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The General Assemblies

The Church of Scotland

NEARLY 1,200 commissioners gathered in Edinburgh on Saturday, 20th May, for the Church of Scotland General Assembly. Rev James Harkness, former Chaplain General of the Army, succeeded Rev James Simpson, Dornoch, as Moderator.

Reports of the Church's declining membership (down by 300,000 since 1971), the fewness of young people in its congregations, and a continuing fall in income, all increase the concern about its future felt by even the more optimistic in its ranks. Yet another General Assembly demonstrates the tragic fact that the Church is not yet realising, let alone facing up to, the fact that its departure from the Scriptural doctrine, worship and practice which it inherited at the Reformation, is the root cause of its crisis.

In his opening address the moderator called on the Church to "communicate with that large number who have little or no understanding of the faith". He added, "Among those with whom I have lived and worked there is a lot of confusion about what the Church is saying. There is desperate need for clear communication about Christian belief." In his closing address he asked the Church to remember its Christian inheritance. "At every critical moment in the Church's history there has been this rediscovery of the Gospel of the unconditional and free grace of God. I believe that the starting point for the Church's renewal will rest on the rediscovery of that message." Fair words indeed, but it is a sad and deplorable fact that the preaching given to the nation from the vast majority of the Church's pulpits is not that of which God says, "Preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee."

A clear indication of the Church's departure from the old paths is its having invited Cardinal Winning to address its Assembly — the man who is the principal representative in Scotland of a system which is the inveterate

foe of the Reformed Faith. His speech was regarded by the press as an adroit seizing of an ecumenical initiative. He expressed the hope that "the entire Christian family in Scotland will gather together in assembly such as this" to celebrate the 2000th anniversary of the birth of Christ. He received a "tumultuous ovation". The Moderator not only "agreed with Cardinal Winning's vision of Protestants and Catholics sitting down together in a Scottish Christian assembly", but also told him that he was "welcome as a brother in Christ." So much for the Moderator's fair words about remembering our Christian heritage. He fails to realise that Rome, in her ecumenical activities, is not going to depart from her position, whatever might be the appearances to the contrary.

Of course, the Church of Rome does not lack support from the media. A leader in *The Scotsman* says that "the Cardinal's visits (to both Assemblies) surely shed some much-needed light on the way forward." It adds that "the Churches must have the grace to realise that Cardinal Winning is right; and the gumption to follow with real action." A journalist in *The Herald* praises Winning for his sincerity and says that he made the most significant ecumenical advance in Scotland since the Roman Catholic Church agreed to come into ACTS, adding, "He gave Scotland a vision." Although it dazzled many members of Assembly and the press it is a vision which will result in the nation being brought back to the gross darkness from which it was mercifully delivered at the Reformation.

The Church's ecumenical zeal was also shown by its agreeing to the recommendation of the Ecumenical Affairs Committee that it accept the invitation from the Scottish Episcopal Church to enter into negotiations on union. The Convener of the Committee regards the invitation as "evidence of the spirit at work". Certainly, it is not a movement which bears the marks of the work of the *Holy Spirit*. It would have been the wisdom of the Assembly to heed the elder who, in opposing acceptance, said that spiritual revival was more important than structural union, and warned the Assembly to never forget their inheritance and the cost of it. Another item focussed on by the press was the Church's perilous financial situation. Ministers' salaries have had to be subsidised by drawing on reserve funds earmarked for mission and aid work, to the sum of £1.5 million. These funds will not last longer than another two or three years, the Assembly was informed. Nevertheless, ministers' salaries were increased by £883 to a basic stipend of £14,000.

Moves to allow children to receive communion without being baptised were defeated. One elder, who was opposed to this recommendation by

the Board of Parish Education, said that the moves were part of a general tendency to downgrade baptism and were desperate measures to hold on to the younger members of the congregation.

The Free Church Assembly

IN his opening address the new moderator of the Free Church Assembly, Rev. Murdo Alex Macleod, Stornoway, said that the Church is facing a crisis of preaching. In his opinion, the Church had been too ready to admit into its ministry men who had proved totally inadequate to the demands of preaching the Word. He also said that the Free Church College must take its share of the blame, and that the curriculum should lay more emphasis on Biblical interpretation.

