and consequently, when Jesus came and spoke of a kingdom, they immediately thought of a temporal one. Even His own disciples were slow to grasp this very truth—that the kingdom to be set up was to be a spiritual one, a kingdom of grace on earth, preparing the way for a kingdom of glory in heaven.

Paul took up that teaching, by heavenly instruction, and sought continually to bring home this point to his hearers, and especially to his own fellow-countrymen. In this very chapter we have him expounding this precious truth to the Jews, who came to his lodging in Rome (verse 23). Jesus had indeed set up a kingdom—the Church of the first born on high—and sinners were being summoned to enter in. How often, in his own writings, you find the Apostle speaking of this great change in a person's life, under the similitude of a kingdom—translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son. This, then, in brief compass, was his message to such as came in unto him then; he was a true herald of the King of kings and Lord of lords.

Brethren, this must also be a significant note in our own preaching. It must be ours to stress the spirituality of this kingdom, and declare the need for regeneration in order that ungodly sinners might take their place as members of Christ's Kingdom here below, and having been called into that kingdom that they should prove worthy followers of this glorious king.

(c) The last duty in which he was engaged at this time was that of "teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ." This, too, was entirely characteristic of the man; there were always two sides to his ministry in word and in doctrine, that of proclaiming the glad tidings for all to hear, and that of instructing his hearers out of the Scriptures. His methods naturally varied with his audiences—when speaking to the Jews he invariably began by asserting fearlessly that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ and from there he went on to instruct, out of the law, the psalms and the prophets, that in Jesus were fulfilled the Scriptures, which had been written beforehand of Him that was to come "in God's great name to save." This method we have exemplified in verse 23 of this chapter. His treatment of the subject differed, when dealing with a Gentile audience, but still his aim was to teach all things concerning Jesus, out of the Scriptures alone.

How he treated his subject here is not revealed; suffice it to say that, in accordance with his customary manner as depicted for us, in the pages of the New Testament, he would here deal with those precious truths concerning Jesus which proclaimed Him Lord and Saviour. We would merely name one or two as they suggest themselves to our mind in the context. Surely he would teach them that Jesus had come to seek and to save that which was lost, had opened up a new and a living way into the holiest of all, by the blood of His Cross, had suffered and died, the Just in the room of the unjust, made peace through His Cross,

broken down the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile, reconciled sinners to God, and, risen again from the dead, by the power of the Father, had now gone up on high, to live, after the power of an endless life, to make intercession for all them that come unto God by Him. One glorious truth concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, which he would certainly not have omitted (for it was a favourite with him) would have been to declare that Jesus was coming again, returning in power, to judge the world at the last. We leave it there, dear friends—the broad sweep of the canvas, rather than specific aspects and views of the whole.

Shall we take anything less for our subject, Fathers and Brethren? Shall we not rather seek to be like him, glorying in these precious doctrines of truth, as he did, and teaching, from day to day, these same precious things of the Lord Jesus Christ? These are the truths for which we, as a Church, distinct from other denominations in the land, are called upon to stand. These are the truths which we love—not only to declare, but also to hear. Let us all, then, with one mind, stand fast in the Lord, engaged in the duty of making known the savour of His name.

### *III. Paul, a faithful witness for the truth.*

He declared the truth as it was in Jesus, from day to day, but how did he declare it? As one who was somewhat ashamed? As one who was too timid, too conscious of his chain, and of his inferior position as a prisoner, to speak forth the whole counsel of God? No, indeed; here was a man who would make no excuses for the whole doctrine of truth, but would, “with all confidence,” continue to herald the kingdom, and teach those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ. Here was a true and faithful witness—a man ready to be even a martyr for truth. This pregnant phrase is highly significant—“with all confidence” or boldness. Nothing could ever daunt the noble Apostle. Had he not written, from his prison, to the Ephesian believers, urging them to pray, with all perseverance and supplication, for him, that he might open his mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the Gospel . . . (See Ephesians vi: 18, 19)? Here was the answer to that prayer. He had indeed been strengthened with all might to make known that wonderful mystery of redemption—Christ and Him crucified, as the only way of salvation. Boldness had characterised his every utterance; he who had never feared the face of man in the cause of truth (as the good Regent Moray was to comment, long after, of a worthy successor, John Knox) now spoke freely what was in his mind, whether men would hear or whether they would forbear. He had written to the Church

at Rome that he was not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, and now in Rome itself, he became a living witness to that conviction, for he had indeed tasted of the power of the world to come, through that same Gospel. As one who knew the terrors of the Lord, he would persuade men, "Be ye reconciled to God." Although an ambassador of the Gospel in bonds (Ephes. vi: 20) yet he knew it was his duty to speak boldly (as I ought to speak, he says, Eph. vi: 20). Christ was all in the world to him; in that hired house of his he truly lived out that great word of Philippians i: 21, "For me to live is Christ." With such convictions it was only to be expected that he would carry on the good work unto the end, since it was not himself alone that was speaking, but rather, Christ speaking in him.

His words to the Philippian Church may fitly close this section of our discourse, "For I know . . . according to my earnest expectation and my hope, *that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also, Christ shall be magnified* in my body, whether it be by life, or by death" (Phil. i: 19,20). He was not ashamed; holy boldness was given; and Christ truly was magnified by his life during these two whole years.

"With all confidence." Fathers and brethren, let us lay hold tonight upon that keyword in the text, that oft-recurring phrase of New Testament language, and by Divine help, through grace, make it our own motto; let us seek to imitate the great Apostle here (as he so beautifully suggests to the Philippian believers, during this very period of his life—"Brethren, be followers together of me" (Phil. iii: 17) (Gk. Be ye imitating me . . .)).

Ours is an evil day of sad rebuke, a day of much lukewarmness spiritually, a day of sad declension, and of false charity; a day when iniquity abounds and the love of many waxes cold, when men are afraid to speak the truth, for fear of man, when others seek to water it down; yea, a day of small things indeed. In such a day, then, let us not be afraid! Let us lay hold on the everlasting strength of Jehovah, and with all confidence and boldness, hold forth the word of life, speaking the truth in love. Let us have confidence—a Spirit-taught, Spirit-given and Spirit-upheld confidence, in the truth of the living God, as that is revealed in the infallible and inspired Scriptures of both Old and New Testaments. These are the Divine Oracles. Let us hold fast by the Reformed Doctrine of Truth, to which we have all subscribed in the Formula, to the testimony raised on behalf of these glorious doctrines of free and sovereign grace in 1893, by the revered father of our own Church, the late Rev. Donald MacFarlane, and to all that is consistent therewith, in the practice and government

of the Church. Let us have confidence in these precious truths, confidence founded upon supernatural convictions. Together with that confidence, let us seek to cultivate a similar boldness in declaring these to be the matters of supreme importance in life to each and all of us, who are set apart to the service of the sanctuary. With all boldness let us continually declare the whole counsel of God, shunning not to declare to the wicked that it shall be ill with him, but well with the righteous, in season and out of season; in private and in public.

Are we followers of the great Apostle, in spirit, tonight? Let us then be witnesses for the truth; let us seek to be imbued with the spirit of our noble Reformers and Martyrs (the same Greek word is used both for "witness" and martyr; the martyr is but a witness who seals his testimony with his blood). The world calls for a new message from the Church of today; the Church, in many of its branches at least, in our own land, has responded only too readily. The spirit of the Athenians of old, who were continually asking and seeking for new things, is not yet extinct. Paul's answer was directly in line with his testimony from start to finish—his message was the one given by revelation at first on the Damascus road and thereafter; from that message he never flinched. It was old, but ever new. Let our answer be the same, dear friends. Let us not be ashamed by the Cross, let us lift high the Banner of Truth, and carry it aloft wherever we go.

