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The General Assemblies

The opening of the General Assemblies of the Church of Scotland and the Free Church took place in Edinburgh on Tuesday, 18th May with the customary pageantry and ritual associated with this important event in the Church's life when the highest court of the Church meets in annual session. The Lord High Commissioner to the Church of Scotland this year was Lord Clydesmuir and in the message of H.M. the Queen which he delivered to the Assembly were some pertinent remarks about the need of preserving the Christian heritage, entrusted to the Church, free from the corrupting influences of modern life and of the discharging her duty by the faithful proclamation "to an uncertain and questioning generation, the continuing relevance of the Christian message." The retiring Moderator, Dr Hugh Douglas, in opening the Assembly took also as the theme of his sermon the present position of the Church of Scotland, which he represented as passing through a winter of discontent, with declining congregations, internal divisions, and the failure to retain the religious interest of the Church's youth. Some hopeful signs were, nevertheless discerned by the Moderator in the Church's readiness to face the realities of her condition and to consider "radical solutions" for her problems. We fear, however, that the true causes of the plight of the Church of Scotland today have not yet been faced. The only solution, as far as we can discern, lies in the radical exercise of scriptural discipline to remove the deadwood of the destructive worldliness which afflicts the Church and a return to her true vocation, the faithful proclamation of the whole Gospel of Salvation. From St Giles the procession which included civic and church dignitaries wound its way to the Assembly Hall, where the Rev. Andrew Heron was installed as the Moderator for the present year. When the Assembly took up its work, proceedings were for a brief period enlivened by protests from the public gallery against the presence of the official Roman Catholic observer, Bishop James Monaghan, Vicar General of the Archdiocese of St Andrews and Edinburgh and Auxiliary Bishop to Cardinal Gray. This emissary of the Scottish papal church was nevertheless received cordially by the Moderator who said: "I

would assure you that you are very welcome to this Assembly." The significance of the presence of the Queen's representative in the Assembly and the past history of suffering and contending with the papal church in Scotland by the National Church were certainly forgotten in the courteous but misguided welcome given to this papal bishop. The Assembly then proceeded to deal with the work before the court.

The General Assembly of the Free Church met under the new Moderator, Rev. Prof. G.N.M. Collins, who in his opening sermon dealt with the Church as the "Church" in an Age of Revolution." In the course of his remarks the Moderator observed that the two most powerful enemies that faced the Christian Faith today were represented by the forces of Humanism and Communism; the one, especially active in Parliament, aimed at "destroying the moral and religious foundations of our national life," and the other, although itself the greatest tyranny ever known, attacked under-privilege and social injustice as a cover to undermine law and order with the ultimate object of the overthrow of all lawfully constituted government. The Church, in an age of permissiveness in morals and religion, faced these dangers with a liberal Gospel, from which its divine authority and supernatural character had been removed. Christianity had not failed, but the Church must recover her early courage and conviction.

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

The Anti-racist Groups, who received grants from the World Council of Churches, were given an indirect notice of approval for their work by the Assembly when the Report of the General Administration Committee came up for consideration on Wednesday. The Convener, Dr Roy Sanderson, admitted that racism was a highly controversial subject, and claimed that the Committee was merely maintaining the general ruling of previous Assemblies in approving these grants without condoning violence, but said that on the methods of giving practical aid, there was room for difference of opinion. Rev. J.H. Duncan, of Earlston who had been a missionary for 12 years in S. Africa and Rev. Ian Campbell who supported him were highly critical of the Assembly's support of giving aid to guerrilla fighters, who employed violence to attain their aims, and stated that these freedom fighters were not only Communist-inspired but equipped with Communist guns. The Earl of Wemyss saw no cause for alarm, since he thought it very likely that if the money were put to any other than social, health and education measures, the abuse would soon be detected, and made a very doubtful appeal to the action of the Covenanters in taking up arms in defence of their faith. There are some 19 separate anti-racist groups in S. Africa who may benefit from WCC grants, and it will be very surprising if some of this money does not find its way into the purchase of arms and weapons for guerrilla warfare.

Religious Education came in for full consideration by the Assembly in view of the proposed local government reforms. The great changes proposed

in the reorganisation of local government were bound to affect religious education in our schools, and the fear was expressed by Rev. A.M. Minto, Convener of the Church's Education Committee, that the Churches were in danger under the new scheme of being denied full representation on local education committees. He said: "In the proposed reorganisation of local government there seems to be no clear provision being made for Church representation on the regional education committees of the future. If this representation is denied to us, if the voice of the Church is not to be heard at this level, then the gloomy prophecy of 100 years ago that State Schools could become secular institutions looks like moving nearer to fulfilment. In such a situation, religious education would be more open to attack by those who wished to see it removed from our day schools." To meet this new situation, he went on to suggest that a united front should be presented on this issue by all the churches including the Roman Catholic church. He added, however, that he did not mean to suggest approval of the present segregation of children on religious grounds in our schools. Any change that might be made on this question should come from the Roman Catholic side, he argued, and not forced upon an unwilling church. In the debate that followed some ministers such as the veteran member, Rev. Wm. Baxter, ordained 59 years ago, pointed to the danger of Protestant children being taught by an R.C. teacher on such subjects as John Knox or Mary Queen of Scots, and added, "We should make it plain to the people of Scotland that education is not education at all if there is no religious education." Others, such as Rev. Maxwell Craig, of Falkirk, one of the younger ministers, thought that it might give point and urgency to religious education that R.C. teachers should teach our children. He then moved that the Assembly "encourage the efforts being made by Roman Catholic educationists, parents and clergy to work for religious desegregation within our educational system." This motion found little support and was defeated.

The post war measure of 1918 conferring upon the R.C. church the right to separate schools has always been jealously guarded by her clergy which even the ecumenical atmosphere, which she has so carefully cultivated, in the unity talks with the Church of Scotland has failed in any degree to change. This fact itself should be convincing evidence that Rome will never give up any of her privileges or make concessions, or change her attitude to education or church unity. It is doubtful if much hope of change can be derived from the convener's remarks that a survey undertaken by Strathclyde University showed that a majority of Roman Catholics in Glasgow favoured desegregation. We can remember in our student days how Rev. F.E. Watson, Bellshill Church of Scotland, used to plead the strong feelings of resentment throughout the country against the provisions of section 18 of the Educational (Scotland) Act, 1918, the heavy subsidies which Protestant ratepayers were pouring into papal education, and the privileged position of Rome in Protestant Scotland, that while the National Church of Scotland had no legal safeguards

for teaching of the Bible in our schools, the R.C. church has full legal rights to religious teaching in her schools. This iniquitous Act should be repealed, and the Assembly members would be doing their duty by their own schools, if they made this demand. It is useless to adopt the mild methods of persuasion, recommended in the defeated motion, where Rome is concerned. We feel confident that while Rome's rights to religious education in her schools are preserved, she will not be unduly disturbed at not being represented on local committees, nor will she be disposed to give help to Protestants to secure places for their representatives.

In presenting his Committee's Report on Adult Education, Rev. Wm. Johnston of Colinton spoke of the Church's youth growing weary of listening to sermons and traditional services, which they regarded as dull and boring, and stated: "They will not sit and listen to sermons and they tell us *ad nauseam* that our traditional services are dull and boring. But they will walk till their feet blister for Shelter and Christian Aid, and they will demand with embarrassing bluntness why the Church seems too often to compromise with the world in accepting less than its true spirituality. There are youngsters today who are turning to Buddhism because they find it more spiritual than the Christian Church." If this state of affairs is true to any extent in the Church of Scotland there is cause for disquiet. Could a more damaging admission of the Church's failure in her real mission as a Church be made than is constituted by these words?

The Editor's Dismissal from the management of the Church's Magazine, "Life and Work" last December by the Committee of the Department of Publicity and Publication, was reversed by an overwhelming majority of the Assembly on Thursday. The case came up by petition from the Editor, Rev. Leonard Bell, and was presented by Hon. H.S. Keith, Q.C. The petition asked the Assembly to declare that the notice of termination of the appointment was not authorised by them, and was therefore ineffective; it asked the Assembly to take steps to investigate the facts regarding the conduct of the editorship and the steps leading up to the sacking and that Mr Bell should continue his duties. The Committee asked that the petition be refused, that their action in dismissing the editor be confirmed "for the avoidance of doubt," and to terminate the appointment from June 30, 1971. There are some peculiar features about the case which are difficult to understand. The committee at the meeting which made the decision to dismiss the editor was greatly under strength for such an important meeting, only 33 attending where it is reported 48 should have been present, the decision being made by 26 to 4; Mr Bell was not called before the Committee to answer criticisms of his work; the convener gave no evidence to support the decision to dismiss the editor beyond saying that continual disagreements had arisen between the editor and the committee over Magazine policy and that in the five years as editor, Mr Bell had proved himself to be "a square peg in a round hole," and "not the man we wanted;" the question of editorial freedom was also thought to be involved

and charges of political motives were also made. By a majority of more than a thousand to twenty against, the editor was reinstated till the reasons for dismissal were investigated. The motion was that the Assembly declare that the dismissal was not authorised by the Assembly and was ineffective; that an *ad hoc* committee of 11 be set up to study the circumstances leading to his dismissal; assess the editorship of 'Life and Work' and report back to next year's Assembly with its findings; Mr Bell to continue as editor without prejudice to the conclusions of the special committee. Rev. Wm. Macartney, the convener, immediately submitted his resignation. Whatever may be the merits of the controversy over the editorship which was discussed in a "sensational two hour debate" in the Assembly, the present editor has not raised the "Life and Work" Magazine above the social, economic and political level of previous editors. There is nothing of a scriptural or spiritual nature to satisfy the needs of precious souls thirsting for the Word of Life in the Magazine, nor can we discern any clear, determined witness against present day declension in Church or State. It is conducted like any secular magazine with the editor disclaiming any responsibility for the views expressed, which allows the utmost freedom for the strange and sensational and altogether unscriptural material in the way of articles and pictures which generally find their way into its pages. If these are among the reasons which moved the Committee to dismiss the present editor, we fear that the Committee will get little sympathy or support from the Assembly next year for their decision.