He later condemned the Church of Scotland Assembly for inviting Cardinal Winning to address it, saying, "It is shocking and appalling and a sad day for Scotland when a Roman Catholic Cardinal is invited to address the national Church."

The Cardinal's appearance in the Free Church Assembly itself was reported to have "happened by accident", but it was evidently a planned "accident". He was there at the invitation, and as the guest of, Lady Fraser, Her Majesty's High Commissioner, when she crossed over from the Church of Scotland Assembly to make the High Commissioner's traditional visit to the Free Church Assembly.

The Ecumenical relations Committee recommended that the Associated Presbyterian Churches denomination be placed on the list of churches and organisations with whom the Free Church can have exchange of delegates. The Committee did not think that local arrangements for FC and APC congregations to worship together, as in Lochinver, is the way forward. Their Report to Assembly states, "In particular, the Committee feel that it would be difficult for the free Church to make any significant move towards closer relations if there was a prospect that the APC might eventually become part of some loose-knit confederation of churches which do not share the standards of worship and practice inherent in it (and the Free Church's constitution)." The Committee was also concerned, as well it might be, by the APC saying in its constitution that it adheres to the Westminster Confession of Faith "so far as it is consistent with Holy Scripture". How the APC can now affirm to the Free Church that these words, carefully chosen and solemnly incorporated in such an important legal document as an ecclesiastical constitution, "did not amount to a qualification in any real sense", defies belief.

The Editor

Induction Sermon

Rev Donald MacLean

This sermon, now somewhat abbreviated, and the two addresses which follow were delivered in Edinburgh on the evening of Friday, 18th June, 1991, at the Induction of the late Rev. D.B. MacLeod to the pastoral charge of the Edinburgh Congregation.

"For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake," 2 Corinthians 4:5.

THE apostle, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is in these words setting before the church in Corinth the office of the ministry. He says at the beginning of this chapter, "Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not."

In the previous chapter he describes this ministry as more glorious than the ministry of Moses, because the ministry of the gospel compared to the ministry of the law is a glory that excels. It is an excellent glory. Therefore those who are engaged in this ministry are engaged in a glorious work. How eminent and faithful Moses was as a servant in God's house; yet we read in the third chapter, "Shall not the ministration of the Spirit rather be glorious; for if the ministration of condemnation be glory much more shall the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory." The revelation given under the gospel ministry exceeds, in glory, every other revelation that God has given of Himself.

Now the apostle makes it plain that this ministry was given to him. "We have this ministry." It was not the ministry which he obtained by any abilities or talents of his own but which was given to him. "Unto me," he said, "who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." This glorious work of preaching the gospel, which has effects that stretch into the eternal world, is altogether honourable; therefore it is true of the Lord's servants, as was true of Moses: "that no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron."

Now we shall notice, **first**, that the gospel which is preached is described as the "*manifestation of the truth*", (verse 2); **secondly**, that the preaching of the gospel is a work to which men are *called*; and **thirdly**, that those who preach the gospel are "*servants for Jesus' sake*".

First, *the gospel which is preached is described here as a manifestation of the truth*. By the truth we are not to understand the discoveries which men may make. The truth referred to here is a revelation from God; a revelation that is as good news from a far country; that is as cold water to the thirsty soul because it is a manifestation of God's love to lost sinners.

If this gospel is hid, it is hid to those who are lost. There is no hope for anyone apart from the gospel. No philosophies or ideas of men are of any value with regard to the lost condition of man.

The truth of God is that the whole human race is in a lost condition. Men are sinners; they are without God; they are under the sentence of eternal death. That is the truth, but how often is it heard from the pulpits of this land? There are so-called gospels being preached which are destitute of this teaching that the whole human family is lost and under the sentence of eternal death; that men are utterly unable, and indeed have no desire, to deliver themselves out of that awful and solemn condition. But the gospel reveals the love of God, from eternity, going out to a number that no man can number of the human family — going out to embrace them and purposing that they will be saved with an everlasting salvation.

