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Accepted in the Beloved

It is clear from the Word of God that there is no hope of a sinner being accepted of God apart from being accepted in God's beloved Son. Sin has separated us from God and we lie under the curse of the broken law. The claims of the divine law are upon us and these demands will never be lowered, that is, perfect and perpetual obedience to all the precepts of the divine law in heart and in life. Man, as fallen, can never meet these claims. All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags and we have nothing to commend us to God.

While this is so, how little we regard these claims of the divine law and of inflexible justice until God in His mercy, by His Spirit will awaken us to a realisation of them. How solemn is the sinner's plight then, as the sinner finds himself or herself a transgressor of the holy law of God and meriting the just punishment which their sins deserve. Unless the soul can be delivered from out of its lost state it must lie down in hell fire for ever to endure the wrath of God eternally. The sinner discovers that his sins which are against God deserve the wrath and curse of God. What hope could such a sinner entertain were it not for the hope of the Gospel which is in Jesus Christ.

In Ephesus there were those to whom the Apostle was writing and of them it was true that they were accepted in the Beloved. It was not on the basis of any merit in themselves that they had been accepted but on the basis of the infinite merit that is to be found in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is in this glorious, divine Person that sinners are accepted and that on the basis of His finished work on Calvary. It was there that sinners were reconciled to God. Christ paid their ransom price in His great work of redemption. In that work He satisfied not only the law of God, which His people had failed to fulfil, but satisfied divine justice as well to meet the infinite demerit of His people's transgressions.

What a glorious Saviour His people have who took the law place of the guilty, stood where they should have stood, and bore the penalty due

to their sins. And when they think of this, that their Saviour is none other than God's Beloved Son, then how can they be filled with anything else but wonder and astonishment. What brought such a Saviour to die for those who were worthy to die eternally? Love was the compelling motive behind it all — love to the will of the Father and love to His people. What can that soul say — of whom it is true that he is accepted in Christ Jesus — but 'Oh, the wonder of the rich grace and mercy and love of God in Christ Jesus!'

Where do we stand in the light of this? Can we say with godly Samuel Rutherford —

I stand upon His merits
I know no other stand
Not even where glory dwelleth
In Immanuel's Land?

On what a firm footing is that soul who is accepted in the Beloved. It can never be moved. The enjoyment of eternal blessedness will be the portion of this people. They will be eternally magnifying the grace of God which took them from the dust and from the dunghill and placed them amongst His princes.

If we do not know in our spiritual experience what it is to be accepted in the Beloved through faith in His Name, let us seek it for ourselves, let us seek it earnestly, let us seek it with our whole heart, for the Lord is to be found of those that seek Him. And when we find Him, He will clothe us with the unspotted garment of His imputed righteousness.

Notes of a Sermon

by Rev. Neil MacIntyre, Edinburgh

(Preached at Dingwall Communion on Saturday, 3rd August, 1940)

"He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. This my joy therefore is fulfilled." John 3: 29.

These are the words of John the Baptist. He was a wonderful man. Christ Himself says of him that among men none arose like John the Baptist. He was wonderful in this respect that he was spoken of hundreds of years before he was born. The Prophet Isaiah, who lived about 700 years before John the Baptist, speaks of him as "the voice that crieth in the wilderness", and the Prophet Malachi, who lived 400 years before John, speaks of him as "my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before

me.” We may say that he was also wonderful in this, that he was sanctified from the womb. There is no question of that. He was also wonderful in this, that he was the first to proclaim publicly that Christ had come, when he said — “Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.” This honour was also put on him, that he baptised Christ in the river Jordan. Now, we see that these were words which he spoke to his disciples when they came to him about a certain question which had arisen between themselves and the Jews, evidently about purifying. Very likely the Jews maintained that purifying was from the ceremonial law. The Jews were zealous concerning the tradition of their fathers, and they held that purifying was through the ceremonial law, and John’s disciples were zealous concerning their own master and his teaching, and they probably held that purifying was from the baptism of John, and said to him that He who was with them beyond Jordan was baptising, and that all men came to Him. It appears to me that there was here zeal without knowledge on the part of the disciples of John. I think that they were jealous of Christ — He was in opposition to their own master. He was baptising and all men came to Him, and they were to defend the honour and glory of their own master. John, however dispels the error under which they were labouring — “Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ”, and so now, without enlarging on these things, he says to His disciples — “He that hath the bride is the bridegroom, but the friend of the bridegroom which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom’s voice, this my joy therefore is fulfilled.”

In seeking to take up these words for a few minutes, we may notice *first*, the parties here spoken of, and they are the bride and the bridegroom. There is a bride and a bridegroom spoken of here, and who are they? *Secondly* what is said about the bridegroom, for it will naturally follow what has been said that the bridegroom has the bride, and in the *third* place, the effect that this had on the friend of the bridegroom who was standing by and hearing His voice — “This my joy therefore is fulfilled.” This was the effect it had on John, and it is the effect it will have on all His friends. It is the fulfilment of their joy.

Now, first, the parties here spoken of, i.e. the bride and the bridegroom. We need not take up time pointing out that the bride and the bridegroom here are none else than Christ and the Church, and the Church is spoken of in many places in Scripture as the Lamb’s wife — His mystical body, and we are told in Scripture also that when two are married that they become one flesh. Now the Church is the mystical body of Christ, and we know that our bodies are made up of members — different members,

and each member has its own function, and the Apostle speaks of this when he says that one member of the body cannot say to another — ‘I have no need of you’. The ear cannot say to the eye, nor the eye to the ear, — ‘I have no need of you’. He goes on to say — “If the ear shall say, because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?” What I wish to point out is this, that Christ’s mystical body, as our bodies, is made up of members. In the Church of God He bestows different graces and gifts upon each member of His mystical body, the Church, and one member cannot say to the other — I have no need of you. The weakest is as useful in his own place as the strongest. He gives grace — different exercises of grace and different exercises of gifts to different members, but each are useful in this mystical body of Christ. Most of you will have read in the “Father of Ross-shire” about two godly ministers, Mr Fraser of Alness, and Mr Porteous of Kilmuir. It seems that Mr Fraser was in the habit of preaching the law, and on the other hand Mr Porteous was more on the gospel side. The Lord was blessing Mr Fraser’s labours in quickening and awakening sinners, but evidently they were not getting nourishment for their souls, and so they were going from Alness to Kilmuir to hear Mr Porteous in order to get nourishment for their souls until at last the Church at Kilmuir was overcrowded with the people of Alness. Mr Porteous’ elders spoke to him, and suggested that he should speak to Mr Fraser, so Mr Porteous told Mr Fraser that he was sorry to see so many of his congregation coming to him and complaining that they were not getting the nourishment their souls required, and that if the Lord gave it to him he should not keep it back, for Mr Porteous considered Mr Fraser was better able to give it than he was. The answer Mr Fraser gave was this — “When the Lord sent me out to preach He gave me a quiver of arrows, and I will be trying to cast these arrows, and the quiver is not finished yet; but when he sent you out He gave you a cruise of oil, and your cruise is not empty yet, and I will be trying, as long as the Lord will enable me, to pierce and break the hearts of sinners in Alness and also send them to Kilmuir to be healed by you, and we will be working together in building up the Cause of Christ.” We have here two men — one sent out with a quiver of arrows, preaching the law, and the other sent out with a cruise of oil to preach the gospel, and to feed the Lord’s people.

But now in coming to speak of the parties here spoken of — the bride and the bridegroom, who is the bride and where did He get her? In the first place he found her dead in trespasses and in sins. There was no difference between her and others — “By one man sin entered into the world

and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men because that all have sinned." Dead in trespasses and in sins — no difference whatsoever between her and the rest of the human race, as the prophet Ezekiel puts it — "Cast out in the open field". Now, did Christ marry a dead woman, as it were? (You never heard of, and I do not suppose the law of the land would allow a man to marry a dead woman.) No, He did not. What did He do with her? We read — "The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." He brought her alive by His word and Spirit, and she was betrothed to Him in righteousness, in judgment and in lovingkindness. It was here He found you — dead in trespasses and in sins — you who have a ray of hope that you have been betrothed to Him as your own. You will be the first to admit that it was dead in trespasses and sins He found you. Were it not that He came your way, and quickened you by His Spirit you would have remained dead in trespasses and sins, just as those who will be lost forever. If you have a ray of hope that He did this for you — that He came your way and quickened you, and united you to Himself, you will have to confess that He found you among the dead. There will not be a saint in Heaven of the human race but will have to confess that it was there they were found — among the dead, and He brought them alive.