#### *IV. Paul, a good soldier of Jesus Christ.*

The last thing told us by the inspired writer of Acts concerning the great Apostle is this—that he was engaged in the duty of serving the Lord, from day to day, over that whole period, "without hindrance of any kind" (no man forbidding him). This phrase is the translation of one word in the original Greek, and some have attempted to bring out the force of the adverb in Greek by translating in one English adverb, "unmolestedly." No one, not even Nero in his royal palace, was to be allowed to interfere with his witness for the Master. It would even seem as if he were throwing out a challenge and saying to all and sundry—Who will dare to say no—to close my mouth; to bind my tongue with fetters? One is perhaps reminded here of our own national motto—*Nemo me impune lacessit*; "Wha' daur meddle wi' me?" The boldness of which the historian writes might have seemed to some to have been sufficient to say, but no; this one final word must needs be written also "no man forbidding him." This opens for us a window into the effect, perhaps, of that boldness upon his enemies. They dare not

interfere: the work must go on unhindered. Truly here was a man, with fire in his bones, like the prophet of old; one whose face also shone with the glory of the Lord; and no one could forbid.

The good soldier of Jesus Christ was enduring hardness for the Captain's sake, and following in the Captain's footsteps. He was defending the Cause, even though in chains, against all comers, so that none could make him afraid. He was fighting the good fight of faith, his eye upon the glory of the Lord in His Church, and upon the crown of righteousness laid up by that same Lord for him, and so we leave him with that great word, "unmolestedly."

Fathers and Brethren, what encouragement for us here! Shall any forbid that we should preach the whole counsel of God, the unsearchable riches of Christ, the glories of the fulness of the Spirit and so forth? Shall the enemy close our mouths in a dark and cloudy day? Shall any dare to hinder? Shall we grow weary in the fight of faith? Shall *our* hands hang down, *our* knees become feeble? God forbid; He who prevented Paul's enemies from molesting him, in his own hired house in Rome, is He who had stopped the mouths of lions in Daniel's den, and surely it is He to whom we, too, must go for strength and wisdom, being persuaded that He is able to do for us, what He did of old for Paul and for Daniel.

Be heralds of the Cross, then, and go forward proclaiming on every occasion, and at every opportunity, the glad tidings of great joy. Your Gospel, like Paul's, is not of man, but of God: it cannot be hid; it cannot be bound: it *will* go forth, accomplishing God's eternal purposes, let men say and do what they like. Their efforts to thwart the Divine purposes are destined to fail:

O but the counsel of the Lord,  
doth stand for ever sure;  
And of his heart the purposes  
from age to age endure.

Psalm xxxiii: 11.

Let us never accept defeat; let us rather seek grace from above that we, in His strength, might carry the battle to the very gates of the citadel of the kingdom of darkness. To this end, let us be prepared to endure hardness (shame and disgrace, if need be, mockery, persecution and the like) as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, knowing that such as endure unto the end shall be saved, and that they that have borne the heat and the burden of the day, shall at last have an abundant entrance into the Kingdom.

Meantime, then, let us seek to be engaged as Paul was here: whatever be our environment, dear friends, let us seek never to

be ashamed of the Gospel nor of the witness of our own beloved Church. As he proved faithful unto death, so let us pray for grace to be like him, to be shining lights in a dark place.

When going into battle, off Cape Trafalgar, on October 21st, 1805, the great Lord Nelson flew, from the mast-head of the flagship Victory, the signal that ever since has been Britain's watchword: "England expects that every man will do his duty." Fathers and Brethren, this is the clarion call of our Divine and Heavenly Master too, "Occupy till I come"; every man of you to do your duty—to be like the great Apostle here, who "for two whole years, in his own hired house, received all that came in unto him, preaching the Kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him."

This brings me now to offer a few thoughts in conclusion. While this is perhaps neither the place nor the time to enter upon a discussion of the problem affecting the last years of the great Apostle's life—whether he was released after the two whole years of this verse in Acts, and after a further period of service for the Lord, suffered a third imprisonment and then sealed his wonderful testimony with his blood, or that this present imprisonment terminated in his martyrdom. From the Pastoral Epistles (I Timothy, Titus and II Timothy) it would seem to be the case that the former view is the correct one, and indeed this has been the traditional view and the one which commends itself to us personally.

Be that as it may, however, for our present purposes, we are now to take our leave of the servant of the Lord, we leave him thus—engaged, as ever, in that service which is indeed perfect freedom. The book closes on that splendid note—"no man forbidding him"—and so we love to think of him, unashamed and unafraid until the end.

Fathers and brethren, let me end tonight on that same note. The outlook for the Cause of Christ, by many standards, may not be bright; we may have much to keep us humble, within and without; we may at times be somewhat downcast as we survey the contemporary situation. We may feel that the power of the enemy is too great for us—that we are fighting a losing battle. Yet, tonight, let us take courage from this fearless servant of the Lord; let us be determined, by Divine grace, that we shall stand firm, in His strength, convinced that He that is with us is greater than he that is against us. If the Lord be on our side, what need have we to fear?

Let us hold fast that which we have: let us prove ourselves to be good soldiers of Jesus Christ. May the Spirit dwell richly

in us, stirring up His own grace within, that we, like Paul, may also take unto ourselves "the whole armour of God, that we may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand" (Ephesians vi: 13).

### CAUSES OF GOD'S DISPLEASURE

At the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland in 1859 a welcome was extended to Brownlow North, the noted evangelist, through an address given by the Moderator, Principal Cunningham. In his reply Mr North, who was deeply affected by the Moderator's remarks, touched on the general state of religion in Scotland at the time and, among other things, spoke especially of the grieving of the Holy Spirit in the following terms:—

"I believe there are *four special things* for which God is very angry with the land, and for which His Holy Spirit is so little among us. First, *the neglect of united prayer*—the appointed means of bringing down the Holy Spirit. I say it, because I believe it, that the Scotch, with all their morality so-called, and their outward decency, respectability, and love of preaching, are not a praying people. Sirs, is not this the truth? The neglect of prayer proves, to my mind, that there is a large amount of practical infidelity. If people believed that there was a real, existing, personal God, they would ask Him for what they wanted, and they would get what they asked. But they do not ask, because they do not believe or expect to receive. Why do I say this? Because I want to get Christians to remember, that though preaching is one of the great means appointed by God for the conversion of sinners, yet, unless God give the increase, Paul may plant and Apollos may water in vain; and God says He will be inquired of. O ministers! excuse me,—you gave me this chance of speaking,—urge upon your people to come to the prayer meeting. O Christians! go more to prayer meetings than you do. And when you go to the prayer meeting, try and realize more that there is use in prayer.

"Secondly, I do not believe that there is a more effective system in Christendom for the promotion of true religion than the Presbyterian system, *if it was carried out*. But the machinery is not worked. Look at the mass of elders there are in the Presbyterian Church. But what are these elders doing as a body? Blessed be God, there are many holy, self-denying, godly men, who seek not their own things, but the things which are Jesus Christ's, and who go into the lanes and alleys of the cities and pray, and speak, and try to lead people to God. But do the elders, as a body,

do that? I believe there are elders—it is possible there may be such in this very Assembly who know that God, who searcheth their hearts, sees that from week to week, and from month to month, they never make a single attempt to do anything for the glory of Jesus Christ, and such must give an account to God at the last day.