The Westminster Confession of Faith had been the subject of discussion and thought for three years by a Panel on Doctrine of the Church's theologians and on Friday the fruits of their three years' labours were reported to the Assembly. The Report, which will have far reaching consequences by its findings upon the life of the Church of Scotland, was approved by the narrow majority of 15 after about two and a half hours' debate. The remit which was given to the Panel was to consider the place of the Westminster Confession of Faith, as the Subordinate Standard of the Church's faith, and the reference to it in the Preamble and Questions which are put to ministers and office-bearers when taking office in the Church. In carrying out the remit, the Panel recommended that the words "Subordinate Standard" should be dropped altogether, which means that the age long place which the Westminster Confession has held in the historic Church of Scotland, as an authoritative statement of the Church's faith next only to the Scriptures themselves, has now been changed and the Confession from now on will be relegated to a place along with the Nicean Creed and the Scots Confession, as an interesting document of only historical importance. Rev. Kenneth M. Campbell reported that from between 70% to 80% of Presbyteries supported this proposal. He claimed, therefore, that here was no opinion formed by the Panel, but the voice of the whole Church speaking throughout her Church courts. This may be true, but the reversal of the Church of Scotland's relation to her own Confession is the tragic outcome of many years of insidious teaching by heretical

Professors in her Divinity Halls, of agitation by the Church's leaders, and the apathy that has destroyed all interest among the people in their Church's past history. A new statement of faith, prepared by the Panel, was also approved, but at once voices of dissatisfaction with its terms were raised denouncing the new statement. We have not yet seen this effort of the Panel and cannot pronounce any opinion upon it. Prof. Cheyne of New College described it as "wooden," "a document that neither elucidates or inspires." Rev. John Watt, a lecturer at Hamilton College of Education, roundly stated that the proposed statement would not do. "It speaks in the language of Canaan—not in the language of the street corner," he said, which indicates what some members of Assembly conceive should be the nature of the Church's Statement of Faith. The statement, he said, would give little help in the work of religious education. Finally, Prof. Cheyne moved an overture from the Presbytery of Edinburgh, calling for the setting up of a special twelve man Committee to draw up a new statement of faith, but the overture was defeated and the Panel's proposal was adopted, that their Report, containing the new statement of faith, should be sent down again to Presbyteries for comment and criticism, by the small margin of 15 votes, there being 253 for and 238 against. The Church of Scotland has at last got rid of her own Westminster Confession, but what she may approve as a statement of her beliefs, we fear, will be a poor substitute for the clear, scriptural, unambiguous language of the noble Westminster Confession of Faith. During the debate, interruptions broke out from members of the public, with shouts of 'No popery,' in reference no doubt to the term 'anti-Christ' in the Confession, and a huge banner was waved from the public gallery. The Westminster Confession has held its place as the classic statement of belief of Presbyterianism for more than 400 years. We fear that returns from Presbyteries next year will show strong approval of the new Confession. Theological belief in this country has steadily been deteriorating till today we can see that the fears roused by the modifications introduced into the Westminster Confession by the Declaratory Act of 1892, have now been fully realised. The wise foresight of our fathers may now be appreciated. The warning that the Constitutionalists gave against all tampering with the Confession at the end of last century, can now be understood, "Confession of Faith or no Confession of Faith."

Church Unity cropped up in different forms in the discussions in the Assembly, when the relations of the Church of Scotland with other denominations were being considered. The Assembly had already in 1969 sent down a basis and plan for union with the Congregational Union of Scotland to the Presbyteries, but failed to obtain a majority in favour, and now the Assembly gave the assurance of her readiness to resume union negotiations at any time with the Congregational Union of Scotland. Rev. Rupert Davies, president of the Methodist Conference, in an address to the Assembly, stated that although in England negotiations between the Methodists and the Episcopalians had reached the stage where agreement on some form of union was in sight, in

Scotland talks between the Methodists and Episcopalians was a dead issue, and the Methodists considered that they were free to open what might prove to be fruitful talks on union with the Church of Scotland. He appealed to the Assembly not to entrust these discussions on union to Church theologians who were impracticable and lacking in realism, but, he declared, let the people through the courts decide. It may be significant that Principal Davies is the first Methodist President to address the Assembly of the Church of Scotland. The Scottish Episcopal Church in the June issue of "Scan," the Church's news magazine, speaks of herself as a small minority Church, representing only two per cent of the population, but busily engaged in ecumenical activities. "Scan" says: "With the Church of Scotland we have for a long time been seeking towards organic unity." "With the Roman Catholic Church, discussions are proceeding which are designed to explore areas of doctrinal agreement. In multi-lateral conversations our Church is seeking ways to unity with the Baptists, the Congregationalists, and the Churches of Christ."

Professor J.K.S. Reid of Aberdeen who is on the Church's Panel conducting conversations on union with the very much smaller body, the Episcopal Church of Scotland, put forward the plan for the Episcopal Church of Scotland to be incorporated as a synod within the enlarged Church of Scotland. "There is no reason," he said, "why bishops should not take their place in the General Assembly as fully elected commissioners of the Episcopal Synod on the same footing as commissioners elected by the presbyteries." He rejected a suggestion by Rev. R.W. Matheson, St Mungo, Lockerbie, that the Synod proposal was a ruse by which union would ultimately be effected by rubbing out altogether the history of the Church of Scotland, which, we believe, comes nearer to the true purpose of this move. Prof. Reid, however, denied that the effort to bring these two separate Churches together would in any sense be unfaithful to the Church of Scotland. This appears to be the present form that talks on Church union are taking in the Inter-Church Relations Committee, the Convener of which, Rev. Roderick Smith spoke in approval of this idea. If full Church union cannot be foisted upon the Church, this loose form of Church connection might be feasible. The union mongers in the Church of Scotland are still evidently determined, in spite of repeated reverses, to find some way of getting a place for bishops in the Assembly, although the radically different nature of Presbyterianism and Episcopacy makes any hope of merging them into the one Church, impossible.

The **Common Market** in modern times has perhaps stirred the country throughout every rank and class as no other public question has done this century. The meeting of Assembly at which the move to get this country into Europe was discussed was no exception. The voting on this occasion was far more decisive than the rejection by 3 votes last October of the recommendation for entry by the Commission of Assembly, and came after a heated debate. The motion by Captain John Hay of Hayfield, Turiff, Aberdeenshire, which pointed out the serious consequences for Scotland if Britain entered

the Common Market was carried by 303 votes to 230. Capt. Hay spoke of a decision to enter Europe as being irreversible and asked the question: "Why is it they dare not have a plebiscite like all the other ECC entrants? This they could have done when they had their Census instead of asking questions about our kitchen sinks." The vast majority of the people of Scotland and England, he claimed, were opposed to entry. The motion was seconded by the Very Rev. Lord MacLeod of Fiunary, who was mainly responsible for the Commission of Assembly last October demanding that all negotiations be broken off. In a resounding speech Lord MacLeod declared: "We are witnessing the biggest surrender of British sovereignty since Charles II did France's bidding in return for subsidies." The Market was not functioning successfully and the present Government had no mandate, without consulting the people by referendum or General Election, on such an important question, to take this country into Europe. "The Church of Scotland at present and in the name of Scotland, says, 'No,'" he said. Only one voice was raised in favour of Britain's entry, when Rev. Alistair J. MacLeod, minister of the Scots Kirk in Brussels, appealed for delay till the terms of entry were announced. Rev. George Ball, Convener of the Church and Nation Committee, said that if the terms of entry were declared and rushed through Parliament before next October, members were prepared to call a special meeting of the Commission. The decisive vote of the Assembly, though taken on economic and political grounds, will strengthen opposition to entry.