The truth also reveals that the *person* appointed to be the Saviour is the person referred to here as “Christ Jesus the Lord,” — Christ Jesus, the eternal Son of the Father in truth and love; the great object of the Father’s love; the Son of His love who was set apart from eternity to be the Saviour. In order that He might be a Saviour He descended to the condition in which He was given the name Jesus. “Thou shalt call His name Jesus for He shall save His people from their sins.” That name was given to Him when He who was, is, and ever shall be the eternal Son of God became the Son of man by taking into union with His divine person a holy humanity, conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Virgin. So this is the Saviour: Christ Jesus the Lord.

But more was needed. Wonderful though it was (angels desire to look into this great mystery of the Son of God becoming the Son of man), more was required. What was required was that He would *bear the guilt of the sins of His people* in His own body upon the tree of Calvary; that He would die, willingly and lovingly, in their place, and that His blood would be shed for the remission of their sins.

This also is the truth: that Christ Jesus is the *only* Saviour. The modern idea of multifaith religion, and that all the religions are just different ways to God, is a delusion. It is a lie! It is not the truth! There is only one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, the One who died and who rose again and is alive for evermore, the One who is able to save to the uttermost all those who come unto God by Him. Therefore, those who trust in the Virgin Mary, those who trust in Buddha, those who trust in Mohammed, those who trust in the gods of the Hindu, are trusting in a lie. It needs to be emphasised in our day and generation that the truth is this: that there is no other name given under heaven among men whereby

we must be saved but the name Jesus.

The truth is described here as "*the word of God*," (verse 2). This revelation is given in the form of the word of God. This revelation that God gave down through the ages was written, and it was written by a special exercise of the power of the Holy Ghost; that is to say, the Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of inspiration, carried and guided the writers of the Scriptures to record the truth in the words which He chose. So all Scripture, without exception, is given by inspiration of God; by the breath of God the Holy Ghost, the third person of the Godhead. In the word of God from Genesis to Revelation we have the truth without error of any kind, and it is futile for people to stand up in the pulpit and find fault with the Bible and to think that they are preaching the truth. They are not! They are doing exactly what the apostle did *not* do. He did not handle the word of God deceitfully, nor walk in craftiness (verse 2).

Now, we must be clear on the point that we have, in the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, the truth which we can trust our souls to. In doing so we shall not be put to shame when we come to die, and when we stand before the great white throne and before the eyes of Him whose eyes are as flaming fire and whose voice is as the thunder of many waters. You who have the truth as the ground of your hope will not be put to shame.

Let us notice **secondly**, *that the preaching of the gospel is a work to which men are called*. The apostle was called to preach the gospel. Now, when one is called to preach the gospel, he must *know* the gospel and be convinced of the truth of it. If this was understood by those who ascend pulpits in this and other cities and do not preach the truth, then they would understand that the pulpit is not the place for them.

With regard to this calling the apostle declares, "It pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the Gentiles." These words, "*reveal his Son in me*", make it crystal clear that no one can preach Christ unless he knows Him, understands experimentally in the faculties of his soul that He is the Saviour, and is brought into saving union with Him. One cannot preach "Christ Jesus the Lord" by just mentioning His name and thinking that this will have an effect on people. There must be an experimental knowledge on the part of the preacher.

In connection with this experimental and saving knowledge of Christ, the apostle says as we see in the verse following our text, "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, *hath shined in our hearts*, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus

Christ.” This is a description of spiritual conversion, not a description of people going forward to make decisions and of such trifling with souls. This is reality, divine reality, the reality that comes from the love of God, the reality that comes through the gracious power of the Holy Ghost. God was the One who in the first creation commanded the light to shine out of darkness, and He is the One who in the new creation (and let us remember that conversion is a new creation) has shined in the heart.