Now, in speaking of this marriage, was there anything to oppose it? Was there anything that opposed this person being betrothed to Him? When two are to be married there is what we all know to be a proclamation of banns. Now, why is there a proclamation made when two are to be married? Is there any sense in the thing at all? Yes, it is not done without a reason or purpose. Why is the proclamation made then? It is made for this purpose, that if any person has an objection to the marriage taking place he has an opportunity of coming forward and putting a stop to the marriage. That does not take place very often, but I saw it being done (not in our church) — a son of the man who was to be married got up and said he was putting a stop to it, and the marriage had to be stopped until matters were settled. Now another thing, when the two parties do not belong to the same parish the proclamation will have to be made in both parishes. Now, the parties here belong to different parishes — the bridegroom belongs to the parish of Heaven, and I think we may say the bride belonged to the parish of hell. Was the proclamation made in both places? Yes. Were there any objections in Heaven to the marriage? Yes. What were they? In the first place there was this objection — He was a divine and eternal Person and she was a finite creature and polluted, and how could the eternal God who was from everlasting to everlasting come

to be married to the world? How was that objection to be got over? Here, my friends, was love that was strong as death that many waters could not quench, and floods could not drown. He loved them with an everlasting love. He said He would take her very nature — “Seeing the children were partakers of flesh and blood He likewise took part of the same”. He became flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone. There was this objection also, — the law of God objected to this marriage. What did the law say? She is married to me — she is my wife, and although she has conducted herself as she has done — she has forsaken me and broken her marriage vows, yet that does not mean that I lost my claim on her. I still claim obedience just as before. Let us remember that we are married by nature to the law in our first covenant head — the covenant of works, and the law of God in our breaking the covenant demands obedience of us, and we have no excuse for not giving that obedience. We are so very, very ready, (that is, Christless sinners here today and elsewhere) to say — “I can do nothing”, and you think that your inability and your helplessness will excuse you in the eyes of the law. No, the law demands of you the same perfect obedience that it demanded of man in a state of innocency, and it will demand obedience throughout eternity — do this! It is no excuse, and it will not be accepted of you to say — “I cannot do it”. Dr Hugh Martin who was in Edinburgh used to say — “Although you had no other sin going to eternity but your inability that very inability will bring you to hell.” But now Christ came, or rather entered into a covenant to obtain his bride. She was under the law — she was under its curses and could never meet its demands, and the law has never ceased to demand of her what she could not pay. The law demanded obedience and justice demanded punishment for the past, and she could give neither the one nor the other, and that is the case with you, but Christ was made under the law to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. He exalted the law and made it honourable, and I think I am right in saying this, that Christ as the second Adam was not made under the law in the same way as the first Adam. There was a difference, and it is that Adam was made under the law as an untransgressed law. The law of God had no curse for Adam in a state of innocency, and while he continued to obey that law there was no curse for him, but now when Christ came, how was He made under the law? It was not as an untransgressed law He was made under it, but as a broken, transgressed law, and in that sense He had to be made under the curse, and not only that He had to be made under the curse of a broken covenant, but also you see justice demanded her life, as we were hearing — “The wages of

sin is death". Justice demanded her life which meant eternal death for her, but now the Bridegroom came and took her nature — was born of a woman and made under the law, and now you see He suffered and came under the curse of the law and laid down His life for her to satisfy the claims of justice. Now "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth," and so this objection, or this obstacle, was taken out of the way, and the law of God satisfied, and that, my friends, is the comfort of the Lord's people in the moment in which they are enabled to believe in and accept of Christ as their Saviour. What about the law? The law now has nothing to charge the sinner with — there is no condemnation for him now. Why? Christ satisfied the law in the place of the sinner. "He that believeth is not condemned." We cannot say how long Adam stayed in a state of innocence, but however long, we know that in the moment he sinned he had nothing to fall back on — not a penny laid by. He lived as it were from day to day, but this second Adam, who is the Lord from Heaven, has now earned for her unsearchable riches for time and for eternity, and the Lord will not ask even one single farthing of the believer because of the satisfaction that Christ has given to the claims of the law and of justice.

Now, we may say that the proclamation was made also in her parish. Were there any objections there? Yes, there were two there too. Who were they? There was this one — her father, the devil. Christ, my friends, did not come to ask the daughter of this father — "He spoiled principalities and powers and made a show of them openly." You may be certain that Satan will do everything in his power to keep you from being married to Christ, as it were. He will say — You do not need to look for salvation, you are not elected, and I believe the devil makes his own use of the doctrine of election more than any other doctrine in the Word of God. What should you say to Satan if he comes with such a temptation to you? Tell him that he was a liar from the beginning, and that he knows no more about election than you do, and that is nothing. No angel or man on earth knows anything about election as regards who is elected or who is not, and you have no authority — no sinner here today has authority to come to the conclusion that he is not elected. I defy you to show me your authority for saying you are not elected. It is not from Scripture you have your authority, but from Satan and yourself. You continue, my friend, to reject Christ in the gospel, and you will have an eternity to find out that you are not elected. But you have this revelation, that you are called — see how beautifully the Word of God is putting it, not putting the cart before the horse. It does not say — make your election sure — if I was

sure I was elected it would be easier for me to believe in Christ. The Word says — “Make your calling and election sure.” This is the order of Scripture, and that is the order which we should take. Satan objects to this marriage, but He (Christ) takes the prey from the mighty and sets the lawful captives free. There is another objector, and perhaps the worst of all. Who is that? Herself. When Christ came to her she would not accept Him, and ran away from Him. It was said to Rebekah — “Wilt thou go with this man?” and she replied — “I will go”, but how many when asked if they would go with the Man Christ Jesus say, no, and are many a year rejecting this Bridegroom. We compare her to a young woman and a man seeking her hand in marriage, but she has no love nor regard for him and would not accept him, so sent him away time after time, but somehow a change came in her mind, and now she began to love this person, and would be saying to herself — what would I not give if he would come and offer his hand in marriage to me now, but it is not likely that he will come to me again, but if he would, I would gladly accept him. Christ was offering Himself to her, and is doing so to sinners here today but they will not accept Him, but if the Spirit would come in a day of His power and make you willing you would soon come. I can appeal to all the Lord’s people here today — never did you do anything so willingly as to marry Christ in the day of your espousals. Not one of the mystical body of Christ ever accepted Christ against their will, and never will there be any, and why? Because, as we have it in the 110th Psalm — “Thy people shall be willing in a day of thy power”. They never did anything more willingly than to accept of Him.

Well, we are just now speaking of those who have been under the wrath and curse of God, under sentence of death, but He took her nature, bone of her bone, and went and paid all her debt for her as we commonly say, and as the old divines used to say — “Sin is an infinite evil and she was in infinite debt which she could never pay, but Christ came and paid it all off”, and are you not indebted to Him? If you were in great debt and your creditors came to apprehend you and cast you into prison until you paid the last farthing, and that a kind friend came and paid it, would you not be indebted to him? You who can cherish the hope that Christ came on your behalf, and underwent the miseries of this life, the cursed death of the cross, and was buried and continued under the power of death for a time, for *you*, has He not, my friend, put you under an infinite and eternal obligation, and especially to obey His command on the morrow — “Do this in remembrance of me” — in remembrance of what He did for you. Well, she was an abominable creature. Scripture says — “From

the crown of her head to the sole of her foot there is no soundness in her, but wounds, bruises and putrifying sores". What would you say about a woman in Dingwall, and from the crown of her head to the sole of her foot she had wounds, bruises and putrifying sores? You would be sorry for her. Well, that is exactly the state of the Church when Christ found her. That is how she is described in Scripture — wounds, bruises and putrifying sores. Well, here was a marvel of love to His bride — a marvel that He ever looked on her in her low state — He took her and married her. Now, who is the bridegroom? He is the eternal Son of God — "Thy Maker is thy husband". He said to Jacob — "Fear not, worm Jacob." It occurred to me when Mr Gillies was speaking that Jacob got a new heart that day — He had power with God and man. You will find in the Prophecy of Isaiah, many hundreds of years after Jacob was in Heaven, that he is called — "worm Jacob". That is the case here. He is the eternal God — "Thy Maker is thy husband." That is wonderful — "The Lord of the whole earth shall he be called." Everything belongs to Christ — the wild beasts on the mountains, the fish in the sea and the fowls of the air are His, and what has that to do with her? Her Husband is their Creator — He to whom everything in the world belongs. Her water and bread is sure, and I am certain of this, my friend, if you know the Lord, do you not know Him in His providence? How often has He come to relieve you when things were dark and difficult! Your Maker is your Husband. All things are His — the Lord of the whole earth. But now, as I was saying, He took bone of her bone and flesh of her flesh, and was made like unto His brethren. It struck me very forcibly how Christ was made poor — He was rich and became poor that we through His poverty might be made rich. He was made poor regarding temporal things — "the foxes had holes and the birds of the air had nests but the Son of Man had no place to lay His head." Why was it that Christ had to be made poor in that respect? Why should He not have plenty to eat and drink. I take it to be this — she was under the curse and she had forefeited any claim even to a drop of cold water, and when performing miracles — on more than one occasion He fed the multitude, yet we never find Him performing a miracle to feed Himself, because He was made poor that she might be made rich. Supposing you had nothing but potatoes and salt if you are His you have that with a covenant right for He purchased it for you. Now, He took their place and nature, and He purchased their blessings — whoever will want His bride will not want. "My God," says the Apostle, "shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" — unsearchable riches. If you are poor, my friend, today, and you may be

poor enough and may be complaining of your poverty, it is not because there is not enough in the store. Your Husband has provided riches for you. We hear a great deal about rationing, but Christ has given what He sees profitable for His bride.