Priorities of Mission was the subject of a Report entitled "Keeping Pace with Tomorrow," which was brought before the Assembly at an early meeting but ruled out of order by the Moderator because not in proper order, and stirred great anticipation among members which in the end the Report did not justify. The Moderator spoke of the Report as making "some of the most drastic and revolutionary changes which have occurred in the history of the kirk for a very long time." The 24 recommendations of the Report are of a far reaching order, and propose sweeping reforms of the whole framework of the Church, since the existing structure, it is suggested, may "constitute an impediment to the Gospel." Such reforms are advocated as group or team ministries in place of the parish ministry; union of isolated congregations into large Church units; greater say in Church work by lay members; mission work to include "industry, education, communications, mass media and politics." These revolutionary changes, which betray an urge for change which is not confined to doctrine and a lack of confidence in the scriptural pattern of the Presbyterian Church did not commend themselves to members. Rev. Robt. S. Hill, Glenshee moved the rejection of the Report, and pointed to the extraordinary omission of any mention of evangelism. "The aim of the Commission," he said, "seems to be to influence the structure of society without a thought of bringing people into relationship with Jesus Christ. We have been doing this long enough and it doesn't work." The proposals were not sufficiently considered and had missed the mark. "If we accept this, it would be an admis-

sion of spiritual bankruptcy," he said. When seconding the motion, Rev. Robt. Carmichael was even more forthright, when he condemned the Report as failing to make one new constructive suggestion, its proposals were already familiar. "This momentous Report," he said, "is nothing more than a hotch-potch of other people's ideas." In discussing the proposals for larger area churches, Rev. J.B. Duncan, Earlston, spoke of the loss of personal contact, that people were reduced to being "a cog" in the Church. The motion, however, was defeated, and the Report, which was presented by Prof. Hugh Anderson of New College, was adopted by the Assembly.

Amidst the multifarious business before the Assembly, the Veto Poll, the Colin Temple Case, Church Investments in S. Africa, etc., one pleasing incident of the proceedings stands out in relief. A petition came up from the Kirk Session of Wishaw-St Andrew, Tranent and was presented by Rev. Robin Brough, asking the Assembly to set apart a special day of repentance and prayer for the nation. The motion was lost by 83 to 71, but the concern of the Tranent congregation about the present state of our nation, which moved them to send up a request to the Assembly for a day of repentance and prayer indicates a degree of spiritual life, so lacking in the proceedings of Assembly, which, we pray, that the Lord will encourage and bless, for we wish this congregation well in the Lord's name. The assembly rose on Wednesday, 26th May.

FREE CHURCH

In a discussion in the Free Church Assembly, the Church's Ministry was the subject of proposed changes which, if adopted, would alter the work and the very nature of the Free Church ministry itself. The Free Church Assembly listened on Wednesday to the Report of the Sustentation and Supply Committee, presented by Mr John Munro, Inverness, in which a scheme was outlined which would combine the pastoral duties of the ministry with employment in some secular work, either in Education or Industry. "It may well be that the ministry as we know it today will change in a very distinctive way within the next few years," said Mr Munro, "The minister of the future may be required not only to be a specialist in his own sphere in religion but he may also be required to take his place in industry and education, particularly in the latter. It may be well for those who are thinking of the ministry and those who are presently students to equip themselves to take their place in secondary schools in specialist subjects. By their influence, by precept they could make a contribution to the advancement of the evangel and to moral standards—all very necessary in this day and age." It sounds as though what is advocated here amounts to a part time ministry. But will a part time ministry, whatever may be the purpose for it, where the minister immerses himself in the work of some worldly calling for the most of the week and expects to preach a fresh, stimulating message to his flock on the Sabbath, be more effective than a whole time ministry? In time of economic necessity,

as a temporary measure, the minister may have to take up worldly employment, as did the apostle when he resorted to the trade of tentmaker, but consecration to the work of the ministry requires of the Lord's servant unreserved application to his work, free from worldly anxieties. The scriptures teach only a full time ministry for Christ's ministers. The apostle counsels Timothy to give himself wholly to the work of the ministry, "that this profiting may appear to all"—I Tim. 4, 15; "Watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry"—II Tim. 4, 5. For the most part the occupants of the modern pulpit are worldly enough and need no fresh encouragement to become more worldly.

The proper use of the Church's man power was also considered. There are at present in the Free Church ministry 83 ministers in active service and 20 on retired list but fully employed each Sabbath; there are also 18 working lay agents. The proposal was made that the small congregations should link together for the purpose of enjoying the services of a full time minister. "By linking they could have unity in strength and make a much more effective contribution to the community," he said. In the City of Glasgow were 9 congregations where this scheme might apply without detriment to any one congregation.

On Church's Finances, the Assembly was informed that ministers' salaries would be increased from £1,000 to £1,100 which was in no way too great remuneration for the work of their noble office, and salaries of resident lay agents would rise to £650 per year. Payment to retired ministers, at present £290 payable under the terms of the Aged and Infirm Ministers' Fund would be raised to £400. On retirement allowances, the Assembly agreed that a scheme would be prepared providing that within 5 years the maximum retirement allowance would not be less than 65 per cent of the equal dividends, the same proportion being maintained in any future fluctuations of the equal dividend, at the time of retirement. The Assembly also approved the setting up of a central fund of the Free Church for a trial period of three years, which would be a holding fund for the total income of the Church, apart from legacies or sums devoted to special purposes, and from this fund would be allocated to the various administrative committees, money in terms of a budget of expenditure what had previously been approved by the Finance Committee.

The Westminster Confession of Faith was taken up in the Report of the Committee on Public Questions, Religion and Morals, when Rev. H. Cameron, Dornoch presented the Report to the Assembly. Mr Cameron offered some defence of the Confession against criticisms in recent years, having no doubt particularly in mind the debate in the nearby Assembly of the Church of Scotland on the Confession. He spoke of the need of the people of Scotland being educated up to their own Confession, as something that was more urgent than the abandonment of the Confession itself. "They would then be in a happier position to place an estimate on their doctrinal heritage," and might with

fuller knowledge be able to decide what changes, if any, were required, he said. "We spend too much time bemoaning the tragedy of the age instead of getting on with the job of Christian education," he went on. "We ought to look at the question how far Christianity is actually being taught," We cannot deny that much of what Mr Cameron says in his remarks on this subject is true. There is a woeful ignorance in the country today of the Bible as well as the Confession. The Westminster Confession, being a human document, is not above the need of undergoing changes, although the fact that it has stood for four centuries makes this possibility very remote. And the task of the Church is certainly urgent to press on with the Christian education of the people. But when the Westminster Confession is under heavy attack as an antiquated, discredited document, is this the time to emphasise ignorance of its contents, possibility of emendation of its statements, the time wasted "bemoaning the tragedy of the age" which could be devoted more profitably to Christian education? These matters may not be irrelevant today, but used by Mr Cameron in this context, they are simply a diversion from the serious issue of the very survival of the Westminster Confession. This is a poor defence. These hesitating words will do little, we are convinced, to deter the enemies of the Westminster Confession from their purpose of getting rid of this noble statement of the Christian Faith at all costs. We do not wonder, when we read such remarks as these, that the Assembly of the Church of Scotland have relegated the Westminster Confession, up till now the accepted Subordinate Standard of the Church, to a place alongside the Creed and the Scots Confession as an historical document of antiquarian interest.

The Treaty of Rome was discussed in the Assembly when considering the Report of the Committee on Public Questions. In seconding the adoption of the Report, Rev. N. MacLeod, Duke Street, Glasgow spoke of the major political issue facing this country today as being Britain's relationship to the Common Market, which in public discussions was being treated as though the economic question was the determining factor, whereas the loss of sovereignty was the main political issue. Under the Treaty of Rome, Britain would lose much of her sovereignty and the Christian influence inherited from the time of the Reformation by which she was able to make so great a contribution to the Christian institutions, culture and traditions of the world. The present Government's manner of handling the Common Market negotiations was highly unsatisfactory, for "they have not been frank, open and honest with the nation." The European Economic Community was "Romanist dominated." If Britain were to sign the Treaty of Rome, she would become a minority voice as far as religion was concerned. Mr MacLeod said: "If Britain does become part of the Community, that will be one of the saddest chapters in the long and distinguished history of this country." With these words we fully agree. This is no over-statement of the dire peril that threatens this country, if we enter the Common Market. Besides the economic and political questions, there are the religious consequences which will affect the

Sabbath, the Protestant Constitution of the Throne, and the religious and civil liberties of our people.

The **Growing Permissiveness** of the age was taken up by Rev. A.G. Ross, Hope Street, Glasgow who put forward an amendment to the Report of the Committee. Mr Ross spoke of the appalling decline in moral standards, the debasing of the beautiful gift of sex into something perverted and pernicious and expressed the fear that God was in the process of giving people up to the uncleanness and horrid catalogue of vice of which the Bible had warned. The amendment called upon the Assembly to urge Christian people everywhere "to unite in a concerted effort against the present exploitation of sex and to campaign ceaselessly to preserve the foundations of our national life now being shamelessly undermined," and other churches be invited to give their support to this necessary cause.

In his closing address to the Assembly on Friday evening, the Moderator Rev. Prof. G.N.M. Collins spoke of the present fragmented condition of the Christian Church, which demanded an enquiry into the causes of division, not an incorporating union of a vague, uncritical, unscriptural kind. While the causes of division were ignored, such a union was to attempt the greatest fraud in history. "Truths once held dearer than life itself are now demoted to mere arguable propositions," he said. A Bible based ecumenical movement provided the answer to the modern ecumenical movement which was described as "one of the most controversial and influential sideshows of the present time." The Moderator spoke of two important fields of interest which deeply concerned the Church, the relationship with other Churches and the Christian message preached from the pulpit. The Free Church, he claimed, had always taken her full share in inter-Church activities which provide a worthwhile area of Christian co-operation, without compromising her testimony to the inerrancy of Holy Scripture. Whether the Free Church has always observed the line of separation between the Reformed Church and heretical bodies is open to question. On the nature of the message heard from many pulpits today, the Moderator said: "The content of pulpit proclamation in many cases is so pitifully inadequate and so destitute of the message of salvation as to be an affront to the Gospel and an insult to the intellect." The standard of education required for the Ministry is generally as high as it has even been. The Assembly then rose on Friday night. A.F.M.