“ The third point I have seldom or never heard touched upon, because, perhaps, men hardly know how to alter it, but I believe it lies at the very heart's core of the irreligion of the land; and it is this,—in the Church of England, and in all Presbyterian Churches in Scotland, and I doubt not, in all other bodies, men are brought up from childhood to say that they are going into the Church—men are put to college and educated for the Church, and men in England are brought before their bishops, and in Scotland before their Presbyteries, and without any fear of being struck dead for committing the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, they swear in my Church, they state in yours, that they believe they are called by the Holy Ghost to the ministry, and that they enter it out of a desire to promote the salvation of the souls of their fellow-creatures; and they know when they say it they tell a lie. I say there are multitudes of instances of this; even in this Assembly there may be those who know they have been guilty of this fearful sin—for even among the twelve apostles there was a Judas—even in this Assembly there may be those who have not been born again of the Spirit, and who are nothing but hireling shepherds. Oh, if there be, I implore you to conceive your position! If it was a dreadful thing for the rich man to think of the entrance of his five brethren into hell, knowing how their reproaches would increase his torments, what will the entrance of your congregations into hell be to you! Think of it! The day of judgment will come, and if you know in your hearts that you are not yet converted, and are not really labouring for souls, as those called of God to labour, oh, follow the advice of Peter to Simon Magus—confess your sins to God, pray for pardon and the Holy Spirit, and for the baptism of that fire which can yet enable you to awake the dead around you; and then, instead of being lost for ever, you may yet appear before God in glory with many children which may still be given you. Brethren, bear with me. I do not presume upon my position; but if I lose this opportunity of speaking, no man can tell if I will ever have the like again. I asked God this morning to bless me and to give me a word that should be blessed to you.

“ Lastly, the very best amongst us are exceeding'y guilty in neglecting the apostolic injunction to be instant '*out of season.*'

How solemn is the introduction to the command, 'I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing,'—'I charge thee'—what? 'Be instant in season, out of season.' Now, we can all speak when we are expected in the pulpit, in the prayer-meeting, or at the family altar, but are we faithful out of season? I feel convinced if the godly minister would prayerfully commence a system of individual, faithful, personal dealing with his people in their own houses, speaking as one who was in earnest and beseeching men not to rest in a mere form of godliness, but to be content with nothing short of God's Spirit witnessing with their spirit that they were born again, that he would very soon see of the fruit of his labour, and have reason to bless God and take courage. We need more out-of-season work, more talking to people apart in private as to the state of their souls."

### MEEKNESS—A LOVELY GRACE

By Rev. Alex. McPherson, Dornoch

It is very questionable whether the grace of meekness is as much sought after as it ought to be. At anyrate, it is observably less requested in public prayer than humility, its companion grace. Yet it is no less necessary than the latter, both for the perfecting of Christian character and for the promotion of harmony within the church. It is not the easiest grace to define. When asked to do so by a missionary in Jamaica, a little black boy replied: "The meek are those who give soft answers to rough questions." The following commends itself as a somewhat fuller definition:—"One who is meek is at once gentle, patient, peaceable; disposed to be submissive and yielding under injury and provocation, rather than to resist. To be meek is not necessarily to be weak or timid, for meekness has been characteristic of very strong natures, faithful to affection or righteousness through all danger, even to death. On the other hand, one may be timid, weak and outwardly gentle and submissive, but by no means meek, as has often been proved by some sudden change of fortune. Meekness is of the spirit."

Some people are naturally mild, quiet and amiable, but the meekness which the Saviour pronounced "blessed" in the third Beatitude is much more than that. It is a Christian grace accompanying humility, spiritual mourning, purity of heart and the other graces which the Holy Spirit implants in regeneration and nurtures by his sanctifying influences. Whatever there may be in the natural heart bearing a resemblance to it, meekness itself does not dwell there. With worldly people, meekness is generally

regarded as a defect of character. To hold one's own as a man among men, a person must have a just estimate of his own worth and dignity so as to be ready to resist all attempts to belittle or slight—that is considered a proper spirit. Hume, the infidel philosopher, once said: "Nothing carries a man through the world like a genuine natural impudence," and many would privately assent to that.

But God has something very different to say on the subject of character. "Let your adorning be that of a meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price" (I Peter iii: 3, 4). There is nothing foolish in seeking such spiritual adornment. "Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom" (Jas. iii: 13). Twice in the New Testament, in Galatians and Colossians, meekness figures among the virtues which are the fruit of the spirit and make up Christian character. It is singled out by the Saviour as a vital element of his own character which his disciples must learn from Him, and if anything besides that could make it more attractive as an acquisition, it can only be his own pronouncement that the meek are blessed, and shall inherit the earth.

In its very nature, meekness is non-assertive, yet it shows itself before men. The meek person can be reasoned with; he is not infatuated with his own theories and insights. He can be rebuked for he is honest enough to recognise his faults, and is not disposed to justify himself. He does not readily take offence because he knows himself to be more deserving of blame, reproach and humiliation than any fellow creature is aware of. His spirit is far removed from sulkiness, smouldering resentment or sinful anger. When he encounters opposition or ill-will or prejudice, he abstains from dubious carnal devices to gain his will and discomfit his opponents. Instead, he takes his troubles and problems to the Lord.

In his relations with God a man's meekness manifests itself in submitting to the divine will, whatever that be. In face of adversity he does not murmur but accepts that God's way of ordering his life is best, and better than a sinner deserves. The language of Psalm 103 becomes his own: "He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities." When he finds himself rebelling against those parts of Scripture which reprove and humble and correct him, he is more disposed to quarrel with the corruptions of his heart than with the inerrant, sanctifying Word.

Only in Christ was this grace perfectly exemplified. He could claim to be meek and lowly in heart. Yet now and again it shone

out in the lives of the saints of God recorded in the Bible. Surely it was this grace which made Abram refrain from asserting his seniority when strife arose between his servants and Lot's. "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren." Moses, we are told, "was very meek, above all the men which were on the face of the earth," and this grace was more than once apparent in his reaction to the provocations of the Israelites. At Marah they murmured against him, saying, "What shall we drink?" but he took this trouble to the Lord and showed no exasperation with his querulous followers. Again and again this grace stood him in good stead and, as a solemn warning to us, we see that its failure at Meribah under intense provocation debarred him from entering the promised land.

Gideon likewise showed great meekness in his reply to the men of Ephraim (Judges viii: 2, 3). David also did so when his brother Eliab accused him of selfseeking and presumption. How admirable was his answer! "What have I now done? Is there not a cause?" Alas, how readily the haughty retort will spring to mind! But it is in this very ability to restrain the speech and quell the passions of a proud heart that the grace of meekness shows its supernatural origin and tremendous power. And shall we pass from even a brief review of some of earth's meek ones without again referring to Him in whom this beautiful spirit dwelt perfectly? "When he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: who his own self bore our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed" (I Peter ii: 23,24).

There can be no meekness in any of us until we are enabled to humble our proud spirits to receive forgiveness and a new nature through Christ. Then, when we are crucified with Christ and, paradoxically, alive by his Spirit dwelling within us, our life will be lived unto righteousness, and to the acquiring of every grace which is in Jesus and must be found also in us. For God who delights in holiness designs that all his people should cleanse themselves "from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord" (II Cor. vii: 1).

One would gather from the Word of God that meekness is what might be termed a foundation grace upon which others are the more easily built. Psalm 149 says: "For the Lord taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation." It is the meek also who will be guided in judgment and taught God's way. Shall we not then seek it for ourselves, not in small,

or average measure, but in the highest degree, that we may bear a resemblance to the Saviour and show forth his praises. It will also make for our own blessedness and the good of the church, so let us seek this lovely grace.