In coming to the second head — “He that hath the bride is the Bridegroom”, we notice, for instance that at a marriage every man has a partner on his arm coming to the dinner table, and it might be difficult for you to tell who is the bride and bridegroom. Everyone has his partner, and they are all seated there until the dinner is over when everyone will go away to his and her respective home — couples are separated and there may be miles between them the following day, but there is one party who do not separate, and who are they? Go to the house of the bridegroom and you will find those who were married the night before are together when others are separate, and that, my friends, is the case here. There is plenty of profession today — plenty professing to be married to Christ, but wait, they will soon part with Him, but those who are married to Christ will never part with Him. There is no such thing as a divorce, never was and never will be, in the court of Heaven, although indeed He had many reasons to divorce Her. She is His. How is she His? Well, she is His by creation — by creative right. Also He received her from the Father in eternity — “Thine they were, and thou gavest them me.” They were given to Him from all eternity. We read in one place that He was “Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men”. He takes them from north, south, east and west. He was rejoicing in these parts of the earth that would be inhabited by His bride. Now they were given to Him from all eternity, and they are His in this respect, that it was a voluntary choice on His part. There was no compulsion here. There are many marriages in this world where parents demand their sons to marry a certain individual but if they were left to their own choice they would never marry that person at all. But there was no compulsion here. It was a mutual choice. She was made willing and there was no compulsion on His part. He loved her, and why? She cannot tell. You have proof that He loved you. Can you tell why? No, you cannot, neither can angels tell why He loved you. No creature can tell why. What is the reason that He loved her? He loved her because He loved her. His love is free and sovereign, and she is His by purchase. She was in debt to the very ears, but Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for her. He redeemed her from the curse of the law, being made a curse for her — “Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree”. Well, He purchased her. She was a dearly-bought church. “He humbled himself, and became obedient unto

death, even the death of the cross." He loved her and many waters could not drown that love, and neither will the waters quench it. You see, my friends, this love wherewith He loved her was a personal, intelligible love.

One thing more and I will stop — for what purpose did He take her? That He might redeem her to Himself — to regenerate, purify and sanctify her, and that is His work by His Word and Spirit. She was in rags, she had no marriage robes. It was customary in the east to provide the marriage robes, and here Christ provided the marriage robe — His own righteousness. She was clothed in His spotless righteousness, an everlasting righteousness, and not only that, but, as we said, she was purified. How was she purified? I believe that that will be a question with yourself today as you expect to sit at His Table tomorrow — the lower end of the Table — how are you going to sit at the upper end of the Table among holy angels when you find yourself so corrupt and so unlike those who are going to Heaven? I remember the first time I ever saw the late Mr Macdonald, Shildaig, was at a Communion in _____, and there was a godly man there, Allan Young, and he was so greatly taken with Mr Macdonald that when he got up to speak to the "Question" he looked at Mr Macdonald and said — "You nice minister, it is yourself that is worthy to be there and it is from your own mouth the truth is sweet." After going on a little he said — "We hear much about holiness or sanctification but in my opinion there is nothing that is so difficult for the child of God to understand as what holiness is. I am told that merchants will be taking stock once a year, and that they usually have cellars in their shops which they will be cleaning out before taking stock, but one man took stock and forgot all about the cellar until he went down and found it on fire and the smoke and smell of the rags was choking him with the result that he lost his way in the smoke and had to stay there until the last bit of it was burnt out. If I know anything about sanctification it is like that." He is preparing them and will bring them to glory at last. He will present them holy and unblameable at last. He will present them before the Father.

Thirdly, the friend of the bridegroom rejoices. What would rejoice yourself today? I remember the late Rev N. Cameron saying that Mr Macdonald, Shildaig, was always asking him to get married, and said — "You know I never got a blessing from the Lord like Mary, apart from the salvation of my own soul." Now, you rejoice to hear His Word, and if he should speak to you today you would rejoice. Nothing would give you greater joy than to hear the voice of the Bridegroom calling sinners — young men and women. That would rejoice your heart more than anything else.

Comfort to a Gracious Soul in Trouble

A Letter by Edward Blackstock, 1841.

I feel very sorry for the dark and trying state of mind of which you complain in both your last letters, and wonder at it, because it used to be so different. Surely we have taken sweet counsel together, and have walked to the house of God in company. I grant it is indeed awful (as you say) to be deceived in soul matters; and if you were trusting to free will and free agency, to human merit, or sound gospel notions in the head — being a stranger to heart-work, and the life and power of true godliness — I should see it necessary to change my voice, as Paul says.

But have I not seen you walking in the light of God's countenance? Has not Jesus revealed Himself unto you many a time, and has He not often in seasons of trouble delivered you? Has he not applied many a promise with divine power to your heart? Has He not granted you many a time of sweet and holy enlargement in prayer? Has He not impressed your heart in private with such and such truths, and then brought you into His house, and confirmed these things from the mouth of His servants? Has he not manifested His love to your soul, so that you thought you never could doubt His goodness any more, or call in question your soul's interest in Him? Did He ever fail you, or forsake you? I trow not. Then stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved!

O, remember, He is the same yesterday, today, and forever! Whatever clouds may veil His face, or darken your sky, He rests in His love. "Cast not away your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. For yet a little while and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith, but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But ye are not of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them who believe to the saving of the soul. See that ye refuse not him that speaketh."

O, my dear friend, *unbelief* is the cruel spear that pierces Him! You and I do not wish to cause His wounds to bleed afresh. No, no, let us catch Him by the feet, and say, "My Lord, my God!"

You are undergoing a long captive state; by and by, He will turn your captivity, and then you will be like them that dream! Then your mouth shall be filled with laughter, and your tongue with singing, and you shall say, "The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad!" Now, you are in the dark; anon, you shall say, "The darkness is past, and the true light now shineth." He bringeth deep things out of darkness, and light out of the shadow of death. Now, "the good man" is gone a long

journey, and he hath taken his bag of money with him, but he will come home at the time appointed. Now, you are tempted, but thy God will make the tempter flee; now, you see nothing, and feel nothing, but a body of sin and death, but this is only the strife raised by the law in the members against the law of the mind.

Here is the trial of faith, and the patience of the saints. Trust in, and plead the blood of Jesus. "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death." Now, though you are locked up in unbelief, coldness, deadness, etc., your life is still in the root, and shall ere long ascend into the branch: "Because I live, ye shall live also." Blessed be God, our unbelief cannot make the faith of God of none effect. "God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, principalities nor powers, things present nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall ever be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Sometimes God gives Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers. Little-faith fell among thieves, but the good Samaritan came in with his oil and wine, etc., etc. When the priest and the Levite have passed by, look out for *Him*. "He will surely turn and smile again, nor shalt thou seek his face in vain."

Dear daughter in the faith, fare you well. The Lord lift up the light of His countenance, and give you peace. So desires and prays, your sincere, obliged, and ever faithful friend.

Ed. Blackstock

Letters

by Rev. Neil Cameron
(To Donald MacMaster, Strontian)

24 Gibson Street, Glasgow
5th December, 1893

My beloved friend,

It causes me very much sorrow to hear that you are so poorly.

The Lord grant you much of His own presence in your trouble and may His blessed gifts make your bed easy for you.

The blood of Christ is the only plea for the guilty either at the bar of conscience or at the bar of the law. "The blood of Jesus Christ God's Son cleanseth us from all sin."

The enemy can do a great deal if the Lord permit, but he can do nothing

against the Lord's people but what the wisdom of God sees good for them. Job was severely tried but the Lord had gracious purposes in view. Hezekiah was told that his time for departure had come yet he had 15 years added to his life. Both had to set their seal to it that His name is "the Wonderful". May the Lord grant you much of joy which comes from the shining of His face upon the soul. "Unto you therefore which believe He is precious." The Spirit asks the question, "Is there any consolations in Christ? Is there any communion of love?" Philippians 2: 1. May the precious consolations which are in Jesus Christ be the support of your soul and may the communion of His love fill you with hungering and thirsting after Him, and enable you to say: "I love the Lord because my voice and prayers He did hear."

With fond love,

Your loving friend, Neil Cameron.