Induction Sermon

by Rev. J. Tallach, Kinlochbervie

"Sir, we would see Jesus". John 12 v.21

(The following sermon was preached at the induction of the Rev.D.B. Macleod to the charge of Lairg and Bonar on 17th March, 1971.)

As you will notice in reading this chapter, Jesus was One over Whom the

people in Jerusalem were divided. Even little children understand that when Jesus of Nazareth began His public ministry, it was not a case of the whole of Galilee and the whole of Jerusalem as a man flocking to follow Him and hail Him as the long-promised Messiah. There were those who loved Him; there were those who rejoiced that the day-spring from on high had at last visited them. There was Simeon, who rejoiced at the Saviour's birth, and there were others when Jesus began His public ministry who loved Him and who rejoiced in His preaching and who followed Him with their whole hearts. But not everyone followed Him: for the Redeemer, we may say, at every turn in His ministry, had to say to those whom He preached, "There are some of you who believe not". There were some who did not acknowledge Him, there were some who did not receive Him, there were some who had no love for Him in their hearts. Now in this chapter we have a case, or more than one case, of these two conflicting attitudes coming together over the head of Christ. You have this woman, Mary, who showed what love she had in her heart, anointing Him. Then immediately you have the opposite view in Judas. Then again you come and read of the Pharisees, in verse 19: "The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? Behold, the world is gone after him". And then, following on that expression of their animosity against the Saviour, we have these Greeks, who were among them that came up to worship at the feast. They had it in their own hearts that they desired for themselves that they would see Him. So they came to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, "Sir, we would see Jesus". These Greeks, as you will understand, were proselytes. That is, they were not Jews by birth, though they were coming up to this Jewish feast. Apparently their whole hearts were not taken up with this ancient feast. Apparently they had this in their hearts, that they desired to see the Saviour, that they desired to meet with Him — "Sir, we would see Jesus".

Let us think briefly first of all of these Greeks, who came up and presented this petition to Philip.

Secondly, we will think a little of the disciples who brought this matter to Christ — of Philip and of Andrew, who together came and told Jesus.

Then we will think a little thirdly of what is involved in seeing the Saviour in a gospel sense. These Greeks were not the first to come with this desire in their hearts — "Sir, we would see Jesus" — and they were not the last. And perhaps it is true that there are those among us this night who have this in their own hearts, "Sir, we would see Jesus". Well, we will think about that in the third place — about seeing Christ in a gospel sense.

And then we will have a little by way of applying this matter to ourselves in the circumstances in which we are met tonight.

First of all then let us consider those who put this question to Philip, who came with this desire in their hearts, "Sir, we would see Jesus".

We may just describe them as enquirers. We will just pick out this one aspect in which they are presented to us, this single aspect. They come to us as enquirers. That is, they have something in their hearts which goes out to that which they seek. They have a desire. They have something in their hearts making them unsatisfied with the way they are. They have this desire, they have this enquiry, they have this out-going of heart to this object. They are enquirers.

And we may say that those coming to the public means of grace are enquirers. When they are coming to the courts of God's house, coming to the preaching of the gospel, they come in this aspect too; they are enquirers. Why are they gathering to hear the preaching of the gospel? Because they are not satisfied with themselves as they are — there is something in their hearts which is going out to a certain object. They are enquirers; they are seekers. And I think we may say that in a special sense those who call a pastor to be their minister present this aspect in a very striking way; they are enquirers. Why are they asking for a minister to come among them, and why are they seeking the ordinance of the preaching of the gospel? Because they are not feeling that they are complete without it, and they have this desire in their hearts towards it. They have this out-going of soul. They are enquirers; they are seeking something. This is your profession, in calling a pastor to labour among you in this congregation. This is your profession, that you are saying, "Sir, we would see Jesus".

You notice that these Greeks did not come up to the Feast to see John, or to see Peter, or to see James. And when they came with this enquiry, this seeking, this request to Philip, they did not ask to see a mere man. Their enquiry fixes upon the Saviour and the Saviour alone. They did not say, "We desire to see Jesus, and some of His disciples, some of His supporters, some of His followers". But this desire in their hearts goes out to, and fastens upon, Christ alone. "Sir", they say, "We would see Jesus". So this is your profession, in seeking a minister to labour among you: "We do not desire to see a man for his own sake. We do not seek a mere man. We do not desire merely to have a man among us, but this is our desire, in calling a pastor, that we would see Jesus through his ministry". This is your profession, that your heart's desire goes beyond the man, and that it rests upon the Saviour. This is your profession, "Sir, we would see Jesus".

Now let us consider a little about the disciples (of course, particularly Philip, but then Philip and Andrew together).

The Greeks did not come directly to the Saviour, but they came to one of the Saviour's friends, one of the Saviour's followers, one of His close disciples. They came to one of the twelve, they came to Philip, and they presented their petition to him and placed it in his hand.

Surely this if for our learning tonight — surely there is a lesson for us, surely there is something precious for us here, that the Lord in His providence

ordered it in this way, and that the record of it would be given to us, and that we could read it tonight, that this is how things went between these Greeks and Jesus of Nazareth — that the Lord in His providence gave this place to Philip and Andrew, that they had a part in introducing these Greeks to Jesus of Nazareth. We have symbolised here the function of the ministry of the gospel. We have reduced to concrete terms the ministry of reconciliation. We have it written large here, in concrete terms. Here we have a man, and in the providence of God he is used to bring sinners to Christ. Don't you see there the function of the ministry? Don't you see there represented and symbolised the work of the ministry? Is it not represented in such a simple way that a child could follow it? This is the work of a minister, to bring a sinner to Christ. Paul had extraordinary gifts, and he was qualified to a very high degree for the work of preaching the gospel. But was there in essence any difference between Paul and Peter? You see Paul preaching in Athens, or in Thessalonica or Berea, and you see Peter also (and he was an unlearned fisherman) preaching in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost. Now if you examine their function, is it not the same? Is there any basic difference between the two? What Paul is doing in the Areopagus in Athens, Peter is doing in the streets of Jerusalem. This is their function, simply represented — it is to bring sinners and Jesus together. This is the work of the ministry. How easy it would be for us to overlook the significance of Philip's function here. We might see the desire in the hearts of these Greeks, and then hurry on to see what Jesus says in response to their request. But if we hurry on like that, then we overlook something which is large with significance for the preachers of the gospel. It is a very simple act, but it is full of significance. The action that Philip and Andrew did was simple, but it was precious. If the ministers of the gospel would read here, they would find encouragement for themselves. It was a simple action which the disciples performed, but the Lord put it out for them, and gave them that work to do.

Now Philip and Andrew have nothing of their own to offer, in answer to the Greeks' request. There was no use in Philip saying, for example, that Jesus was occupied in healing the sick, but that perhaps Philip himself could help. There was no use in that. The enquiry terminated on Christ, and to cut it short of that was to destroy it, to annihilate it. It was Christ and Christ alone who was desired, and Philip had nothing to put in Christ's place. Philip had nothing of his own to offer to these Greeks. All his work consisted in was this simple leading them along till they met with Jesus. That was all. It wasn't giving anything of his own, but just leading them to Christ. Now we have there again something that brings before us the work of the ministry. A minister has nothing to give of his own; but this is simply his work, that he will lead sinners to Christ. Paul, though he was learned, and though he had a masterly mind, had nothing of his own to offer to the Greeks in Athens. They were there, and their minds were just itching to learn or to hear of some new thing. Had Paul anything new for them? None

of his own, nothing of his own. He could not give them anything that originated in himself, but this was simply his work, to lead to Christ. So it is with the minister who is to be set over you. So it is with every minister of the gospel. He cannot give a congregation of his own — he has nothing of his own to give. "But none of these his brother can redeem by any way. Nor can he unto God for him sufficient ransom pay." (Ps.49 v.7) A minister cannot save your souls. You cannot come to your minister and ask him for forgiveness. You cannot come to him and ask him for the blotting out of your transgressions. A minister has no power in his own hands. He has nothing of his own to give to you. Though your need would be desperate, and though you would present him with an urgent plea, though your heart would go out to him, pleading with him to help you, and to give you peace of conscience, he has nothing to give you. Well, that's the first point regarding the disciples, and their work, as it represents for us in the work of the ministry. Philip did not give them anything of his own, and there was nothing which Philip had which he could give to meet their need.