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**BRIGHT ORNAMENTS OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST:  
ROBERT BLAIR**

By Rev. John Colquhoun, Glendale, Skye

Though Scotland is but a small country compared with other nations of the world, yet, ecclesiastically, since the Reformation, it is not insignificant, nor destitute of what ought to be glorious in our eyes. It may truly be said that in no other country were there such conflicts in connection with the Crown Rights of the Redeemer. Since the advent of the Gospel in its purity when Popery was overthrown, men in high places endeavoured to shape the Church in Scotland according to their own fancy, and ranged on their side were to be found men who used all their power and craft to bring it into conformity with the sister kingdom of England in doctrine and church government. In the struggle which arose over this Christ's faithful witnesses often had to contend with "a Pharaoh on the throne, a Haman in the State, and a Judas in the Church. It was often the case as in the days of Micah: "Now also many nations are gathered against thee, that say, Let her be defiled, and our eye look upon Zion" (Micah iv: 11). The Lord, however, is never at a loss to raise up instruments, who, in the strength of God-given grace, were enabled, in deeds as well as words, to say to the enemy, "She shall not be defiled; your eye shall not look upon Zion." Of these the subject of this sketch was one.

Robert Blair was born at Irvine in 1593. His father was an eminently God-fearing man who manifested his piety in his life and in his transactions with his fellow-creatures, refusing to enrich himself by anything that savoured of dishonesty. This godly man died when Robert, the youngest of six children, was only six years of age. His mother, at the time, was not a gracious woman, but was outwardly respectable, and faced the bringing up of her children in rather straitened circumstances. The Lord began to deal with Mr Blair in the seventh year of his age by posing to his conscience the question, "Wherefore servest thou, unprofitable creature?" Shortly after this he heard a sermon from the text, "But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord God, that I may declare all thy works" (Psalm lxxiii: 28), which had a salutary effect on him for a time, as far as keeping him from the youthful follies of other children who were in school with him. However, his goodness appeared to be as

the morning cloud and the early dew that passes quickly away. He went on in this way for a while, alternately sinning and mourning over sin, and it was when he was a Regent in the College of Glasgow that he was taken out of the horrible pit and out of the miry clay, and his feet set upon the Rock and his goings established. He was now a new man in Christ Jesus, and considered it his duty, not only to teach his scholars according to the laws and customs of the College, but also according to the law of God. This had such a salutary effect on them that his reproof had more effect on them than the rod had before.

About this time the infamous Perth Articles were introduced into the College of Glasgow, and, after the retiral of the Principal, Mr Robert Boyd of Trochrig, Archbishop Law made matters very difficult for Mr Blair. The outcome of these troubles and his strained relations with John Cameron, who had succeeded Principal Boyd, caused him to demit his charge and go to Ireland on the invitation of Lord Claneboy. In the providence of the Lord he was settled in Bangor without any Episcopal sanction. When he came to his charge he found the place in a sad condition. Ulster was planted by King James I with settlers from Scotland and England who were reckoned "generally the scum of both nations, all void of godliness, abhorred at home, insomuch that 'going to Ireland' was turned into a proverb, and one of the worst expressions of disdain that could be invented was to tell a man that 'Ireland would be his hinder end.' " Episcopacy in Ireland was not conducive to true piety any more than it was in Scotland. It was such a field that Mr Blair began to cultivate, and he did so diligently as he found opportunity. In his parish there were over twelve hundred come of age besides many children. He preached four times a week, and also instructed the people in a plain and familiar way, and although he had much opposition there was also a good measure of success. In process of time Mr Blair had help from other ministers who came over from Scotland when persecution became hot there. Their joint labours were countenanced by the Most High, and there was a general revival of religion over a wide area. This success of the gospel awakened the malice of Satan, and he lacked no instruments to procure the deposition of the ministers whose labours were blessed in an outstanding manner. This happened in 1631.

After being deposed, Mr Blair and other godly preachers realised that there was no room for them to preach the gospel either in Ireland or in Scotland, and decided to emigrate to New England. The Lord, however, accepted the purpose for the deed, and after they procured a ship and left Ireland they were tossed by contrary winds, and after reaching a point nearer Newfoundland than

they were to any part of Europe, they had to return and at the end of two months they cast anchor on Lochfergus, the place from which they had embarked. Some time after this Mr Blair came to Scotland and preached in various places. After the signing of the National Covenant many of the Bishops fled to England, and Mr Blair received a Call to be minister of Ayr, which he accepted. At the famous Glasgow Assembly of 1638, which ex-communicated the Bishops, he was by an Act of that Assembly transported to St. Andrews. After the Treaty of Berwick, King Charles I, with the perfidy for which the Stuart dynasty was noted, and at the instigation of the prelatic clergy, had that treaty burnt in London by the common hangman, and made preparations for a second invasion of Scotland. The Scots gathered an Army and invaded England as far south as Newcastle, after they had routed the English Army which never stopped till they reached Durham. Blair and several other ministers were in the Scottish Army, and played an important part in keeping up a devout spirit among them. The Committee of Estates sent up a Petition to the King, and after a second Petition followed the Treaty of Ripon. After this Mr Blair was sent up to London to wait on the Commissioners when the great Treaty was concluded. By this Treaty, the King, for the third time, granted a free General Assembly and Parliament to Scotland. At this Assembly, which met in 1641, Mr Blair preached at the opening of it. After the Irish rebellion was quelled in 1642 in response to an appeal from Commissioners from Ireland, the General Assembly ordered eight ministers for each year, during five years, to visit the congregations there for three months. Mr Blair was ordered to visit his former parishioners at Bangor. He found matters had altered for the worse, but still there were many who were the salt of the earth. He worked laboriously among them, preaching once every day of the week, and twice on the Sabbath. Such was the concourse of people who came to hear him that he often had to preach in the fields as no church or house could contain them.

When Mr Blair was settled in St. Andrews he found much uphill work. The parishioners were very ignorant and superstitious and much inclined to prelacy. He succeeded in dividing the parish and settling a minister in the landward part of it, which made the burden of his parocial labours more tolerable, but he was much employed in many weighty and various concerns both of England and Scotland. After the death of Alexander Henderson the King appointed him his chaplain for Scotland, which, when he heard of it, was not very acceptable to him. However, after accepting it, he conducted himself as became a minister of Christ, notwithstanding all the snares and temptations with which the

office was surrounded. His biographer says: "Mr Blair was faithful, and very diligent, and painful in this weighty charge and difficult time. For family exercise, he prayed twice every day in the King's house, before dinner and supper in the presence of the King and all the Court attending the diets. On the Lord's Day he lectured and preached twice, before and after noon in the Presence, besides his earnest dealing with the King (with whom he had many debates anent prelacy, liturgy and set forms, ceremonies, etc.) in secret, to condescend to the just desires of his parliaments. In his public preaching at Court, he was abundantly free, plain, and particular, though he used no apostrophe nor pointed out the King with his finger as some others did, which did irritate the King, whereas he confessed that Mr Blair by his way gained ground on him."

After King Charles I was put to death, steps were taken to put his son, Prince Charles, on the throne. In connection with the negotiations that took place, Mr Blair took a prominent part, taking two journeys to London which considerably undermined his otherwise robust health. His twin enemies, the gout and the gravel, came upon him heavily so that he came not so often to church courts. In 1661 he preached from I Peter iii: 14, and his sermon was misrepresented to the Council by a malicious hearer as something that cast serious reflections on the then Government, and he was called before them. He arrived in Edinburgh but, owing to two fits of the gravel which he took there, he was not able to appear before them. In his absence his place at St. Andrews was declared vacant, after which he sent in his presentation, as the civil part of his ministry, and afterwards liberty was procured for him to reside in Fife. He choose Kirkcaldy as his residence, where he lived for three and a half years. While in Kirkcaldy he did not interfere in public affairs. Through the influence of Archbishop Sharp he had to remove to Couston, in the Parish of Aberdour, where he died on 27th August, 1666. He was buried in the old churchyard of Aberdour, and a monument was erected in the church wall above his grave. Kirkton, in noting his death, says, "This month, Mr Robert Blair, that godly and able minister, departed this life in his confinement, whither he was sent by the State at the Bishops' request. He was a man of great piety, ability and high experience: and though he died a sufferer, yet he died full of hope that the Lord would deliver Scotland, and very confident God would rub shame (as he expressed it) upon Bishop Sharp, as it came to pass."