Stornoway

26th December, 1893

My dearly beloved friend,

I hope "the candle of the Lord shines upon your tabernacle". "Unto you therefore which believe He is precious." O that Christ were made precious indeed to our souls! That we were enabled, through and at the expense of His grace, to sing with David "I love the Lord because my voice and prayer He did hear, etc." To be enabled to sing of the mercy of God is surely a pleasant thing when He enlarges the hard heart. Nothing can give songs in the night and in the wilderness but the remembrance of the mercy of a holy and just God in the gift of His dear Son. "Think on the works which He performed which admiration breeds."

May the Holy Spirit — the Comforter — enable you to rest entirely upon the finished work of Christ as the only foundation laid in Zion; on His shed blood as the price paid for guilty souls; on His intercession as the only hope of being heard and received by the Father through Him.

There is nothing that terrifies the great adversary like the "blood of Christ"; and there is nothing which gives ease to the guilty conscience like "the blood of Christ".

I would like exceedingly well to see you but the sheep are scattered upon the mountains of Scotland and I cannot refuse their cry so I had to come here for two Sabbaths during holy days. "He is faithful that promised who will also do it." His name is "the *faithful* and *true witness*." "He shall lift the poor from the dust and the beggar from the dunghill etc."

The Lord grant you much of the consolations of His grace.

Fond love to Miss Macmaster and yourself.

Your loving friend,

Neil Cameron

A Free Presbyterian Worthy

Mr Alexander Macfarlane, Oban

In the passing away of Mr Alexander Macfarlane, Oban, formerly schoolmaster at Raasay, the Free Presbyterian Church lost one of its outstanding officebearers.* Though he did not leave home much he was well known to many in our Church through his residence at various places — Raasay, Inverness, Rogart, Lairg and Oban. In all these places he left a fragrant memory. Comely in appearance he was also adorned with a beautiful Christian character. He lived a most exemplary life and was an epistle known and read of all men. Naturally of a retiring and reticent disposition, nevertheless he never hesitated to come to the front battle line when the interests of the cause of truth demanded it. He was a member of the first Presbytery of our Church, and his name appears as one of the signatories of the Deed of Separation. He was the last survivor of those who were members of that Presbytery — the others being Rev. Donald Macdonald, Shieldaig, and Rev. Donald Macarlane, Raasay.

Alexander Macfarlane was born at Laxay, in the parish of Lochs, Lewis, on the 26th day of July, 1842. He was baptised by the Rev. Robert Finlayson, of whom he had many interesting stories to tell, as told to him, no doubt, by his father as well as by others. His parents were God-fearing — his father being the lay-missionary in that district previous to the Disruption. We are of the impression that Donald Macfarlane was a missionary in Jura before going for a few years to the parish of Lochs, and returned to Jura where the subject of this sketch was for the main part brought up. He was the youngest of three of a family — his elder brother, who was a teacher, dying in the Little Lochbroom district, where he lies buried.

As a young man, Alexander went to Edinburgh to study at the Moray House Training College, and became a teacher for a period at Portree, then at Braes, and finally at Raasay, where he laboured for over forty years.

When residing in Portree, the subject of our sketch had the high privilege of hearing repeatedly the Rev. Roderick Macleod, of Snizort, and the Rev.

* Mr Macfarlane was the father of the Rev. D. A. Macfarlane, Dingwall.

Alexander MacColl, of Duirinish, latterly of Lochalsh. It may be remarked that the friendship between Mr MacColl and himself was a mutual one and enjoyed by him to the end of Mr MacColl's life. He was heard to say that he seldom, if ever, sat under one of those older ministers who had such an influence upon one. The time passed so rapidly when he was preaching that one wondered why he finished so soon. One text of Mr MacColl's which he referred to was I Cor. 2: 9. Mr MacColl took it up and applied it to the state of matters in the Free Church. Mr Macfarlane took great interest in the steps which led eventually to the passing of the Declaratory Act, whereby the Free Church lost its identity through a change in her Constitution. Although extracts of letters from an eminently godly schoolmaster in Jura, of the name of Mr Dugald Taylor, need not be given, yet they show that they were for years on the alert as to the movements taking place. Mr Taylor was indeed in favour of agitating for a separation if Professor Robertson Smith was not faithfully dealt with. In 1893, however, the separation came. The Free Presbyterian Church carried on as formerly, in the good providence of God. He suffered for his convictions and actions, but that was no matter of regret to him. Indeed, in due course, the Lord caused exceeding kindness in providence to pass before him. We may add, as one might expect, that the Bible-lesson and Shorter Catechism received no second place in the school work. Probably many generations of pupils received their school instruction in the Word under him, and may it be that many of them may remember what was taught them for their spiritual and eternal benefit.

He had many useful and instructive stories to tell and edifying remarks to relate concerning Rev. John Macrae (*Macrath Mòr*); Rev. Francis Maclean, Fort Augustus, and Rev. Malcolm Macritchie, of Knapdale (afterwards of Strathy and Knock, Lewis), among others.

He was not without his trials from within and without, but being of an exceptionally reticent nature, one might not hear anything of them, or, if at all, mainly when he felt relief had been granted. He did not conceal the blessing and joy granted him on the Sabbath day of an Oban Communion season some years ago. That joy continued generally until the close. By the way he spoke of Psalm 103, especially the first five or six verses, and Psalm 73, from verse 23 onwards, he was evidently standing in a large room. There were other portions marked in his Bible, which he re-marked, before loss of memory and failure of strength came on, that were made precious to his soul. He continually remembered in his prayers the Church at home and abroad. When memory failed in other things, he would be enlivened by reference being made to the "Strong

One, the Chosen One raised out of the people." The earthly house of this tabernacle was rapidly coming down for some time before the end. On the last Sabbath of the first month of 1930, he entered into the city where "the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick — the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity." "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God."

Those who had the privilege of knowing Mr Macfarlane in his home will not readily forget the warm way he welcomed his friends. His cheerful, bright smile shed a ray of light in the home, and his fund of stories about well-known ministers and "men" were of the most interesting kind. He had a trained and orderly mind, and it was well stored with gleanings from a wide field of reading of select Christian authors, and from a wide circle of the Lord's people with whom he came in contact. He was a lover of good men and delighted in the company of the Lord's people. As a speaker at the "Question" Meeting, and on other occasions, he was listened to with rapt attention. The winsome way in which the truth was presented and the beautiful orderliness of the discourse with the unction that accompanied the delivery, arrested the attention of the hearers.

In the passing away of Alexander Macfarlane the Free Presbyterian Church is the poorer, and the cause of Christ has lost one who prayed unfeignedly for the extension of that Kingdom which is without end. . . .

Looking Back After a Hundred Years Part 1

by Rev. K. D. MacLeod

The Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland has now been in separate existence for all but one hundred years. Those who took the initiative in establishing a separate denomination in 1893 were wholehearted in their support of the principles of the Disruption Free Church, which had itself come into separate existence only fifty years earlier. What had changed in such a relatively short time that could justify this drastic step of a further separation? The fact is that a great deal had changed, of which only the briefest outline can be sketched in an article such as this.

The solemn grandeur of the scene has often been described, when in May 1843 over four hundred ministers, and a further large number of elders, left the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in St Andrew's Church, Edinburgh, and wound their way to Tanfield Hall where the first General Assembly of the Church of Scotland Free was constituted.

It was probably the high-water mark of that particular tide of evangelical religion in Scotland.

When the tide actually began to turn may be somewhat doubtful — such things are generally imperceptible. But in 1867 a clear signal was given that the tide had ebbed significantly and that there was now a large element in the Free Church which did not have any deep love for truly Scriptural principles. That year the Free Church General Assembly refused to support a unanimous decision of the Glasgow Presbytery to proceed against one of their ministers, Walter C. Smith, because of his unscriptural views on the binding obligation of the moral law in New Testament times and the place of the Old Testament as a whole in the New Testament dispensation. The successful motion, significantly, was moved by Robert Rainy. In it — and it was a procedure which he was to follow so often in the future — there was some condemnation of Smith's views, but nothing was to be done by way of discipline. Smith had offered some explanations, but no apology or retraction. Clearly he had freedom to continue to hold unscriptural doctrines, and he could continue to teach them. The signal from the General Assembly was plain — others could teach and preach similarly and no serious action would be taken. Which is exactly what did happen.

In the course of the years professor after professor taught and published doctrines which were completely unscriptural. And many lent their support to Higher Critical views of the Bible, especially of the Old Testament — among them A. B. Davidson, Marcus Dods, A. B. Bruce, G. A. Smith and W. Robertson Smith. When cases involving the teaching of Dods and Bruce came before the General Assembly, nothing more was done beyond expressing some mild disapproval; and they were allowed to continue to teach their false views of the authority of the Bible to their students, who were to form the next generation of Free Church ministers. While proceedings against Robertson Smith went somewhat further, one is left with the feeling that his dismissal from his Professorship in 1881 was only the result of his contemptuous refusal to trim his sails just a little. In fact his status as a minister was unaffected and he actually sat as an elder in the 1882 General Assembly.