The second point is this. All was in Christ. He could not give them anything himself, but the whole request would be satisfactorily met simply by leading them to Christ. They wouldn't have any other request to meet, once they had led these Greeks to Christ. There would be enough in Christ to meet the desire of these Greeks' hearts. And that is the way with the preachers of the gospel in every age. They have nothing of their own, but such is their work that if they can once bring a sinner to Christ, then that sinner will find everything in Christ. If a minister of the gospel can, under the hand of God, be useful in binding the heart of a sinner to Christ, then that is his work done. He will not need to weep over any soul who is joined to Christ, under his preaching, in a perpetual covenant. That is a covenant that will not be forgotten by the sinner, and that is a covenant that will never be forgotten by God. Once a sinner is brought to Christ, he will find everything in Christ. The apostle opens up that doctrine to the Corinthians: "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption." We have no wisdom to give, but it's all in Christ. We cannot give righteousness, but a sinner who meets with Christ will find it in Him. A minister cannot sanctify his people by his own power, but once they are in Christ, and increasingly resting in Him, then they'll find sanctification in Him. And if seekers, coming to the preaching of the gospel, will find Christ, then they will find eternal redemption in that Christ to whom they are wedded under the preaching of the gospel. If a sinner in this church is united to Christ, he finds in Christ wisdom, he finds in Him righteousness, he finds in Him, as he is coming to the preaching of the gospel, sanctification and Christ is precious to him to an increasing degree. Then the time comes when that person is to be taken from this world. Does he go then in a frenzy to his minister asking him to help him? No! He goes to that Christ to Whom he was joined under the preaching of the gospel and he is not disappointed. He finds

in Him eternal redemption. If you will be united to Christ under the preaching of the gospel in this church, then you will find everything in Him. The minister has nothing to give of his own, but if you are united to Christ under the preaching you will have everything in Christ; you will lack for nothing.

(To be continued)

Noted English Preachers of the 18th Century

3. Henry Venn 1724–97

by Rev. H.R. Moshe Radcliff Th.L.

Henry Venn was born on the 2nd of March, 1724, in Barnes, Surrey, the third of eight children. His father was the incumbent of a church in London. According to the records, the Venn family had an unbroken line of men in the Church of England ministry since the days of Elizabeth. His father was a 'High Churchman', that is, he followed the Romanising influences so ignominiously propagated by Archbishop Laud. He had the questionable distinction of having shut Whitefield out of his church, and by his writings opposed the early Methodists. He died, however, at the early age of 48.

Not much is known about Henry Venn's early days, but various anecdotes show that he possessed a strong character. On one occasion when a man who held Arian views called to see his father, the young Venn looked very suspiciously at him and refused to come to him, saying; "I will not come to you for you are an Arian!" Another proof of his attachment to his father's cause was when he fearlessly attacked the son of a dissenting minister older and bigger than himself who was living in the same street. Someone remarked to his father that Henry would one day go to Holborn and stop either at the Palace of Ely (then the London residence of the Bishop of Ely) or go on to the gallows at Tyburn.

Henry Venn was educated first at a small school at Mortlake and then at Fulham. He was removed to a school in Bristol at his own request because he considered the discipline in Fulham too lax. He entered St John's College at the age of 17 in 1742 but transferred to Jesus College when he obtained a scholarship there, and graduated B.A. in 1745. He graduated M.A. four years later and was chosen as a Fellow of Queens College.

The year 1749 was also the year in which he was ordained by the Bishop

of Fulham, but without going to a pastoral charge. This the Bishop had done out of respect to his late father. But Venn was still unconverted. He was prejudiced in favour of the High Church party, and held fast to their principles and ideals. The seriousness with which he entered upon his ministry can be seen from an incident that happened prior to his ordination. He was an able cricketer, and after playing a winning match, he threw down his bat for anyone to take, as he would have no further use for it. He would never have it said of him "Well struck, parson". He was very diligent in visiting the poor and sick and instructing them.

The first streak of light that came into his heart was when his mind was arrested by a phrase in the form of prayer he had used daily, "... that I might live to the glory of Thy Name". He began to ask himself what this might imply. William Law's book 'A serious call to a serious and devout life' became useful to him at that time though he was later to discard it because of its legalism*. In his self-efforts to glorify God, — being still ignorant of the only way — he walked every night in the cloisters of Great St Mary's and stopped to meditate between the strokes of the great old bell on the theme of eternity.

He left Cambridge after 15 months, and for the next four years was the Assistant to another minister. He was obliged to spend his time in London for the summer months and the winter in Hosley, Surrey, and once again he applied himself diligently to his labours. It was in these years that he began to see the legalism of Law's book, and that the author was not giving the glory to Christ. Venn began to discover the corruption of his own heart and the impossibility of working out his own salvation. It was also at that time that he began to see that the blood of Jesus Christ alone suffices as a covering for righteousness. Although he was not fully in the light, the tone of his preaching undeniably altered.

In 1754, he was inducted as Curate of Clapham, and it was there in the Lord's mercy that the light of the gospel fully broke upon him and he was established in the doctrines of the free and sovereign grace of the everlasting gospel. This he owed largely to Lady Huntingdon, who after hearing him preach wrote a long and faithful letter to him urging him to abandon preaching salvation by works and preach a crucified and risen Saviour as alone sufficient for righteousness: "Oh, my friend, we can make no atonement for a violated law; we have no inward holiness of our own; the Lord Jesus Christ is 'the Lord our Righteousness' . . . You find it a hard task to come naked and miserable to Christ; . . . and to receive from the outstretched hand of our Immanuel the riches of redeeming grace . . . But if you come at all you must come thus . . . Preach Christ as the only foundation of the sinner's hope . . . Be bold, be firm, be decided . . . Leave the consequences to your Divine Master . . ." In later years he would confess: "I am myself a witness to what pains a man can take to get to heaven and still be in the dark."

His time in London was well occupied with sermons and lectures almost

**Having read the book, the writer of this article agrees with Venn's judgment.*

daily, but now his preaching proved that he was on the side of truth. At that time he was obliged to cease from writing his sermons in full and preach only from short notes. It was not surprising that this new style should bring opposition from those who were more formal and dead in their worship and doctrine. While at Clapham, Venn met some of the original Methodists, and Whitefield preached with much power in his Church. Now that he preached the doctrines of grace, Lady Huntingdon frequently invited him to preach before some of the Lords and Ladies who were assembled in her London home for that purpose.

In 1795 he was inducted into the Parish of Huddlesfield, Yorkshire. The bleakness of the Yorkshire hills was a great change from the warmth of Surrey, and it also meant a large drop in income for him. The people over whom he was now settled were in much darkness and ignorance, but the power of the gospel was soon manifested when under his preaching many were turned unto the Lord. Even fifty years later, when his grandson and namesake visited the town, he received many personal testimonies of those who were made new creatures in Christ, and continued to profess Him. There was nearby a Club which met for the purpose of ridiculing the truth. With this in view, one of their ablest members was sent to hear Venn preach so that he might discover the absurdities of his preaching. He was immediately struck with a sense of the presence of God. He waited on Mr Venn at the close of the service, and frankly admitted the reason of his coming, but that he was now leaving the Club.

Labours like his, could not be engaged in without personal cost, but he had always believed that it would be more glorifying to God to labour – "... to spend and be spent even to the shortening a little of a short life." In the end he succumbed to a chest complaint so that he could do nothing for seven months but preach once a fortnight, and then he was prostrate for several days. However, the final cause of his breakdown was the death of his wife and partner, leaving him alone to care for their five young children. For the sake of his health he was finally forced to accept a much lighter Parish in Yelling, Huntingdonshire, but his parting from a people he had grown to love was far from easy.

"I go to Yelling a dying man", were his own words at that time, but the Lord raised him up again for another 26 years. His new people were country yokels, but they were in the same darkness as the people of Huddlesfield at his first arrival. But here too he began to see the same things as in the former charge. The Holy Spirit by the preaching of the Word broke up the fallow ground and uprooted the thorns of their hard and barren hearts, and many were brought under the power of the Truth.

The same year that he moved to Yelling he married again to complete his happiness. From five in the morning till late at night he was about his sacred

duties. It was not long till his house was thronged with anxious callers, and as many as twenty would throng his home to join in family worship.

He did not confine his preaching to Yelling but went further afield and at the suggestion of John Berridge he was even ready to preach in barns. He was among the stated supply at Surrey Chapel (whose minister was Rev. Rowland Hill). On one occasion he returned to Huddlesfield for three weeks and received a warm welcome as the people thronged to hear him once more. On the whole however, his life was very quiet compared with his previous labours.

At the age of 68 he was finally obliged by ill health to retire and end his days at his son's manse, who was a minister of Clapham. He was so filled with joy at the thought of the dissolution of body and soul that his doctor said to him: "Sir, in this state of joyous excitement you cannot die."

There are not many sermons left by which one can form a true estimate of his style, and even those that are at hand represent the earlier part of his ministry. These do not appear to be very outstanding, but the truth is that good preached sermons do not necessarily make good reading. Furthermore, the full force of his sermons was in the power of the Holy Spirit accompanying their delivery and also in the manner of their presentation. He looked severe when he spoke of judgment and hell, and smiled when he freely offered Christ. From his letters he showed that he had a clear knowledge of the sinfulness of the heart. These also prove him to have been an able and wise counsellor.