John Livingston, in his *Memorable Characteristics*, says of him: "Mr Blair was a man of a notable constitution, both of body and mind—of a majestic, awful, yet amiable countenance—

one thoroughly learned, of strong parts, a deep invention, and solid judgment, of a most public spirit for God. His gift of preaching was such as seldom any could observe withdrawing of assistance in public, which in some others is frequent. He was seldom brangled in his assurance of salvation. He spent many days and nights in prayer alone, and with others, and was one very intimate with God."

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### LITERARY NOTICES

*Sunrise in Scotland*.—The late Miss G. M. Alexander was not only well read in the history of the Scottish Church but also writes as one sympathetic to the Cause of the Scottish Reformers. No doubt this arose partly from the fact that she was herself of Scottish descent but even more so it stemmed from her genuine love for the doctrines of God's grace for which the Reformers contended. It is quite understandable, therefore, that she views history not as something detached from the interests of Christ's Cause on earth, as so many historians do, but as a fulfilling of God's purposes regarding His Church even against the determined opposition of His enemies. From her writing, too, it is clear that she was alive to the anti-Christian nature of the Romanist religion and was not unaware of Rome's implacable hatred to the Gospel wherever it has opportunity to express it.

Many volumes have been written by historians covering the important Reformation and pre-Reformation period of Scottish Church history and, notwithstanding the many attempts made to blacken the characters of the Reformers and to white wash the anti-Reformation party, the facts have become largely established as they are presented to us in this small book. Subsequent history has vindicated the work of the Reformers as witnessed by the untold benefits which accrued to the people of Scotland and other countries as well as a direct result of the overthrow of Popery and the establishment of Protestantism in Scotland.

The opening section of "*Sunrise in Scotland*" consists of very short chapters tersely written and such a multiplicity of characters is introduced that it might be difficult for a person unacquainted with the history of that period to grasp everything at a first reading. However further on the book opens out into more connected historical narrative.

We commend the subject-matter of the book as history of which none should be ignorant. The book, first published as a paperback in 1948 is now issued in hard covers and consists of 93 pages in fairly large type. The printer is John G. Eccles, Inverness. At a time when the price of books is continually rising, it is sold at the give-away price of 2/6.—D.B.M.

*The Invitation System, by Iain Murray : Banner of Truth Trust. Price 9d.* We are very much indebted to the author of this booklet for giving a clear and convincing statement of the unscriptural and misleading statements of modern revivalists. With Mr Murray there is no question as to the duty of the preacher to invite sinners to come to Christ, or of man's responsibility with regard to his privileges. The theme of the booklet is the unscripturalness of asking men and women to come to the front, and announce that thus they are receiving Christ. This coming to the front is tantamount to coming to Christ. Here, as Mr Murray shows, there is no place for the new birth or the work of the Holy Spirit, and men are being deluded by being told: "You have the ability to choose, you stand at the crossroads, you may never be as close to the kingdom again. I believe your heart is specially prepared . . . you get up and come forward." If men would study the Bible they would find that *entering the kingdom* is very different from this. The author shows clearly that by treating two distinct issues, "Come to Christ" and "Come to the front," as though they were one, the tendency of the invitation is to mislead the unconverted in regard to their duty. We wish the booklet a wide circulation as something calculated to counteract the baneful effects of the many spurious revivals which have sprung up in various countries for the past ninety years.—John Colquhoun.

### POSADH AN ANAMA RI CRIOSD

Leis an Urr Eideard Pearce (A.D. 1672)

(Air a leantuinn bho t.d. 93)

Caib. III. *Anns am bheil an rathad agus na meadhonan a chùim a bhi toirt mu'n cuairt an daimh pòsaidh so eadar Criosd agus creidmhich air rannsachadh a stigh ann, agus cùinntas coitichionn air a thoirt air.*

Air dhuinn beagan fhaicinn de nàdur an daimh pòsaidh so eadar Criosd agus creidmhich, 's e'n ath nì a thà ri rannsachadh a stigh ann—Cia mar a tha'n daimh pòsaidh so air a dheanamh suas agus air a thoirt mu'n cuairt. Is nì cinnteach e gu'm bheil sinn gu nadurra 'n ar coigrich Dhà, agus gun eolas Air, air dhuinn a bhith, mar tha'n t-Abstol ag ràdh, "as eugmhais Chrìosd," 's e sin, as eugmhais aonadh Ris, na gun daimh spioradail Ris. Ephes. ii: 12. Ach cia mar, uime sin, agus ciod e'n rathad, anns am bheil e air a thoirt mu'n cuairt? Is ann bho ghràs Dhé a tha e, gràs Dhé ann an Iosa Criosd, a faotainn cleachdadh ga shineadh fein a mach air ar son agus oirne; agus tha e bho ghràs

Dhé ann an dà rathad; na mar a tha'n gràs sin a giulain gleachd dubailt leis. An toiseach, mar a tha e seasamh an aghaidh nì air bith de luach na de thoillteanas annain-ne; agus mar sin tha e sruthadh bho shaoibhreas gràs Dhé mar an aon tobar bho bheil e'g eirigh. Agus, anns an dara àite, mar a tha'n gràs sin a seasamh an aghaidh nì air bith de chumhachd na de chomas annain-ne; agus mar sin tha e air a thoirt mu'n cuairt le cumhachd gràs Dhé, mar a phrionnsabal agus eifeachd. A reir sin gabhaibh so gu coitchionn anns an dà nì so a tha sinn a toirt air aghaidh.

I. Tha'n daimh pòsaidh so eadar Criosd agus creidmhich, a sruthadh bho shaoibhreas gràs Dhé, mar an tobar. Gu'm bheil aon air bith de chloinn nan daoine air am pòsadh ri Criosd, cha'n eil e'g eirigh bho luach na airidheachd a tha annta; ach gu h-uile 'us gu h-iomlan bho shaor ghràs agus ghràdh, a gabhail còmhnuidh agus ag oibreachadh ann an cridhe Dhé agus Chriosd dha'n taobh; agus 's e so an cùntas a tha na Sgrìobtur an toirt air, "Ghràdhaich mì thu le gràdh sìorruidh." Ier. xxxii: Mar gu'n abradh E, tharruig mì thù a mach as do pheacaidhean, a mach as t-eas-creidimh, a mach as do shocair agus do dhìtean feolmhor, agus tharruig mì thù a'm ionnsuidh Fein, a dh'ionnsuidh aonadh agus co-chomunn rium Fein, a dh'ionnsuidh co-cheangal pòsaidh agus daimh rium Fein, agus so uile bho mo ghràdh saor, an gràdh sin, an caoibhneas sin, a bha'n am chridhe dha do thaobh bho shìorruidheachd. 'S mar sin a ris, "Agus pòsaidh mì rium fein thu gu bràth; seadh, pòsaidh mì rium fein thù ann am fireantachd, agus ann an ceartas, agus ann an caoibhneas, agus ann an caobh-ghràdh." Hosea ii: 19. Gabh beachd air, 's e thròcair agus caoibhneas gràidh a tha pòsadh anamaibh ri Criosd. "Tha Dia," a deir neach air a phuinc so, "ga'r pòsadh ri Criosd, air a ghluasad a dh' ionnsuidh so, cha'n ann le airidheachd air bith annain-ne, ach le a mhaitheas agus a thròcair Fein." Agus da-rìreadh, mo mhuinntir ghràdhach, ciod a th'againn, na ciod a tha aig aon de chloinn nan daoine, a dheanadh sinne na aon air bith eile airidh air daimh pòsaidh ri Criosd, na bheireadh cuireadh na co-eigneachadh dhà gu ar gabhail a stigh do'n daimh so ris Fein? Am bheil breith na parantachd againn gu bhì dhà cho-eigneachadh? Cha'n eil; mo thruaigh! a thaobh ar staid, tha sinn uile 'n ar sliochd ifrinn, agus bh'uaihte sin, mar pheacaich, tha againn ar slànsearachd agus ar ceud-thòiseachadh. Eoin viii: 44. Am bheil maise agus tlachdmhorachd againn? Cha'n eil; oir tha sinn uile dubh agus millte annain fein, tha spiorad an diabhuill annain, agus iomhaigh an diabhuill oirne; tha sinn dall, agus bodhar, agus balbh, agus crùbach, agus crotach: mar so tha'n a sgrìobtur an labhairt oirne ann ar staid nàdurra. Tha sinn uile ann ar fuil. "Cha do ghabh sùil air bith