What probably opened men's eyes more than anything else to incipient declension in the Free Church was the Union Controversy of 1863-1873, when there were proposals for union with the United Presbyterian Church. In 1867, the year of the Walter Smith case, five members of the Free Church's Union Committee resigned; they had seen too much of a spirit of concession among other members of the Committee. The United

Presbyterian Church differed from the Free Church principally on two subjects: the extent of the Atonement and the Establishment Principle. However, it became clear that if the union was to take place at that time there would be a major split in the Free Church. As a result negotiations for union were broken off.

In the course of time, as well as departures from purity of doctrine, there were departures from the purity of worship which had been a clear principle of the Free Church in its early days. Permission was given to individual congregations to use uninspired hymns and instrumental music if they so wished. It was thus perfectly clear by the late 1880s that the Free Church as a whole had seriously departed from her moorings of less than fifty years previously. Yet, although there was much unscriptural teaching, belief and practice within the Church, and an almost total unwillingness on the part of the General Assembly to take action against those departures, the constitution of the Church remained intact. In the words of a contemporary, "As long as the errors and innovations were not justified by any Act (of Assembly) in which the responsibility of the whole Church was involved they felt at liberty to remain, but no sooner was an Act of this character passed than they considered themselves bound in conscience to separate."

Such an Act was the natural outcome of declension in the Free Church. It took the form of a Declaratory Act, after the example of the United Presbyterian Church, which had passed just such an Act in 1879. The title was a misnomer, for the intention was not to *declare* what the Church understood to be the actual meaning of the *Westminster Confession of Faith*.

A Declaratory Act passed for that specific purpose would have been perfectly in order, but the intention of the Declaratory Act of 1892 was completely different; it was quite definitely to modify the degree of adherence which office-bearers were required to give to the *Westminster Confession* as the subordinate standard of the Church. The function of the *Westminster Confession* as the subordinate standard of the Free Church was to declare how the Church understood the Scriptures, but belief in the substance of the Reformed Faith was all that was demanded by this Declaratory Act. And it was clear that this *substance* was very significantly smaller than the sum-total of the doctrines of the *Confession of Faith*.

An overture from Selkirk had come before the General Assembly of 1887 proposing to delete all references to the *Confession of Faith* in the Formula which elders were required to sign at their ordination. By 1889

a new Formula for elders was in place which contained only a general reference to the *Confession*; they no longer had to subscribe to a belief in the whole *Confession*, as had been the case since 1711, when the Formula introduced in 1694 had been tightened up. It was in 1889 also that a committee was set up in response to overtures before the General Assembly "to make inquiry, and consider carefully what action it is advisable for the Church to take, so as to meet the difficulties and relieve the scruples referred to in so large a number of overtures — it being always understood that the Church can contemplate the adoption of no change which shall not be consistent with a cordial and steadfast adherence to the great doctrines of the *Confession*." Three possibilities were raised in the Committee's report to the next General Assembly: (1) To make some changes in the *Confession* itself. (2) To relax the Formula for ministers. (3) To pass a Declaratory Act. This last option was favoured by a majority of the Committee, and it was adopted by the General Assembly.

At first glance much of the Act, which was first presented to the General Assembly of 1891, seems innocuous enough. Indeed, if it was otherwise, and if loose phrasing and ambiguity had not be pressed into service, it would have been difficult for the proposers of the Act to carry with them such a large body of the Church. To understand the intention of many individual statements it is necessary to read them in the light of prevailing currents of thought. Especially it is necessary to read them in the light of this explanatory statement given in the Act itself: "It is expedient to remove difficulties and scruples which have been felt by some in reference to the declaration of belief required from persons who receive licence or are admitted to office in this Church." It is thus difficult not to assume that each and every statement made in the Declaratory Act represents a weakening of Confessional doctrine, if not an outright departure from it. In each case we can ask ourselves, if this statement is only meant to reaffirm Scriptural truth, rather than to weaken the Church's affirmation of it, why was it made at all in an Act whose purpose has just been explained, in its own words? And the final statement of the Act was very clearly intended to give very considerable latitude to the beliefs of individual office-bearers. No one could doubt if the Church rather than the *Confession* was to interpret the limits of "the substance of the Reformed Faith" she would follow that same line which over the years she had repeatedly and increasingly taken in cases of discipline.

The first section of the Declaratory Act speaks of "the divine purpose of grace to those who are saved", and declares that "this Church most earnestly proclaims, as standing in the forefront of the revelation of grace

the love of God . . . to sinners of mankind, manifested especially in the Father's gift of His Son to be the Saviour of the world, in the coming of the Son to offer Himself a propitiation for sin, and in the striving of the Holy Spirit with men to bring them to repentance." In reading these words we must remember that the purpose of the Act was to help men who did not fully believe the doctrines of the Westminster confession to remain in, or enter, office in the Free Church. It has therefore been pointed out that this section was an attempt "to blend the general benevolence of God with His discriminating love for the elect, and the attempt has proved a disastrous failure." This writer also pointed out that in using the expression, *Saviour of the world*, there is an implication, Scriptural and all as the phrase is, that the gift of the Son flows from God's universal love.

Writing in opposition to similar American attempts to revise the *Confession* B B Warfield has pointed out how "it is frequently objected . . . that the *Confession* makes too little relatively of the love of God, and too much relatively of His sovereignty, and thus reverses the emphasis of the Bible. The farmers of the *Confession* are not responsible, however, for this separation of God's love and sovereignty; to them His sovereignty seemed a loving sovereignty, and His love a sovereign love, and in founding the whole fabric of their *Confession* on the idea of God's undeserved favour to lost sinners they understood themselves to be glorifying His love to sinners. It is perfectly true that they seldom make use of the term *love*, but this is due to the exactness of their phraseology, by which they prefer to speak of God's *goodness* and *grace* — by the use of which terms they designate by the first His general love, and by the other His special love for His people."

The second section teaches that it is the view of the Church that the *Confession* does not teach "the foreordination of men to death irrespective of their own sin". But this, again in Warfield's words, is to "confound the treatment of preterition (the act of God in passing by the non-elect), which is sovereign, with that of condemnation, which is based on sin". "Sin is not the cause of preterition; election is the cause of preterition, that is, the choosing of some is the cause that the 'rest' are left. Sin is the cause, however, of how the preterited ones are treated."

The next section declares that the *Confession* does not teach that any infants are lost. This was true to the extent that the statement in the *Confession*, "Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated" (10: 3), does not attempt to go beyond what is revealed in Scripture. The statement in the *Confession* is a masterpiece of caution, but the statement in the

Declaratory Act seems clearly intended to imply what has not been revealed — that all infants are saved. The final part of this section goes on to assert the possibility of salvation for such as are beyond the reach of the gospel. The *Confession* does state that there are elect persons who are “incapable of being outwardly called” (10: 3) — obviously constitutionally, because of severe mental handicap. But on Scriptural grounds it very emphatically rules out salvation for the heathen, no matter how morally upright they may be — and this assertion in the Declaratory Act was very obviously intended to apply to the heathen.

The fourth section seems to be an attempt to minimise the Confessional teaching about the fallenness of man. It is indeed true, as it states, that “man possesses a knowledge of God and his duty”, but this natural knowledge is totally insufficient for salvation, and this is a point which is completely obscured by the language of the Declaratory Act. The expression is also used that man is “unable without the aid of the Holy Spirit to return to God”, which suggests that the Spirit need do no more than co-operate with man’s own efforts in this direction. Certainly, and this is in line with the whole intention of the Act, it gives perfect liberty to men to hold such views and to teach them with impunity. Similarly the emphasis on man being “capable of affections and actions which in themselves are virtuous and praiseworthy” detracts from the *Confession’s* teaching that because such acts “proceed not from a heart purified by faith; nor are done in a right manner, according to the Word; nor to a right end, the glory of God; they are therefore sinful, and cannot please God” (16: 7).

The points which we have considered thus far were all intended to make it easier for ministers and others to avoid discipline although their beliefs were inconsistent with Scripture. But it was the final section that completely destroyed any possibility of holding any office-bearer to the full teaching of the Bible. It is explicitly stated that there are points in the *Confession* which do not enter into “the substance of the Reformed Faith”, and that on these points “diversity of opinion is recognised in this Church”. Full authority was given to the Church to distinguish between the two categories of truth, an authority which the Free Church was usurping far too lightly, for the plain duty of the Church is to declare “all the counsel of God”. Besides, it was clear from the decisions of previous General Assemblies that the points on which diversity of opinion would be allowed included the inerrancy of Scripture, the binding obligation of the Moral Law, election, Christ’s atonement, His divinity and resurrection, and the use of hymns and instrumental music in public worship.