Henry Venn is also an outstanding example as a parent. It stands to his credit that he brought up all his children to know the Lord, and they were all professing Him giving evidence in their lives whom it was they loved and whom they served. His grandson and namesake was one of the founders of the Church Missionary Society in 1799, and the Church Mission to the Jews in 1809. Both these Societies were evangelical in their early days, and did much to pioneer missionary work.

Although he was a rigid Arminian at the beginning, in the end his doctrine was clearly Calvinistic, and so he was numbered with such great names as Whitefield, Berridge, Grimshaw and Rowland Hill. He was nevertheless sufficiently open-hearted to continue his friendships with those from whom he differed but whom he considered the Lord's people. Thus he continued to be friends with the Wesleys and Fletcher.

He was unworldly in his character, and once when he heard that a wealthy widow intended to make him a beneficiary under her will, he immediately demurred looking only to his incorruptible inheritance in heaven.

London Mission Letters

1. To Mr. Donald Sutherland

4 Shaftesbury Terrace,
GLASGOW
13th April, 1908.

My dear Mr. Sutherland,

Many thanks for your telegram which has raised my hopes of your success. You shall reap if you faint not. This weak effort for the truth's sake never left my mind since I came from London, and I have been bending my knees to plead that the Lord Jesus would gather this weak beginning under His own wings as a hen doth her chickens. If He be for you, who can be against you? I do believe that He is with you, and will be with you, while you continue to do everything according to His Word, and while you will refuse to mix His holy ordinances with the things which the flesh thirsts after. What has Christ to do with Belial, or the temple of the Lord with idols? Surely nothing. Christ's holy name should not be sacrilegiously used to cover the works of the flesh, if men will have vain songs, dancing, etc. let them have them in the name of the spirit that rules in the children of disobedience. I know Satan will roar if his cloak be taken off him; for he cannot get on so well in his own name. Conscience will not so easily sleep when the sinner is told that the Lord Jesus Christ is opposed to such practices.

I hope Thomas Cameron will be upheld in body and mind in that great Babylon, and that you, Willie Grant, all the rest of you who desire that Christ's kingdom should be set up and upheld in your midst, may see yet the plummet in the hand of Zerubabel putting the copestone on the building, "Crying grace, grace unto it."

Please remember me to all the friends of truth among you as if mentioned by name, and with kindest regards to Robert, Frank and Miss Watt.

Fond regards to Thos., Willie and yourself.

Yours very sincerely,
Neil Cameron.

2. To Mr. William Grant

4 Shaftesbury Terrace,
Glasgow.

January 11th, 1910.

My dear Mr. Grant,

You have often come before my mind since I came home from London.

I realise that a heavy burden lies on yourself and the other young men

who are with you in connection with the Cause of Christ in that place. You will need a deep baptism into the Spirit of Christ in order to your being useful in advancing His interests in that great Sodom.

The first duty you owe to one another is a large measure of the grace of love. This would enable you to cover the failings of one another from the world, and keep peace and harmony among yourselves. May the Lord grant you all much of this grace. You will need also sincere obedience to the voice of Christ in His own Word. He alone should rule by His Word in everything. This rule must be followed in dealing with the Lord's people and with the world, without respect of persons. But this will need a good deal of wisdom so that neither Jew nor Greek, nor the Church of God be unnecessarily offended.

It gave me very great pleasure to have found peace and harmony amongst you while I was there, and I have been often pleading since that the Lord would make you one lump. The world will certainly hate you, and will say all manner of evil about you falsely for Christ's sake; but you need not wonder at that. They have called Christ, Beelzebub, and how can you expect to get better treatment than your Lord got.

We had a meeting of the Southern Presbytery last night at which I reported the circumstances of your Mission, and the impressions (favourable) which were left on my mind after my second visit. The Presbytery unanimously appointed me as your future interim Moderator, with four elders as assessors, in order that you should have a session. I asked our Clerk, Rev. J.S.S., if he had received a list of members from you, and he told me no. Perhaps you will send it, when convenient, to me.

I trust you are all well at Seymour House. Please offer my kind regards to each as if mentioned by name.

Mother is always frail and confined to bed; the rest of us are fairly well.

I trust you get good news from home. Remember me to them all when you write.

With kindest regards,

Yours very sincerely,

Neil Cameron.

Posadh an Anama ri Croisd

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

Air a leantuinn bho t.d.

(4) Gabh beached agus tuig e ann an dreuchd Eadar-mheadhonair-eachd. Tha'n soisgeul dhà fhoillseachadh agus a cur an ceill Chrìosd do ar creidimh anns an dreuchd so; tha e foillseachadh agus a cur an ceill Chrìosd mar am fìor

Mhessiah agus Slànuighear an t-saoghail; mar neach air a sheulachadn, air a chur, air ùngadh leis an Athair air son saorsa anama cailte: agus mar sin bu chòr do chreidimh amharc Air agus a thuigsinn. Mar sin, mar an ceudna, thuig creidimh Pheadair e: "Is tusa Criosd," tha e'g ràdh, "Mac an Dé bheo. "Mata xvi.16. Mar sin tha sinn a leughadh mu chreidsinn gu'r losa an Criosd, I Eoin v.1. Uime sin, mar an ceudna, tha Criosd ag ònnse dha na h-Iudhaich, "Mur a creid sibh gur mise e, gheibh sibh bàs ann ur peachaidhean, Eoin viii. 24. Mur a creid sibh gur mise e," 's e sin, gur ml a' Messiah, an Criosd, an Slànuighear a bha air a ghealltuinn. Oh! tha creidimh a tighinn gearr air a bheachd a bu chòr a bhi aige air Criosd, mur eil e mar so ag amharc Air na dhreuchd.

(5) Gabh beachd Air agus tuig E na chumhachd neo-chrìochnach agus na fhoghainteachd gu bhi cur an gnìomh a dhreuchd. Tha'n soisgeul a foillseachadh agus a cur an ceill Chrìosd dha ar creidimh, mar neach a tha cumhachdach gu bhith teanadh a dh'ionnsuidh a cheum is fhaide a mach: agus mar sin bu chòr dha ar creidimh suil a thoirt Air agus a thuigsinn, Ehb.vii.25. Tha e dha fhoillseachadh da-rìreadh mar an aon Slànuighear, agus an Slànuighear uile-fhoghainteach: mar an aon Slànuighear, "Seallaibh riumsa, agus bithibh air 'ur teanadh, uile iomalla na talmhuinn: oir is mise Dia, agus cha'n eil atharrach ann." Isaiah xlv.22." Oir cha'n eil ainm air bith eile fodh neamh air a thoirt am measg dhaoine tre am faod sinn a bhi air ar teanadh." Gnìomh.iv.12. Oir is biadh gu fìrinneach m'fheoil agus, is deoch gu fìrinneach m'fhuil, tha E 'g ràdh, esan a dh'itheas m'fheoil-sa, agus a dh'òlas m' fhuil-sa, tha e gabhail còmhnuidh annam-sa, agus mise ann-san. Mar a tha'n t-Athair a chuir uaithe mise, agus a tha mise beo troimh an Athair; is amhuil sin esan a dh'itheas mise, bithidh e mar an ceudna beo tromhamsa." Eoin vi.55-57. Tha e dha fhoillseachadh ann an eufachd neo-chrìoch-nach fhala, ann an lànachd neo-thraoghaidh a ghràis, iomlanachd ùmhlachd, oirdheirceas fhìreantachd, iomlanachd a riarachaidh, agus a leithid sin, agus mar sin bu chòr dha ar creidimh amharc air agus a thuigsinn. O saothrichibh air son a leithid de bheachd agus de thuigse air Criosd 's tha'n so; ma chreideadh sibh gu bràth gu ceart agus am biodh sibh da-rìreadh air bhur posadh ri Criosd, saothrichibh eolas fallain, soilleir, sònraichte, Air, mar Chuspair mòr a chreidimh: bithibh gu mòr ag ùrnaigh air son spiorad gliocais agus foillseachaidh ann an eolas Air; b'e ùrnuigh an Abstoil air son nan Ephesianach anns a chùis so, Ephes. 1.17, agus biodh e mar sin dhuibh-se, air ar son fein.