truas dhiot, a chùm aon nì dhiubh so a dheanamh dhuit, a dheanadh iochd ort; ach bha thù air do thilgeadh a mach anns a' mhachair fhosgailte, le gràin do t'anam, air an là 's an d'rugadh thù. Agus an tràth, ghabh mise seachad dlùth dhuit, agus a chunnaic mi thù salach ann a t'fhuil fein, thubhairt mi riut, agus thù ann a' t'fhuil, Mair beo; seadh, thubhairt mi riut, agus thù ann a' t'fhuil, Mair beo." Esec. xvi: 5, 6. Agus mar a tha'n suidheachadh air a chur an ceill ann an Isaiah i: 6, mar sin tha ar suidheachadh-ne gu spioradail, "O bhonn na coise gu ruig an ceann, cha 'n eil fallaineachd ann; ach lot, agus bruthadh, agus creuchd lobhta; cha do theannaicheadh ri cheile iad, cha do cheangladh suas iad, cha do thaisicheadh le ola iad." Ann am focal, tha sinn uile gu leir 'n ar peacadh, agus cha'n eil nì againn ach peacadh. "Biodh fhios agad, O cheile Chrìosd," tha aon dheth na seann diadhairean ag ràdh, "nach eil nì agad mar a tha thù annad fein, ach peacadh; agus air son do nithean maith uile is iad gràsan t-Fhir-pòsda dhuit, agus Dhà-san, uime sin, thoir a ghlòir." Tha mi'g ràdh, cha'n eil againn ach peacadh. Agus am bheil maise air bith, na sgeimh air bith an sin, gu bhi tarruig Iosa Naomh? Gu cinnteach cha'n eil. Am bheil againn saoihbreas na ionmhasan? Cha'n eil; oir gu cinnteach tha sinn "doruinneach, agus truagh, agus bochd, agus dall, agus lomnochd." Tais. iii: 17. Tha e fìor gu'm bheil ionmhasan againn, ach 's e feadhan dhubh a tha annta; ionmhasan peacaidh agus aingidheachd, ionmhasan cionta agus fearg, nach urrain gu cinnteach ar deanamh airidh, ach gu mòr neo-airidh 'n a leithid sin de dhaimh. Am bheil gliocas agus buadhan againn gu bhi dha chuireadh? Cha'n eil; tha sinn uile gu leir "brùideil agus mi-thuigseach." Ier. x; 8. Tha sinn "seolta a dheanamh uile, ach maith a dheanamh cha'n aithne" dhuinn. Ier. iv: 22. Am bheil gràdh na caoihbneas againn dhà thaobh-san, na deagh nàdur? Cha'n eil; oir gu nàdurra cha'n eil gràdh againn Dhà; seadh, tha fuath againn Dhà, agus tha sinn 'n ar naimhdean Dhà. Lucas xix: 14. Tha fuath againn, agus tha sinn 'n ar naimhean, araon Dhà Fein agus dhà Athair, mar a chuir E as leth nan Iudhach bho shean; seadh, tha sinn 'n ar naimhdeas fein Dhà. Rom. viii: 7. Tha sinn 'n ar naimhdeas da Phearsa, da rioghachd, da ghràs, da Fhìreantachd, da shlighibh, do na h-uile eolas agus co-chomunn Ris. Mar sin cha'n eil nì againn a chùim a bhi dha tharruig, gu bhi dha'r toirt a stigh do'n daimh so Ris. Aig a chuid is fearr, cha'n eil annain ach cnuimhean bochd aig am bheil am bunait 's an duslaich! Agus ciod is urrain a bhi ann ach gràs saor agus saoibhir ann an Crìosd gu'm pòsadh E leithid sin Ris Fein.

II. Tha'n daimh pòaidh so eadar Crìosd agus creidmhidh,

air a dheilbh agus air oibreachadh a mach le cùmhachd gràs Dhé, a thaobh a thòiseachadh agus a choimhlionadh. 'N uair a tha anamaibh air am pòsadh ri Criosd, cha'n eil e air a dheanamh le cùmhachd na comas a th'aca fein, na fathasd le cùmhachd na eifeachd mheadhonan agus innealan; ach thà e gu dìreach bho chùmhachd agus eifeachd gràs Dhé. Gu'n teagamh, tha Dia a deanamh feum de mheadhonan agus de innealan, tha E deanamh feum de'n t-soisgeul agus do mhinisteirean soisgeulach gu bhì pòsadh pheacach r'a Mhac; agus 's iad so na h-aon rathaidean coitchionn agus na meadhonan tre'm bheil E dha dheanamh. Uime sin, a deir an t-Abstol 'n am cheann-teagaisg, " Rinn mì ceangal-pòsaidh eadar sibh agus aon fhear," 's e sin, le mo mhinisteirealachd, le mo shearmonachadh an t-soisgeil shiorruidh, bha mì am inneal ann an laimh Dhé gu bhì dha 'r pòsadh ri Criosd. Ach ged a tha Dia mar so a deanamh feum de mheadhonan agus de innealan anns an obair so, gidheadh tha'n obair fein a tighinn bho shaor ghràs, agus 's ann do ghràs a tha Criosd a toirt a chliu, a dùnadh a mach gach uile chumhachd eile ach so, mar nì anns am bheil gu leoir." Cha'n urrain neach air bith teachd a m'ionnsuidh-sa," na creidsinn annam, na dùnadh a stigh rium ann an co-cheangal pòsaidh, " mur tarruing an t-Athair a chuir uaithe mise e." Eoin vi: 44. 's e sin mar a bì cumhachd gràis Dhé air a chur a mach a chum na criche so. Tha'n tarruing a tha Criosd a labhairt air ann an so a gabhail a stigh ann an gnothuch uile; 's e th'ann a bhì ga'r deanamh comasach air tighinn a dh'ionnsuidh Chriosd, a bhì creidsinn Ann, agus a bhì dùnadh a stigh Ris mar ar Ceann agus ar Fear-pòsda. Tha e gabhail a stigh ann, mar a tha neach àraidh a gabhail beachd air, cha'n e tarruig na gnìomh a tha air a dheanamh le lamhachas-làidir, ach lùbadh ann an doigh mhilis air an toil, a tha innte fein calg dhìreach an aghaidh Chriosd agus Dhé, agus gu h-uile, a giulain an anama gu Criosd agus dha dheanamh comasach a bhì dùnadh a stigh Ris anns an daimh sin: agus tha Criosd a cur sios so gu h-uile mar chumhachd gràs Dhé. 'S e'n fhirinn a th'ann, nach eil sinn, mar a tha sinn annain fein, na mar bh'uainn fein, cumhachdach na comasach air son a leithid de obair; tha sinn gu'n neart. Rom. v: 6. Seadh, 'n uair a bha sinn air ar toirt gu Criosd le cumhachd gràis Dhé, gidheadh an sin, annain fein, na bh'uainn fein, cha'n urrain sinn nì air bith a dheanamh; mar a tha Criosd ag innse dhuinn, " As m'eugmhais-sa, cha'n urrain sibh aon nì a dheanamh." Eoin xv: 5. Seadh, 'n uair a tha sinn air ar toirt a dh'ionnsuidh Chriosd, agus nì eigin de cho-chomunn again Ris, gidheadh cha'n urrain sinn a leantuinn, na tarruing a nì is lugha dlùth Dhà, mar a bì ùngadh as ùr de ghràs Dhé air a bhuileachadh oirne, ga'r deanamh