What is meant by the light shining in the heart? Well, it means two things, as is clearly taught by the experience of the two disciples on the way to Emmaus. They were in darkness with regard to the redeeming work of the Messiah. “We thought it was he who was to have redeemed Israel,” they said. Then the Saviour drew near and began to *open up the Scriptures* to them (and they themselves testified that His speaking to them was an opening of the Scriptures to them). In the light that came into their souls through the Scriptures being opened to them they saw that it was necessary for Christ to suffer and to enter into His glory, (and that is why it is part of the work of the ministry, in preaching the gospel, to give expositions of Scripture and to open up and to unfold the word of God to the hearers in order that by the blessing of God they will get spiritual light).

Now, the apostle defines what spiritual light is. It certainly has nothing to do with the lighting of candles in a cathedral and that kind of thing. It has to do with reality. It has to do with light coming into the soul through the word of God. It means this: “Whatsoever maketh manifest is light.” The word of God is pure light, and when it shines into the soul it makes manifest the sinfulness, the guilt, the corruption and the depravity that are within the soul. It is light which brings the sinner to see his need of the Saviour who is presented in the everlasting gospel, and so we read here that it is “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” That excels every other manifestation of the glory of God. It is the glory that excelleth, and it is “*in the face of Jesus Christ;*” (and by “the face of Jesus Christ” we are to understand the person and work of Christ).

In connection with this shining of light, the believing soul has come to see that not only is scripture opened up to the soul by the Holy Spirit, but also the Holy Spirit *opens the eyes of the understanding* so that they behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. They behold, in the gospel, God glorified in the eternal salvation of the lost through Jesus Christ. They see what the church was speaking of when she said of Christ, “As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit

was sweet to my taste." This was the place where she found pardon of sin and peace with God; this was the place where she found rejoicing in this salvation in which God's glory is declared to be very great.

Now, no man can be a minister of the gospel who has not had a savoury *experience* of this. The man who has had this gracious experience is the man who sees the glory of Christ; that is the man, who being called to the ministry, can preach about the glory of Christ; that is the man who can speak about the mercy of God in Christ; that is the man who as an ambassador for Christ can offer Christ freely to lost souls, and plead with them, "We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."

Of course, all the people of God know "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ", but not all the people of God are *called* to be ministers. The apostle said with regard to himself that he was "separated unto the gospel of God". He was separated unto the gospel of God by being called by Christ, through the Holy Spirit and the word of God, to the work of the ministry. When a man is thus called, the door is closed on him with regard to whatever secular employment he may have had before. He is called by God to engage in the work of the ministry fully, with his whole heart, with all his talents, all his abilities, all his time and all his labours.

Now, because of his spiritual experience of the gospel and of receiving spiritual light, the minister of the gospel is *dependent upon getting light* for the sermons and teaching that he gives to his congregation. Therefore he prays, "O send out thy light and thy truth." He is just as dependent upon that light now as he was at the beginning so that he may preach not himself, but Christ Jesus the Lord.

In preaching Christ Jesus the Lord he *renounces the hidden things of dishonesty* (verse 2) and does not handle the word of God deceitfully. He handles the word of God by the inward teaching of the Holy Spirit, who, as the Spirit of illumination, reveals to him the doctrines of divine truth in their proper relationship to one another. So he handles the word of God *carefully and faithfully*. It is required in a steward that he be faithful. The minister of the gospel, in dispensing the riches of Christ at the gospel table, is to do so faithfully.

The minister of Christ is not like those who work craftily by trying to get people to believe they are Christians when they are not, and trying to get them to become communicants when they ought not to be. Far from it! When he is preaching Christ Jesus the Lord to his congregation, he is addressing their *consciences*, not their feelings but their consciences. That is what the apostle says here, "By manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's *conscience* in the sight of God,"

(verse 2). He is addressing their consciences — guilty consciences but consciences that feel that this is the truth of God.

Why does he do so? He preaches to the conscience because the sinner needs to be convinced of his need of Christ Jesus as the *balm to the conscience*. The blood of Christ is the only balm for the conscience. Paul in writing to the Hebrews says, “How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your consciences from dead works” (that is, from the guilt of sin) “to serve the living God?” What need there is for consciences to be addressed.