(3) An cuireadh sibh ar creidimh gu ceart air Criosd, agus am biodh sibh da-rìreadh air ar pòsadh Ris, an sin bithibh cinnteach gu'r e roghainn agus taghadh cheart a dheanamh Dheth, air dhuibh mar so, air dhuibh eolas agus tuigse bhi agaibh Air. Tha beachd ceart agus tuigse bhi agaibh air Criosd ceart agus feumail, a chum aonadh a bhi agaibh Ris ann an creidsinn; ach cha'n e so na h-uile; air do Chrìosd bhi air aithneachadh agus air a thuigsinn feumaidh E mar an ceudna bhi air a roghnachadh agus air a dhlùth-ghabhail leinne, agus sin mar a tha E air fhoillseachadh agus air a thairgse anns an t-soisgeul. 'S e

th'ann an eolas agus tuigse air Crìosd ach gnìomh na h-Ìnn-tinn agus na tuigse; ach a bh' roghnachadh agus a bh' gabhail ri Crìosd, ach gnìomh na toil agus na'n aignidhean; ach ged a tha creidimh a th'aiseachadh agus ag eirigh anns an Ìnn-tinn, gidheadh tha chriochnachadh agus iomlanachd anns an toil agus anns na h-aignidhean; tha bh' gabhail tlachd, a roghnachadh, agus a gabhail Ris, agus sin ann an rathad a tha freagarach do'n a ch' an Ìnn-tinn agus an tuigse ann; agus feumaidh sin a bh' air a chur ris na nithean a tha dol air thoiseach, ar neo, cha'n eil creidimh ceart ann, agus mar sin cha'n eil aonadh pòsaidh agus co-chomunn ri Crìosd. Uime sin, tha'n t-Abstol ag ràdh, "Oir is ann leis a chridhe a chriedear chum fireantachd, agus leis a' bheul a dh'aidichear chum slàinte." Rom.x.10. Is ann leis a chridhe tha fìor chreidimh air a dheanamh. Nis, leis a chridhe ann an so, mar a tha gu coitcheann an àitean eile anns na Sgrìobhturan, tha e air a chiallachadh an toil agus na h-aignidhean; mar sin a bh' creidsinn leis a chridhe air a chiallachadh gu'm bheil an toil agus na h-aignidhean a roghnachadh agus a gabhail ri Crìosd, mar a tha E air fhoillseachadh agus air a thairgse anns an t-soisgeul. Tha so air a ghairm "a bh' gabhail ri Crìosd." a stigh dha ar toil, 'n uair a n' sinn roghainn Dheth, agus a leanas sinn Ris air son beatha agus slàinte; agus tha sinn dha ghabhail a stigh dha ar n-aignidhean, 'n uair a ghràdhaicheas sinn E, a mhiannaicheas sinn E, agus a ghabhas sinn tlachd Ann; agus is e so creidimh. "A bh' creidsinn," tha Calvin ag ràdh, "cha'n n' air bith eile e ach a bh' roghnachadh agus a bh' gabhail ri Crìosd le togradh suilbhearr Ìnn-tinn, mar a tha e air fhoillseachadh, agus air a thairgse anns an t-soisgeul. Agus do, da-rìreadh, gnìomh beo a chreidimh leis am bheir aonadh pòsaidh agus co-chomunn ri Crìosd gu h-àraidh air a thoirt mu'n cuairt. 'S e a n' Crìosd na chuibhrionn dhuinn agus a chuireas sinn ann an seilbh Air. "Rinn Muire," the Crìosd ag ràdh, "Roghainn de'n chuid mhaith sin, nach toirear uaipe," Luc.x.42. Rinn i roghainn de Chrìosd, agus rinn i roghainn Dheth na chuid mhaith dhith, agus cho mòr a cuid Dheth, agus nach cailleadh i e gu bràth, agus nach bitheath E gu bràth air a thoirt bh'uaipe. Da-rìreadh n' roghainn cheart do Chrìosd thairis E dhuinne, aonaidh e sinn Ris, agus bheir e dhuinn a bh' gabhail tlachd Ann gu bràth. A chum ar cuideachadh air adhart anns a ghnothuch so biodh fios agaibh gu'm bheil roghainn cheart de Chrìosd air a choimhlionadh anns na trì ceumannaibh so.

(R'a leantuinn)

Letter from Rhodesia

Zenka Mission,
P.B. T5398,
BULAWAYO.

14/4/71

Dear Mr. MacLeod,

In my last letter I tried to describe a journey which I made to the

Mangwizi Valley area. The Mangwizi Valley divides the Zhombe Tribal Trust Land from Nkai Tribal Trust land. Zhombe is administered by the District Commissioner at Que Que, which is one of the administrative centres of Midlands Province. This province is quite separate from Matebeleland Province. Nkai Tribal Trust Land is in Matebeleland, and needs no further definition. It is already well known to our church people in Scotland as Shangane Reserve. Not only is there a geographical separation between the two provinces, there is a racial separation as well. The Mangwizi valley separates the Matebele from the Mashona.

You will recollect that we have a school at Makhasane on the Northern slope of Mangwizi valley (inside the Nkai T.T.L.). The school absorbs children from the Zhombe Tribal Trust Land so that 46% of the children at Makhasane are Mashona. You will also remember that in my last letter I mentioned taking a service at Nkobokhwe. This place is in the Zhombe T.T.L.

On a subsequent visit to Makhasane school, I decided on a Friday afternoon that, rather than go to the Nkobokhwe, I would go in another direction (South East) into the Zhombe Tribal Trust Land. We went to a place called Bambarara valley and discovered that there was a "church" there. We found the preacher and he appeared to be half Methodist, half Seventh Day Adventist. He took great pride in showing us his books (English publications). He had a large expensive copy of the Authorised Version of the Bible. He is able to read English haltingly, and speaks it also haltingly. I persuaded him to give me his books and promised that I would give them back to him pointing out the errors contained in them and promised to give him a better book (i.e. The Westminster Confession of Faith) to read along with his Bible. He appeared to be very happy with this arrangement.

We carried on to a place called Dendera where there has been a Community school in existence for several years. We called at the home of the Headman, where we got a respectful welcome. He gave us permission to go into Dendera school. Here we were introduced to the Headteacher, and he assured us that he would very gladly distribute religious literature for us.

On Saturday we crossed the valley again, and had two short services at Bambarara. The attendance was poor, a death having occurred the previous day, and most of the adult population had gone to the burial. The second service here was held at the request of one of the men who returned from the burial, just when we were about to leave. We felt quite forlorn at the first service, but during the second, which we felt reluctant to take (unprepared) we felt uplifted, being enabled to speak with a measure of freedom on Isaiah chp.55 v.1. We then left for the Headman's home at Dendera, where we discovered that he had most courteously arranged for a service. He suspended his "court" and all legal matters which were being discussed when

we arrived. The people were told to come back with their "amacala" (court cases) the following week. There was a larger turnout here. The audience was later added to with the arrival of a group of Seventh Day Adventists straight from their own service. We thereafter departed from the Zhombe area with the prayer that the Lord would bless them. We had two services at Makhasane school on the Lord's Day and on Monday returned to Zenka. We hope to go back soon, and would ask you to "pray for us" seeking that the Lord would raise up Witnesses to the awakening power of the Holy Spirit and the redeeming love of Christ. The god of this world has blinded the eyes of those who do not believe, but all that the Father has given to the Son to redeem, shall come to Him, even from this dark land.

With kind regards,
Yours sincerely,
D.M. Campbell.

Reformation Translation Fellowship

Report from Rev. Charles H. Chao, the Chinese Executive Secretary

PRESENT RELIGIOUS CLIMATE IN TAIWAN

As we move into the decade of the 70's, we feel grateful to God for having led the R.T.F. through its twenty-first year. At the same time, however, we are confounded by the tremendous challenge that faces the Chinese Christian world here in Taiwan because of the increasing impact of secularization that arises from rapid economic growth and its concomitant urbanization. Evangelism and church growth that used to characterize the 1950's and early 1960's are now suffering from what seems to be an evangelistic apathy. As in the U.S.A., the television stations that bring Apollo expeditions to the Chinese living rooms are also keeping Christians from attending Sabbath evening and other weekly meetings by their diverse and attractive programmes of dances, popular songs, magic shows, classical and modern Chinese dramas, etc.

Bookstores are increasing more and more and they are usually packed with high school and college students. What are they reading nowadays? Modern western philosophy from John Stuart Mill to Jean Paul Sarte, from Bertrand Russell to Albert Camus, Heidegger, Nietzsche and Kierkegaard are among the best. Living under social and academic pressures, these students search desperately for some sort of meaning in life. The old Confucian 'work hard and be successful' value concept is fading away, and the significance of the 'moment' of authentic existence suggested by existentialist philosophers seems to provide a viable solution to their untiring quest for the purpose of life. At a time of cultural confusion like this, there is a

unique opportunity for Christians to present Christ, by way of literature, to young and vigorous Chinese intellectuals. The Chinese Church is hardly ready to handle this task, and the R.T.F. lack the funds and the personnel to perform this urgent ministry.

In July 1970, an instructor in the Department of Philosophy at the Taiwan National University, Ch'en Ku-ying by name, published a booklet called *A new Portrait of Jesus* in which he attacked the Bible vehemently, charging Jehovah as a God of murder, and Jesus as a self-centered egotist. Many non-Christians felt unhappy about this, whilst most Christians felt confounded, not knowing what to do. For the first time, in an embarrassing way, sentimental fundamentalists felt the need of an intellectual defense of the Gospel even though in their hearts they remain anti-theological. Ch'en's attack was launched from the position of a Chinese humanist. My son, Jonathan, has prepared a booklet called *Chinese Ethical Humanism and the Essence of Christianity* (in Chinese) in which he challenges Ch'en's position as a failure in the history of Chinese thought, and he also points out the inevitable factors of conflict inherent in Chinese humanism and Christianity. It is awaiting funds for publication.