comasach a chùin na crìche so. An uibhir so bha ceile Chrìosd mothachail air, agus, uime sin, bha i'g ùrnuigh, "Tarruig mi. A'd'dheigh ruithidh sin." Dan i: 4. Mar gu'n abradh i, A Thighearna, annam fein cha'n urrain mi aon chas a ghluasad dhà t-ionnsuidh; ach cuir thusa a mach do chumhachd ann a bhi ga'm a tharruing, agus an sin, agus cha'n ann gu sin, a thig mi nì's dlùithe dhuit. Seadh, a mhuinntir mo ghaoil, cha'n e bhi pòsadh an anama ri Crìosd, a mhàin gnìomh agus obair gràs Dhé, agus a chumhachd, ach 's e gnìomh na obair cumhachd a ghràis sin; cha'n e cumhachd àbhaisteach a th'ann agus a dh'fheumas a bhi air a chleachdadh ann, ach eadhon mòrachd cumhachd a ghràis sin, cumhachd nach eil nì's lugha na'n cumhachd a bha air a chleachdadh ann an togail Chrìosd bho'n a mairbh. Mar sin tha'n t-Abstol ag innse dhuinn, "Chùin fios a bhi agaibh ciod e dòchas a ghairme-san, agus ciod e saoihbheas glòire oighreachd-san anns na naoimh. Agus ciod e ro-mheud a chumhachd do ar taobh-ne a tha creidsinn, a reir oibreachadh a threun neart; A dh'oibrich e ann an Crìosd, an uair a thog e o na mairbh e, agus a chuir e'n a shuidh air a dheas-laimh fein e anns na h-ionadan, neamhaidh." Ephes. i: 18-20. Uime sin, tha'n so cumhachd, cumhachd mòr Dhé, mòrachd cumhachd Dhé, mòrachd do-labhairt cumhachd Dhé, an dearbh chumhachd a thog Crìosd o na mairbh; agus uile gu leir air a chleachdadh gu bhi dha'r deanamh comasach air a bhi creidsinn, agus mar sin ga'r dùnadh a stigh ri Crìosd ann an cùmhnant pòsaidh. Mar sin tha'n obair so anns na h-uile dòigh bho ghràs Dhé. Ach an so, gu sònraichte, 's i cheisd, Ciod iad na gnìomharan na 'n a h-oibribh gràis sin leis am bheil peacaich bhochd a tighinn gu bhi air am pòsadh ri Crìosd? Cuiridh mi iad uile fodh dhà cheann; tha iad an dara cuid, an toiseach, nì's fhaide air falbh, air dhoibh a bhi'n an gnìomharan gràs Dhé air an cleachdadh air ar son, agus dha'r taobh; na 's an dara h-àite, nì's dlùithe, air dhoibh a bhi 'n an gnìomharan gràs Dhé air an cleachdadh annaiche, agus oirne: anns a cheud aon, tha'n t-Athair agus Iosa Crìosd gu sònraichte leo fein agus bh-uatha fein; anns an dara h-àite, tha iad ag oibreachadh le buaidh agus frithealadh an Spioraid bheannaichte. Labhraidh mi beagan mu gach aon dhiubh.

(R'a leantuinn)

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### Israel-Arab Situation

At the United Nations General Assembly, the Russian Prime Minister called for the condemnation of Israel as the aggressor in the recent brief war and demanded the immediate withdrawal

of her troops from Arab territories. We do not find it difficult to conclude that Russia is behind the Arab and Egyptian opposition to Israel from different items of authentic news. And yet the United States and Great Britain are condemned, and that falsely, for helping Israel in the recent conflict. If Egypt and her friends had overwhelmed Israel, would Russia then have demanded justice for Israel? We doubt it, although Communism calls for freedom for nations and peace in the world. Many still remember what Russian soldiers and guns did in Hungary not so long ago. The Hungarians were not allowed freedom of thought or action in their own land. There could be a call to Russia to withdraw from the Baltic States and other parts of Europe. But we hear nothing of this. Even the British Foreign Secretary hinted at the possible need for Israel to let go her hold on the old part of Jerusalem which she captured in order to ease the way for negotiations with the Arabs. We and others disagree with this expression of policy. People will need to read the Bible and find there the history of God's government with regard to the Jews as providing the background to their present occupation of the Holy Land. A renewed interest in the Jews has been raised in the minds of many Christians by the outstanding recent events involving Palestine, Jerusalem, the Sinai wilderness, and the Egyptians. May God work by His Spirit mightily, in the hearts of Jews and Gentiles

### **The Pope and Celibacy**

The Pope has issued a declaration upholding the Roman Catholic Church's rule of celibacy for all her clergy. This has been done following upon many expressed views by priests of Rome and others that the clergy should be free to enter the married state. Some priests have married and have renounced their priesthood although not their Church. The Pope makes much of the Apostle Peter whose successor he claims to be, yet Peter was married; but Rome in its clergy affects to be more holy than Peter. The opposite has been true in the case of many of the Popes and priests. Marriage is honourable in all, but "forbidding to marry" is said in the New Testament to be the action of enemies to the truth.

### **No Freedom of Speech in South Africa**

An Anglican Bishop, Edward Crowther, of Kimberley, has been served with a deportation order by the South African authorities. He said he was being expelled because of the South African Government's refusal to allow dissent and right of freedom of speech and their intolerance of his efforts to serve the victims of

apartheid. We know that this oppressive spirit obtains in South Africa, yet it always makes sad reading in the light of the mind of the divine Redeemer in the gospel. Philip, the evangelist, and the Ethiopian eunuch had precious fellowship in the Ethiopian's chariot. There can be no systematic apartheid where the true spirit of the gospel of Christ prevails among men.

### Teachers and Religion

A candidate for the rectorship of Douglas Academy, Milngavie, was at his interview, before Dunbarton Education Committee, asked about his church or religious affiliations. This was asked by Rev. John H. Dutch, Church of Scotland Minister, and a member of the Committee. Following upon this, there appeared in "The Educational Journal," an article in which Rev. J. H. Dutch's action was severely criticised. The article argued that such a question should not be asked of teachers applying for a post: We discover here another evidence of the movement to eliminate all Christian and religious influences from Education and the schools. Mr Dutch has ably replied in the press to his critics. He has stated well, that whatever a teacher candidate professes or does not profess, he is not entitled to a Christian minister's support if, for instance, he, the teacher, was a Communist. Mr Dutch rightly stated that a Rector of a school, who is a professing Christian, sets a better example to the students than one who scarcely darkens the door of a Church. The Christian community, we maintain, must not defer to the pressures of Humanists and Atheists to give our children education without any instruction in the principles of the Christian faith; and for this basic reason, we hope Mr Dutch and others interested in the education of our children and are appointed to education committees, will take a firm stand as to their right to question candidates to teaching posts.