This was the Act which was approved by a majority of Free Church Presbyteries in 1891/92, and by a 346 to 192 vote in the 1892 General Assembly on May 26. It was the climax of a period of steady declension, and was to result in the formation the following year of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

Notes and Comments

L.D.O.S. and Sabbath Trading

The Lord's Day Observance Society has produced a leaflet entitled "Towards a Better Shops Act" which gives an informative survey of the situation at present with regard to the Sabbath. It expresses the view that the main advocates of Sabbath trading are the multiple D.I.Y. stores such as Texas and B&Q and points out how they embarked on a policy of deliberate and widespread law-breaking in order to force a change in the law.

In the leaflet the Lord's Day Observance Society states that its position remains unchanged. It says: "We are fully committed to the Bible and the Law of God and we seek, in all that we do, to uphold the sanctity of the Sabbath." Later it appears to contradict this by setting out proposals for regulating Sabbath trading which would not conform to the claims of the divine law. While these proposals might produce a *better* Shops Act, yet the only Shops Act which true Christians can support is one which would forbid trading altogether on God's holy day. We do not think it is the duty of Sabbatharians to help Sabbath desecrators to produce a Shops Act which might be better than the one they might produce on their own, but to bring before the conscience of Sabbath breakers the claims of the divine law.

The L.D.O.S. in London has taken a firm and unequivocal stand on behalf of the Lord's Day and we would not like to see this stand compromised in any way.

Since this leaflet has been sent out a Bill has come before Parliament which would severely restrict Sabbath trading. It was introduced by Mr Ray Powell MP as a Private Members Bill. It received a second reading on 22nd January and was approved by 214 to 41. This shows that many MPs are opposed to unrestricted Sabbath trading. The Government is to bring in its own Bill on Sabbath trading giving Members of Parliament the opportunity to vote for various options. May the day soon come when the Sabbath will be restored in the land for the worship of God and for the honour of His Name.

Betting Shops Late Opening

The Home Secretary, Mr Kenneth Clarke, has announced that from 1st April and throughout the summer betting shops will be allowed to stay open until 10 p.m. This is a further sad reflection on a Government which is also to institute a national lottery to raise money for what it considers worthy causes, to the sin of gambling and the miseries that flow in its train the Government appears to be blind. What moral perverseness is inherent in such a course of action when the Government should be advocating lawful methods and not sinful means for men to increase their own wealth and that of their neighbour. The gambling industry is a multi-million pound business in our country but, lacking the blessing of God, it cannot add to the prosperity of the country by one iota, but is a sign of our moral decadence as a nation. If better days were to come the bookmakers and pools promoters, along with the tavern owners, would rapidly go out of business. The grace of God would make men recognise the illicitness of their trade. May the Lord speedily grant such a time.

Glasgow Drug-taking

It is reported that more than 22,000 young people in Glasgow take drugs. It would appear that Glasgow is taking over from Edinburgh as the drugs capital of Britain. It is not a record for which either of these cities should be proud, rather is it a cause for sadness and shame. In the past year in Glasgow sixty addicts died. Behind this scourge are the drug barons who grow rich on the misery of others. What an account such will have to give in the day of account. Nothing will cure our cities and our land of this and other plagues but the outpouring of the Spirit of God upon the nation to bring our nation to repentance. Because we have forsaken the Lord, it is only too evident that the Lord has forsaken us and given us up to the lusts of our own hearts.

Women Priests

The approval of women in the ministry of the Church of England has made a deep split in that Church. An attempt is being made to arrive at some compromise by which those who are opposed to the ministry of women may be catered for by those acceptable to them. Some of the high Anglicans are in touch with the Roman Catholic Archbishop Hume to see if they might be received as a group into the Church of Rome. They hope this can be done in such a way that the ecumenical process between the R.C. Church and the Anglican Church would not be harmed. Cardinal Hume in stating that he was considering the proposals put to him

said: "I do not lose sight of the fact that the ultimate aim of all our ecumenical endeavour is full communion between all the churches, and that the primary responsibility of all Christians is to proclaim Christ and His gospel to our nation." If he really believes this, then it is about time he began to proclaim Christ and His gospel and not the false dogmas of the Roman Catholic Church.

Mission News

Mr and Mrs Donald MacDonald have been in Zimbabwe since December 14th. Dr Christine's Zimbabwe Permit for Medical work arrived unexpectedly, and they left for Bulawayo almost immediately. The Communion was being held there that week, and having been met by Mr Neil Murray and taken to Ingwenya, 28 miles further on, they attended the services from there. They enjoyed meeting the church friends in Bulawayo.

The Mbumba Mission Hospital staff, at present consisting of Miss Jessie Coote, Miss Margaret MacAskill and Miss Anne Zekveld are delighted to have the assistance of Dr Christine MacDonald as Dr Janette Hak is on furlough, and Miss Lia Terlouw is taking a medical course in Brussels. Mr MacDonald is going through the accounts in Bulawayo, returning to Mbumba at the weekends.

Mr Dick Vermeulen arrived in Kenya early in November to supervise the building arrangements at Sengera. There was some unrest in Kenya prior to the Elections so Mr Vermeulen took the opportunity to pay a short visit to Zimbabwe. Quite a number of Mission staff and other friends were gathered at Mbumba over the New Year including Miss Marion Graham, Neil Murray and Dick Vermeulen.

The Foreign Mission Committee in Scotland have accepted a Dutch lady, Miss Celia Rennes, to work at Sengera. Miss Rennes nursed on a Mission Station in Nigeria for some years and her experience there will be a great help at Sengera. We hope there will be many more nurses offering their services.

Miss Etta MacLennan is now back at the John Tallach School. Her short furlough passed very quickly, but quite a number of friends enjoyed seeing her slides, and hearing about the work. Miss Katie Macaulay was on holiday in Johannesburg over the New Year. She there met her brother and his wife, and stayed with her nephew and his wife, who have been very kind to our men, Mr Mziya, and Mr David Ndlovu, who on a few occasions have had to visit Johannesburg, to secure car parts and other tools unobtainable in Zimbabwe. Miss Marion Graham writes, 'We are

having lovely rains and a good cloud cover so the crops are growing well and everyone is hopeful of a good harvest.'

A young man from Holland, Jan de Boer, has been helping at Mbumba for the past three months. Sister Anne Zekveld writes: 'Jan came from Holland last September to do work on a voluntary basis. He has been a great help to David (Ndlovu), doing a lot of driving for him and helping with jobs. David has been keeping quite well of late, for which we are all very grateful. Jan hopes to return to Holland on 23rd December.'

Mr and Mrs Donald MacDonald hope to visit New Canaan before they return to Kenya, at the end of January, D.V. The Rev. and Mrs Mazvabo are always most welcoming to visitors from the other stations and from overseas. Mr Mazvabo's sight has not improved but he and his elders continue their wide-spread ministry, we trust with the Lord's blessing. — J.N.

Binga Mission

Bulawayo
Zimbabwe

11 January 1993

Dear Friends,

Five months have already passed since we came to settle in Bulawayo. I therefore wish to give you some news of my new sphere of labour.

It was the decision of the Foreign Missions Committee that as soon as I received permission from the Immigration Authorities in Harare to enable me to do full time mission work in the country we would proceed to Bulawayo. After a period of delay and difficulties with the Authorities I was delighted to receive the final word that Authority was now given to proceed with my work. The Lord is good and His time is always best. This we have proved to be true in so many ways over the years.

It was arranged that I would go to Botswana with Mr Ndlovu and Mr Mziya where a Ford Courier 4 x 4 was purchased for my work in Binga, Bulawayo or wherever the need arose.

I wish to tell you something about the Tonga (Batonka/Batoka) tribe who live in the Binga area. Binga is about 270 miles northwest of Bulawayo situated on the shores of Lake Kariba. I usually stay in the Binga Rest Camp which was built as a Resort for Fishermen. It provides one with the basic necessities. Binga being situated in a low lying area the climate is much hotter and more oppressive than other parts of the country. When I was there last month the temperature was 40° plus. Malaria is very prevalent in that area.

Binga is a small sized town which was created as an administrative centre for the Tonga Resettlement. In the last few years some form of social help has been given by the Government and charitable organisations such as "Save the Children and UNICEF."

The area I work in is situated in a mountainous district about 50-70 miles from the main Binga Road. The Road from Bulawayo to Binga is all tarred but once you leave the main road the minor ones are corrugated and very hazardous especially in the rainy season.

There are three places which I visit: Samende, Lubu and Senka, where there is extreme poverty. The heading in the local paper recently said "Binga Folk dying of Hunger" and it was reported that people were now feeding on poisonous fruits. The chief in the area was appealing to the Government to provide his people with food.

It is encouraging that in the midst of such poverty the people have made an effort to erect their own places of worship from where the Word of God goes forth. There can be up to 100 men, women and children at each place. Most are very ignorant of the truth.

Although there are many different churches and sects scattered throughout the country such as the Church of Christ, Assemblies of God Pentecostals and Roman Catholic they bring a Gospel which is not the true Gospel of Jesus Christ.