On the national scene, the Government is renewing its efforts in the 'Chinese Cultural Renaissance Movement'—an attempt to revive Confucianism and all other aspects of traditional culture. This revival is expressed through movies, television programmes and festivals that show Chinese traditional feelings of loyalty to the ruler and filial piety to the parents as well as practices in folk religions. Culturally, this renewal is enriching, but it is also exerting an influence upon the Church for subtle conformity to this cultural norm. Most Chinese Church leaders seem to adopt a position of harmony and so there has been no clash between Christianity and Chinese culture. The Roman Catholics express their approval of this movement in a most conspicuous way when, just recently, Cardinal Yu-pin led a group of Catholics in performing the rites of ancestor worship, and this was editorially endorsed by the most widely circulated Protestant newsweekly, *Christian Tribune*. All this means one thing: that the unique claims of Christ is being endangered by a possible cultural syncretism, however subtle that might be, and that the prophetic ministry of the hour in the Chinese Church is to witness to Christ against this cultural wave. This is going to be the battle ground in this coming decade. All these secular and religious currents are forcing us to pause and re-evaluate the present ministries of the R.T.F. and to determine her new role in the midst of these challengers, so that our ministry might be performed more strategically and in a truly prophetic way.

RESPONSE FROM READERS OF OUR LITERATURE

The *Faith and Life*, our quarterly magazine, continues to be published at 2,000 copies per issue. Of these, about 1,500 are distributed to subscribers bookstores, and some as gifts. Countries to which the quarterly goes include

Brazil, Burma, Canada, England, France, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, the U.S.A. and Taiwan. A total of 5,553 copies were distributed in 1970, and of that, 3,293 copies (60%) were distributed in Taiwan. This is a clear index to the difference it makes as to whether the editor is here in Taiwan doing promotion work or not. The following are representative responses from our readers:

Mr. H.Y. Yeoh, a school teacher in Pahang, Malaysia:

'Dear Rev. Chao,

Thank you for sending me the *Faith and Life*. I appreciate your having printed my article, "Life and Its Sufferings". I read carefully the article "Reasons for Chinese Theological Impoverishment" and felt that the horizon of my view was extended. Every time I enter a Christian bookstore I leave there with an impression that more than 80% of the books are in English, and we Chinese Christians just don't seem to have cultivated the habit of reading and writing. I agree with what you said in your article, "The Task of Chinese Christian Literature Work." I suggest that we aim at establishing a publishing house and a bookstore where we can sell other good books, stationery, along with our Christian books. I agree with Professor Lit-sen Chang's idea that we aim at a position of cultured leadership. Mr. Jonah Chan wrote me recently and said that he hopes *Faith and Life* could have a more dynamic editorial committee, efficient production, and a business manager, etc. The journal should aim at becoming a vehicle whereby younger men can exercise in their gifts in the Christian literature ministry. I agree with Mr. Chan. What is your view? It is my most sincere hope that your periodical will have a larger and more dynamic group of original writers. If the content of the periodical can appeal more to the needs of the Chinese Church, written with a high quality, then the faith of the readers will be strengthened, and its circulation will automatically increase . . .'

Part of another letter from the same writer (April 19, 1970):

'... I appreciated reading (in issue No. 82) your article "The Devil's Emergency Meeting". I think this type of writing is a good technique in presenting a message, and is quite attractive. I also enjoyed reading Watson Soong's article: "Indigenous Theology and Polytheistic Concepts." It is a good contribution to the debate on indigenous theology. I used to dislike translated articles, because I don't have the patience to read them. But your translated articles are like original Chinese ones. The critical article on Nietzsche is good. I am enclosing four names and addresses . . .'

Mr Chou Ming, a lay Christian in Hongkong (March 30, 1970):

'Your magazine and books are most suitable for pastors, theological students and mature Christians. They meet our needs, and so we enjoy them greatly. However, it is sad that they are seldom seen in other Christian book-

stores. It is difficult to secure your books. I hope you can improve the distribution situation in Hongkong and thereby facilitate us readers. We Christians in Hongkong feel the need for deeper and more detailed Biblical expository or exegetical works. We hope that you will aim at meeting this need of the Chinese churches today.'

Rev. Jonathan Kaan of Vietnam (June 5, 1970):

'Your periodical is most helpful to those who are searching after the truth. However, I think it is a pity that it is only a quarterly. It would be best if it could become a monthly journal.'

Mr. Stephen Chiu, Pastor of Greater Boston Mandarin Church (September 24, 1970): 'The content of *Faith and Life* is getting richer, and I think you probably spend a lot of time on it. It is very suitable for pastors and Christian intellectuals. I am willing to do my best to promote it on your behalf . . .'

As indicated previously, Biblical expositions are in greatest demand. Dr. J.G. Vos' *The End of the Ages*, Dr. L. Boettner's *Immortality and The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination* were good sellers among our other books. Cameron's *God's Plan and Man's Destiny* has been designated as the Chinese textbook at the newly formed China Evangelical Seminary where Jonathan is teaching this year.

Thus, generally speaking, the response of our readers and sale of literatures indicate that: (1) commentaries and Biblical theology should have top priority in our future selection of books for translation; (2) the *Faith and Life* periodical should be increased to bi-monthly publication and, if possible, eventually to become a monthly; (3) in terms of contents, *Faith and Life* should, in addition to introducing Reformed literature, aim at dealing with the contemporary issues facing the Chinese Church, such as Christianity's conflict with Chinese culture; (4) an editorial Committee be formed with an enlarged body of Chinese contributing editors who can participate in the work of contemporary witness to the Biblical truth; (5) more paperbacks dealing with specific issues facing the Chinese Church and society should be published; and (6) we ought to increase our staff so as to improve our business management and general promotion work.

PERSONAL NEWS AND PROSPECTS

Besides my regular work, I taught a course in Systematic Theology during the first semester at Calvin United Theological College in Hsin Chu, south of Taipei, by the invitation of Rev. Egbert W. Andrews of the Orthodox Presbyterian Mission. But since it was dissolved last summer I am no longer engaged in teaching. However, a church in the eastern part of Taipei called Pei Hsin Chapel is without a pastor, and so I am temporarily

assisting the work there. At home, my youngest son Sergeant Bill Chao has been staying with us as he completes his Army service in Taiwan. He will return to the states in June 1971. Lois, the ninth child, left us for the University of California, Santa Barbara campus last summer. This summer, our youngest child, Rose, is due to leave for the U.C. Santa Cruz campus. Grace, a Junior at Wheaton College, is planning to visit Taiwan with the Wheaton Student Missionary Programme. My wife and I are hoping to return to the U.S. this summer and stay for half a year or so. My second son, Jonathan and his wife, Rebecca, are also here for a year until this Fall. Jonathan is teaching at the China Evangelical Seminary for one year on loan from the China Graduate School of Theology, Inc. The other children are in the States and are doing fine.

It is the pleasure of the writer of this report to mention that Dr. Samuel E. Boyle, Chairman of the Board of the R.T.F., visited us here in Taipei last summer during his brief stay in the Far East and we had a very profitable fellowship together at Sun Moon Lake, a resort of this Treasure Island. Dr. Boyle is planning to do missionary work in Taiwan, beginning in 1972. We are awaiting him with great expectations.

May I close with a word of appreciation for all the friends of R.T.F. in Britain and in the States for their prayers and financial assistance. We are grateful for your partnership in this ministry. The task before us is truly great. As we look ahead, let us pray that (1) the *Faith and Life* quarterly may become a bi-monthly, and that through it men of God might speak prophetically to the needs of the Chinese Church; (2) that more small theological books, Biblical expositions, and current issue paperbacks, will be published as a new series; and (3) that there may be enough funds to employ a business manager, and if possible, open a bookstore. It is also our hope that in the near future we might be able to remunerate our writers and thereby encourage a larger body of capable Christian writers to participate in this ministry.

CHARLES H. CHAO

Notes and Comments

I.R.A. PERFIDY

It has long been suspected that the disturbances in N. Ireland were organised and that the Irish Republican Army were the main instigators of trouble. Now indubitable proof has been produced, as reported in the "Times" of 22nd May, which leaves no doubt that this vicious organisation, trained in Eire, the spawn of the papal system, must be held accountable for the continued murder, arson and destruction that fill the headlines in the press and radio news from Ulster. Documents were disclosed before the Scarman Tribunal in Belfast on 21st May which contain the secret plans of campaign of the I.R.A. Counsel said that these plans were received from the Royal Ulster

Constabulary in mid-1968, were described as from a reliable source, and greatly helped the police in dealing with the riots in August 1969. In the first phase, plans were laid to foment riots, under cover of which informers were to be killed, and "quiet assassination for police" and "silencers, poisoned darts, etc. can be used with effect here;" kidnappings were to take place to secure hostages in the event of executions of Republicans. The second stage was a military operation against the British Forces in Ulster. Counsel quoted from the document which read: "This type of operation should, and must be of a purely 'killing nature' designed to inflict as many fatal casualties on the British as possible. It should be confined completely to British Army personnel." To avoid rousing suspicions, the men composing the unit for this task, consisting perhaps of 60 men, were not to be drawn from one area—60 men drawn from Dublin would be noted. Selected men would receive a three weeks' course in basic military skills. The Tribunal learned that the purpose of this campaign was to try out with little cost in men the strength of the northern organisation. In the final phase agriculture and industrial sabotage were to take place. The Stormont Government and the British Forces have a stern task to maintain order in Ulster, but now that the real enemy has been uncovered, that task should become simpler. C.

Acknowledgment of Donations

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

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