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## CHURCH NOTES

### Communions

*January*—Fifth Sabbath, Inverness, Auckland. *February*—First Sabbath, Dingwall; third, Stormoway; fourth, North Uist, Kyle of Lochalsh. *March*—First Sabbath, Ullapool; second, Ness, Portree and Tarbert; third, Finsbay, Lochinver; fourth, Kinlochbervie, London and North Tolsta. *April*—First Sabbath, Breasclete, Portnalong and Fort-William; second, Fearn, Gisborne, N.Z.; third, Greenock; fourth, Glasgow; fifth, Wick. *May*—First Sabbath, Kames and Oban; second, Scourie; third, Edinburgh and Broadford. *June*—First Sabbath, Applecross and Auckland; second, Shieldaig; third, Lochcarron, Glendale, Helmsdale, Dornoch and Uig; fourth, Gairloch and Inverness. *July*—First Sabbath, Lairg, Raasay and Beaulay; second, Staffin, Tomatin and Tain; third, Halkirk, Rogart, Flashadder and Daviot; fourth, Bracadale,

North Uist and Plockton; fifth, Achmore. *August*—First Sabbath, Dingwall; second, Portree and Stratherrick; third, Bonar, Finsbay and Laide; fourth, Stornoway, Thurso and Vatten. *September*—First Sabbath, Ullapool, Breasclete; second, Strathy; third, Tarbert, Stoer and Vancouver (Canada); fourth, Applecross. *October*—First Sabbath, Tolsta, Lochcarron, Fort-William; second, Dumbarton, Gairloch and Ness; fourth, Gisborne, N.Z., Greenock, Lochinver; fifth, Wick. *November*—First Sabbath, Oban and Raasay; second, Glasgow and Halkirk; third, Edinburgh, Dornoch, Staffin and Uig. *December*—First Sabbath, London.

### Mission Communions.

Zenka: last Sabbath of February and August. Ingwenya: last Sabbath of March and September. Mbuma: last Sabbath of April and October. Donsa Dam: last Sabbath of May. Somakantana: last Sabbath of July.

### Jewish and Foreign Mission Fund

By appointment of the Synod this Collection is to be taken up in August, and we again appeal to our people for help. The Lord has entrusted us with spreading the Gospel among the natives of Rhodesia, and He has acknowledged our labours in a measure which no one could anticipate at the beginning of our Mission there. This entails a great deal of expense, and our people have responded nobly in the past to our calls for help. This response emboldens us to appeal again for help, and we are not afraid of being disappointed. It is the Lord's work that we are appealing for, and we do so in the confidence that the friends of the Mission will contribute as liberally as the Lord will lay to their hands. "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us."—John Colquhoun, *Convener*.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF DONATIONS

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

**Sustentation Fund.**—Harris Adherent, £2 10/-; A. MacKay, Quidinish, £1; Mrs S. MacRae, Glenelg, £2; Mrs Smith, Golspie, £10; Mr C. Nicolson, California, £1 16s 10d, last three per Mr J. G.

**Foreign Mission Fund.**—Psalm 115, v. 12, £5; Mrs Adams, Glasgow, £1; A. MacCuish, Lighthouse, Scalpay, £5 for Mission Transport; Mrs Smith, Golspie, £5, per Mr J. G.

**Home Mission Fund.**—Anon, £20; Mrs Smith, Golspie, £4, per Mr J. G.

**College and Library Fund.**—Psalm 115, v. 12, £5.

**Home of Rest Fund.**—Psalm 115, v. 12, £5; A Friend, £1; Anon, £2; Anon, Inverness, £5 5/-; Anon, Inverness, £10, four per Rev. A. F. M.; J. D. MacAuley, Inverness, £50; Friend, Lairg, £5; Anon, £5.

**Organisation Fund.**—Mr and Mrs MacKinnon, Balgown, £2 for Synod Expenses, per Mr J. G.

**China Mission Fund.**—Friend, N.C., Applecross, £3 for Bibles, per Rev. A. MacAskill.

The following lists sent in for publication:—

**Applecross Congregation.**—Mr C. Gillies acknowledges with grateful thanks, £4 for Car Park, from Mrs C. MacKenzie, in memory of her brother, Ewen MacLean.

**Dunoon Congregation.**—Mr H. MacPherson acknowledges with thanks, £25 1s 6d from Kames Congregation for Building Fund.

**South Harris Congregation.**—The Treasurer acknowledges with sincere thanks: Miss M. M., Harris House, £1 for Sustentation Fund; Mrs K. M. D., Finsbay, £2 10/- for Home Mission Fund and £2 10/- for T.B.S.; Mrs M., Tarbert, £5; Mr R. M., Lingerbay, £2; Mr R. M. K., Mooring, Leverburgh, £1, all for congregational purposes.

**Fort William Church Exension Fund.**—Mr I. Matheson acknowledges with thanks: M. McRae, £2; Friend, Cuaig, £1, per Rev. J. A. McD.; K. L. M., £5, per N. McRaid.

**Plockton Congregation.**—The Treasurer acknowledges with grateful thanks, £1 for use of congregation from Mr and Mrs A. L. de Boo, Delft, Holland.

**Inverness Congregation.**—Rev. A. F. MacKay, acknowledges with thanks, £70 from the estate of the late Mrs MacRae, Shildaig, for Sustentation Fund.

**Inverness Ladies' Rhodesian Mission Fund.**—Mrs MacKa, F.P. Manse, acknowledges with grateful thanks, £88 10/-, collection taken at Ladies' Mission Meeting, Inverness.

**Portree Congregation.**—Mr D. Matheson acknowledges with thanks: £5 for Church decorating; Foriegn Mission Fund, £5; Welfare of Youth, £5; College and Library Fund, £2 10/-; Home of Rest, £2 10/-, all from R. M., Uig, Skye.

**Beauly Congregation.**—Mr J. MacKenzie acknowledges with thanks, from the Executors of the late Miss Flora Campbell, Beauly, £50 for Home Mission, £50 for Foreign Mission and £50 for Beauly Funds; Inverness Friend, £1.

**Kinlochbervie and Scourie Manse Building Fund.**—Mr D. A. MacLeod acknowledges with sincere thanks, from a Friend of the Cause, £3.

**Glendale Congregation.**—The Treasurer acknowledges with sincere thanks: £1 from Mrs MacLeod, Inverness, for Car Park; for Communion expenses, K. MacLeod, £1; A Friend, £2; Kenneth and Marion, £2, per Rev. J. C.

**St. Jude's Congregation.**—Mr J. Gillies acknowledges with thanks: M. S., Glasgow, £1; Mrs Walker, Glasgow, £1 10/-, both for Communion expenses; Mrs Walker, £1 for Sustentation Fund; Mr and Mrs MacL., Clydebank, 10/-.

**Greenock Congregation.**—Mr A. Y. Cameron acknowledges with grateful thanks: £2 from Mr and Mrs Conway for congregational purposes, per Rev. L. MacL.; London Friend, £10 for Manse Purchase Fund.

**Broadford Manse Buildinf Fund.**—Mr J. MacLean acknowledges with thanks: A Well-wisher, £5, per Mr R. McL.; Friend at Communion, per Mr J. McK., £5.

**Kinlochbervie Congregation.**—Mr D. N. MacLeod acknowledges with grateful thanks, £5 from Mr and Mrs Tocher, Fraserburgh, for congregational purposes, per Mr E. M.

**London Congregation.**—Mr J. Campbell acknowledges with thanks, for Church and Manse Building Fund: Anon. £40; Friend, Edinburgh, £1; Friends, Kinlochbervie, £2; Friend, Lochcarron, £1; Friend, Gairloch, £2, all per Rev. D. B. MacL.; for Church Building Fund: Harris Friend, in memory of Rev. J. P. MacQueen, £2, per Rev. D. B. MacL.

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

**Publications Fund.**—Anon, £3; Miss R. M., Northton, 8/-; Interested, Sutherland, £2.

**Welfare of Youth Fund.**—Teacher, £5.

**Magazine Free Distribution Fund.**—Interested, Sutherland, £2; Anon, Laide, £1; Mr I. M., Strathcroy, £8/-; Mrs A. M., Leckmelm, 8/-.