On weekdays I teach portions of scripture e.g. Isaiah 55, Psalm 51. They also learn and memorise the Shorter Catechism and are questioned from the Mother's Catechism. On Sabbath I hold two services, the first at Samende then I proceed further on either to Lubu or Senka. We pray that the Holy Spirit will bless the word to sinners in these parts and that they will come to know Him whom to know is life eternal.

Though the Tonga people have been known to Europeans since the time of Dr Livingstone's journeys along the Zambezi in the mid 19th century little was known about the social, political and economic life of the people until a few years after the Second World War. History tells us that they migrated from east Africa via Malawi and came to settle in Zambia along the Zambezi River Valley. A minority group crossed the Zambezi and settled on the southern bank of the River which is known today as Zimbabwe. The river was easily manageable using canoes. The fertile valleys provided a whole year ploughing season. They had the freedom of the game, the river and whatever was edible in the forest. They grew maize, fruit and vegetables.

In 1957 came the construction of the Kariba Dam so the people were forced to leave the valley for higher ground. Some resisted the move with

the result that they were drowned when Lake Kariba began filling up. The new area which they now occupied was sandy, barren and unfertile. Therefore the Tonga tribe were now a needy people.

When I am not in Binga I help out in Bulawayo or Ingwenya. On Sabbaths I usually have two services at the new church recently opened at Nkulamane Township which can accommodate over 200 people. There are three prayer meetings in Bulawayo during the week — at Thembiso orphanage, MGUSA and at Lobengula Church. It is encouraging to see the numbers increasing at the various prayer meetings.

David Brainerd missionary to the Red Indians of America wrote in his journal "I had two desires — my own sanctification and the ingathering of God's elect." I hope and pray that that is my chief desire for myself and the people I have been appointed to work amongst.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to the many friends in Scotland, England, Holland and New Zealand who sent gifts of money which made it possible for us to bring bibles, food and clothing to the needy people of Binga.

Brethren pray for us.

With best wishes.

Neil Murray.

Church Notes

Presbytery Meetings (D.V.)

Zimbabwe: At Bulawayo on 9th March at 2 p.m.

Western: At Laide on 9th March at 6 p.m.

Northern: At Dingwall on 30th March at 2 p.m.

Committee Meetings will be held at Inverness Church D.V.:

Tuesday, 23rd March

9.00 a.m. - 10.00 a.m.	Church Centenary Committee
10.00 a.m. - 11.00 a.m.	Training of Ministry
11.00 a.m. - 11.45 a.m.	Church Magazines
11.45 a.m. - 12.30 p.m.	Publications
2.00 p.m. - 3.00 p.m.	Welfare of Youth
2.00 p.m. - 4.30 p.m.	Finance
3.00 p.m. - 4.30 p.m.	Religion and Morals
4.30 p.m. - 5.30 p.m.	Dominions and Overseas
7.00 p.m. - 9.00 p.m.	Foreign Mission.

Wednesday, 24th March

9.30 a.m. - 11.30 a.m.	Church Interests
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Visit of Deputy to African Mission

Rev. Dr James Tallach, Raasay, expects to leave for Africa early in March and spend two months visiting the stations in Zimbabwe, Kenya and Malawi. We trust that Dr Tallach will be carried through the many duties that are before him and that the Lord's protecting care will be about him throughout the period of his visit to Africa.

Notices re Synod Agenda

Clerks of Presbyteries, Conveners/Clerks of Committees, and all interested parties should note that all items of business intended to be placed on the Synod Agenda must be in the hands of the Clerk of Synod by Tuesday, 23rd March, 1993 (D.V.)

(Rev.) D. B. Macleod,
Clerk of Synod.

Notice to Conveners/Clerks of Standing Committees

The Conveners/Clerks of all Standing Committees should note that all Committee Reports must be in the hands of the Clerk of Synod by Tuesday 30th March, 1993, for printing purposes (D.V.). These Reports should contain information of the work of the Committees during the year. Recommendations and proposals should be sent up as separate items for the Synod Agenda.

(Rev.) D. B. Macleod,
Clerk of Synod.

Correction: In the February issue of the Magazine and in the note on the Commemoration Meeting in Edinburgh, 25th May, 1993, the address of Mr Alastair MacRae should have read 9 Laxford Lane (not 4 Laxford Lane), Broughty Ferry, Dundee DD5 3HF.

Ingwenya Mission Appeal**WANTED URGENTLY**

Teachers for John Tallach Secondary School

Qualifications: University degree with teaching subjects suitable for school level, and/or Teacher Training Diploma.

Contract: 2 years.

Mission teachers from overseas **may** be asked to (1) take Bible and/or English as well as their own subjects. (2) Assist with extra-mural activities, e.g. Sabbath School, dispensary.

Reasonable accommodation with water and electricity is provided.

Applicants should apply as soon as possible. It takes 3-6 months to get a work permit.

FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SCOTLAND CONGREGATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS — 1992

Location	Sustentation Fund	Home Mission Fund	Jewish and Foreign Mission Fund	Aged and Infirm Ministers, etc., Fund	College, Library and Bookroom Fund	Organisation Fund	General Building Fund	Dominions and Overseas Fund	Outreach Fund	Publications Fund	Centenary Fund	Eastern Europe Fund	TOTAL
NORTHERN PRESBYTERY													
Aberdeen	£760.00	£15.00	£15.00	£15.00	£15.00		£15.00	£15.00	£15.00	£15.00			£880.00
Bonar Bridge)													
Lairg)	3,299.00	286.00	367.00		105.00		93.00	137.00		88.00			4,375.00
Dornoch)													
Rogart)													
Beauly	1,325.00	50.00	100.00		65.00		50.00	80.00		55.00	100.00		1,825.00
Dingwall	2,941.00	242.00	314.00		233.40			293.00		233.00			4,256.40
Fearn)	200.00												200.00
Tain)													
Halkirk)													
Strathly)	1,000.00	180.00	170.00			40.00	45.00	100.00		90.00			1,625.00
Thurso)													
Wick)													
Inverness	14,213.00	2,020.00	3,000.00		630.00		750.00	800.00		810.00	200.00		22,423.00
Kinlochbervie)	1,359.20	365.00	505.00		50.00		86.00	100.00			200.00		2,665.20
Scourie)													
Daviot, Tomatin)	5,218.00	340.00	538.70		160.00		150.00	230.00		135.00			6,771.70
Stratherrick)													
	£30,315.20	£3,498.00	£5,009.70	£15.00	£1,258.40	£40.00	£1,189.00	£1,755.00	£15.00	£1,426.00	£500.00		£45,021.30
SOUTHERN PRESBYTERY													
Dumbarton	2,372.00	171.00	410.00		73.00		76.00	94.00	20.00	71.00	100.00		3,387.00
Edinburgh	3,691.50	235.00	512.00		84.44		72.00	155.00	70.00	38.00	300.00		5,157.94
Fort William)	404.00	35.00	32.00		10.00	10.00							636.00
Oban)													
Glasgow	16,348.00	1,890.00	2,753.00	30.00	996.00	126.00	922.00	1,053.50	721.00	796.00	500.00	515.00	26,650.50
Dunoon)													
Greenock)	2,345.00	156.50	329.50		88.00		64.00	107.00		72.00	50.00		3,212.00
Kames	195.00		188.00								50.00	100.00	533.00
London	5,728.22	409.03	995.81		212.63		207.14	163.84	235.14	189.52	150.00		8,291.33
Stirling	360.00	60.00	40.00		25.00		10.00						550.00
Perth	747.00	108.00	140.00		4.00		2.00	77.00		30.00			1,108.00
Dundee	925.00	84.00	120.00		60.00	40.00	45.00	20.00		40.00		260.00	1,594.00
Barnoldswick	1,220.00	400.00	435.00		100.00		300.00	400.00		150.00	100.00	75.00	3,180.00
Larne	3,350.00	75.00	200.00		50.00		105.00	150.00	5.00	35.00	100.00	65.00	4,135.00
	£37,685.72	£3,623.53	£6,155.31	£30.00	1,703.07	£176.00	£1,813.14	£2,275.34	£1,051.14	£1,456.52	1,450.00	£1,015.00	£58,434.77
OUTER ISLES PRESBYTERY													
Achmore	1,011.00	56.00	74.00		24.00	26.00	23.00	32.00		31.00			1,277.00
Stornoway	12,455.90	881.70	997.50		415.00	191.00	445.00	173.00		435.50	300.00	200.00	16,493.60
North Uist	3,653.00	266.00	541.00		51.00		93.00	89.00		80.00			4,773.00
Brasclete	741.00	210.00	218.00		70.00		70.00	100.00	90.00	80.00	250.00		1,879.00
North Tolsta	6,775.00	588.00	514.00		227.30		231.00	235.50	253.00	226.50	250.00		9,300.30
North Harris	4,563.57	305.50	239.00	76.50				102.00		83.00			5,369.57

South Harris	9,045.00	783.90	943.00		179.00		199.50	208.00		197.00		172.00	11,727.40
Ness	2,483.00	124.00	84.00		35.00		27.00	38.00	23.00	30.00			2,844.00
Uig	4,498.00	125.00	265.00		90.00		90.00	106.00	178.00	85.00			5,437.00
	£45,225.47	£3,340.10	£3,875.50	£76.50	£1,091.30	£217.00	£1,178.50	£1,083.50	£544.00	£1,247.00	£800.00	£372.00	£59,050.87
WESTERN PRESBYTERY													
Applecross	1,835.00	141.00	201.00							73.00	100.00		2,350.00
Gairloch	6,875.00	244.00	636.00		151.00		174.00	159.00		145.00			8,384.00
Laide	4,404.50	189.00	217.50		88.00		84.00	303.00		68.00		4,945.75	10,389.75
Kyle of Lochalsh)													
Plockton)	739.00	52.50	57.00		25.00		17.00	26.00	2.00	17.50		35.00	971.00
Lochbroom	5,130.00	457.00	535.00		175.00		250.00	228.00		194.00			6,969.00
Lochcarron	3,250.00	260.00	400.00	48.00	150.00		150.00	150.00	150.00	150.00	300.00	452.00	5,460.00
Lochinver	1,110.00	385.00	630.00		148.00		138.00	144.00		113.00			2,668.00
Stoer/Drumbeg	2,283.67	205.00	260.00		69.00		79.00	85.00		87.00			3,068.67
Shieldaig	2,500.00	104.00	227.00		30.00		50.00			80.00		20.00	3,011.00
	£28,127.17	£2,037.50	£3,163.50	£48.00	£836.00		£942.00	£1,095.00	£152.00	£927.50	£400.00	£5,542.75	£43,271.42
SKYE PRESBYTERY													
Bracadale)													
Strath)	3,500.00	385.50	319.50		125.00	75.50	159.50	138.00		98.00		309.80	5,110.80
Flashadder	230.00	90.00	76.00					51.50		34.00			481.50
Glendale	1,647.00	219.00	273.00		25.00		85.00	161.00	109.00	53.00	100.00		2,672.00
Vatten)													
Watnish)	1,476.00	165.00	174.00		37.00	5.00	46.00	87.00	42.00	9.00			2,041.00
Portree	10,820.00	1,140.00	700.00	250.00	200.00		223.00	248.00	250.00	178.00	200.00	400.00	14,609.00
Raasay	5,400.00	293.00	303.00		105.00		102.00	141.00		107.00	130.00	40.00	6,621.00
Staffin	3,531.20	284.00	324.50		106.00			161.50	95.00	115.00			4,617.20
	£26,604.20	£2,576.50	£2,170.00	£250.00	£598.00	£80.50	£615.50	£988.00	£496.00	£594.00	£430.00	£749.80	£36,152.50
AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND PRESBYTERY													
Gisborne			139.87		32.88			32.88		16.44	65.76	16.44	304.27
Wellington			32.00	32.00	32.00		18.00	40.60			65.26		219.86
Auckland			166.90					621.68			66.73		855.31
Grafton			312.35					223.21					535.56
Sydney					21.16		21.16	105.82			42.33	42.33	232.80
			£651.12	£32.00	86.04		£39.16	£1,024.19		£16.44	£240.08	£58.77	£2,147.80
CANADIAN PRESBYTERY													
Vancouver)								913.24				976.80	£1,890.04
Toronto)													
Chesley)													
								£913.24				£976.80	£1,890.04
SUMMARY													
Northern Presbytery	£30,315.20	£3,498.00	£5,009.70	£15.00	£1,258.40	£40.00	£1,189.00	£1,755.00	£15.00	£1426.00	£500.00		£45,021.30
Southern Presbytery	37,685.72	3,623.53	6,155.31	30.00	1,703.07	176.00	1,813.14	2,275.34	1,051.14	1,456.52	1,450.00	1,015.00	58,434.77
Outer Isles Presbytery	45,225.47	3,340.10	3,875.50	76.50	1,091.30	217.00	1,178.50	1,083.50	544.00	1,247.00	800.00	372.00	59,050.87
Western Presbytery	28,127.17	2,037.50	3,163.50	48.00	836.00		942.00	1,095.00	152.00	927.50	400.00	5,542.75	43,271.42
Skye Presbytery	26,604.20	2,576.50	2,170.00	250.00	598.00	80.50	615.50	988.00	496.00	594.00	430.00	749.80	36,152.50
Australia/New Zealand Presbytery			651.12	32.00	86.04		39.16	1,024.19		16.44	240.08	58.77	2,147.80
Canadian Presbytery								913.24				976.80	1,890.04
	187,957.76	15,075.63	21,025.13	451.50	5,572.81	513.50	5,777.30	9,134.27	2,258.14	5,667.46	3,820.08	8,715.12	245,968.70
Donations	160.00		13,936.78						200.00		70.00	1,586.59	15,953.37
GRAND TOTAL	£168,117.76	£15,075.63	£34,961.91	£451.50	£5,572.81	£513.50	£5,777.30	£9,134.27	£2,458.14	£5,667.46	3,890.08	£10,301.71	£261,992.07

Matron and Nursing Staff Appeal

A Matron and Nursing Staff are required for Senger Hospital, Kenya. The Foreign Mission Committee would be pleased to hear from suitably qualified staff for the above posts. It is our hope that the Hospital will open, the Lord willing, in March 1993.

(Rev.) James R. Tallach

Acknowledgment of Donations

The General Treasurer acknowledges with sincere thanks the following donations:—

Africa Famine Relief: Anon., Broadford £250; Anon., Glasgow £500; A Friend, Broadford £100; Anon. (via C. A. F. — per Rev. D. B. M.) £50.

Centenary Fund: Mr D. M. Clark £50.

Centenary Commemoration: Anon., Glasgow £30; Mr D. M. C. £50.

Eastern Europe: M. & K., Grafton £60; Anon., Glasgow £200; Anon. (via C. A. F. — per Rev. D. B. M.) £50.

Foreign Mission: Anon., (per Rev. D.B.M.) £500; Anon., (via C.A.F. — per Rev. D.B.M.) £30.

Kenya Mission: Mr & Mrs R. B. £100; Friend, Harris £50; Mr D. K. C. £200.

Magazines (Free Distribution): Anon. £2.

Sustentation: Anon. (via C. A. F. — per Rev. D. B. M.) £40.

The Treasurers of the following Congregations wish to acknowledge with sincere thanks the following donations:—

Breasclete: Anon. £50 for Sust Fund and £50 for Collection; Friend of the Cause £20 for Collection.

Flashadder: D. N. M. £50 for Door Collection, per F.M.

Fort William: Mrs MacC. and daughter £20 and £5 respectively, per Rev. J. A. MacD.; J. A. MacD. £5 per Treasurer, all for Congr. Fund; From the estate of the late Mrs Agnes MacLeod, Caol, Fort William, the sum of £1000 for Fort William Congr. Fund.

Glasgow: Anon., "In appreciation of the excellent Hearing Aid", £20 for Congr. Fund; Anon., "In appreciation of Bus Service to local Communion" £10; Anon. £15; Anon. £10; A. A. £10, all for Bus Fund; J. A. M. £10; Anon. £100, both for "Sponsor a Blind Child."

Glendale: Anon. £20, where most needed, per Rev. G. G. H.

Kames: M. T. D. £20 for General Funds.

North Harris: M. A. McL., Tarbert £10 donation; Anon. £10 for Communion Expenses; Friend, Stockinish £10 for Door Collection; Anon. £10 for Hearing Aid, all by envelope in plate.

North Uist: H. McL. £30; M. McD. £50; P. McD. £12; D. A. McD. £30; M. M. £3; J. A. McL. £100, all for Car Fund; P. McD. £20; M. M. £24, both for Bus Fund; Friend, Inverness £20 for Sust. Fund, per Rev. A. M.; C. MacD. £20; Anon. £5, both for Car Fund.

Portree: A. C. £1,125 for Sust. Fund; Tolsta Friend £20, where most needed; Tunbridge Wells Friend £20 for Congr. Purposes; A. N. £2 for Church Bus; Anon. £8; Anon. £10; both for Door Collection, last 3 by envelope in plate; Friend £15; Friend £5; Friend £3, all for Sust. Fund, all per S. Y. M.

Shieldaig: Anon. £100, where most needed; Anon., Expenses Refunded, £24 for Eastern Europe.

Vatten: Anon., £30 for Sust. Fd., Anon., £30 for For. Miss.; Anon., £20 for Home Mission; Anon., £20 for Congr. Fd. for new windows; Anon., £40 for Trinitarian Bible Society.