Now, the ministers of the gospel have times when they *faint*, or when they are tempted to faint. The apostle says here, “As we have received mercy, we faint not”, meaning, he did not faint although faced with great opposition. The minister of the gospel meets with the opposition of the human heart — an evil heart of unbelief that goes astray from the living God. He also meets with the opposition of the god of this world, for as the verse before our text says, “If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.” How concerned we ought to be in Scotland lest we grieve away the Holy Spirit and provoke Him to take the gospel from our land because of leaders of churches mingling with the superstition and gross darkness of Popery and trying to bring the people back into this gross darkness. The people of this country had better watch and heed the warning that if the gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost.

So, as we have received mercy, we faint not, for we preach not ourselves but Christ Jesus our Lord, for we know that this is the preaching which the Holy Spirit blesses to souls. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth. He does not bless false gospels, and He does not bless people who preach themselves. It is through the preaching of the gospel that the Holy Spirit comes to souls. It is through the preaching of the gospel that the Holy Spirit will return once more to Scotland. There is no other way. The ecumenical movement and various ideas of that kind are futile. Therefore, it is “the glorious gospel of Christ” which the servants of Christ preach, and persevere in preaching. “As we have received mercy, we faint not.”

Let us notice, *thirdly, that those who preach the gospel are servants for Jesus’ sake*. The minister of Christ, being called by Christ, is not only the servant of Christ, but also of the *church of Christ*, for it says here, “Ourselves *your* servants for Jesus sake.” He serves the church of Christ in expounding the truth so that the church may be edified. He labours in the service of the church, preaching the gospel to sinners and prayerfully

seeking that the Holy Spirit would begin a good work in them; that Christ would be made precious to them; that they would be raised up to be living witnesses on the side of Christ. That is one thing.

The other thing is this: that it is "*for Jesus' sake*" they are servants. They get such views of the glory of Christ as the Saviour that they cannot but preach. They must say, "Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!", because of the views they get of the glory of Christ as the One who is able to save to the very uttermost all those who come unto God by Him. It is for Jesus' sake that they are servants because He is the head of the Church, and the Alpha and Omega in the Church. They are servants for Jesus' sake because the views they receive of the glory of Christ makes the cause of Christ precious to them. They see that His glory is bound up with His cause, and that his glory as a Saviour is made known through His cause

They are called to serve the Church, not only in preaching the gospel but also in *exercising rule in the Church*. Scripture exhorts us, "Obey them which have the rule over you." The servants of Christ are engaged in the rule of the Church. Our belief, based on the word of God, is that scriptural church rule is the presbyterian form of rule; that is, the Church is ruled by church courts in which ministers and elders or presbyters are equals when it comes to the exercise of rule. This is most important. The maintaining of rule and discipline in the church of Christ is part of the work of the servants of Christ, and they are to do it with a singleness of eye to Christ's glory, and to the glory and wellbeing of His Church.

Now, of course, we live in an age when people are in such spiritual darkness that they do not even understand the scriptural nature of church discipline. We as a church have suffered a great deal because we hold to the doctrine of scriptural church discipline and are prepared to practice it. We do so because we are sure that the glory of Christ is bound up with His cause and with its wellbeing.

And so His servants continue labouring, and this is what they say to their congregations, "We preach not ourselves but *Christ Jesus the Lord*." Then they themselves come to the fore in this way: "Ourselves your *servants* for Jesus' sake." The Lord *will* bless such a ministry, and He will *strengthen* such a minister in his fainting times when he meets with powerful and crafty opposition in engaging in this great and glorious work.

Being servants for Jesus' sake they must also say, "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be *of God*, and not of us," (verse 7). They are content that the conversion of a sinner is by the power of God — not by any power of theirs, or any

skill of theirs, or any knowledge of theirs, but entirely by the power of God. God teaches all His servants that the excellency of the power must be of God and not of them. They are content that while Paul may plant and Apollos may water, God gives the increase, and that He will have the glory with regard to the salvation of souls.

So they continue as servants for Jesus' sake, speaking the truth of the gospel, although "troubled on every side" (verse 8). The apostle goes on to say here, "We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, *I believed*, and therefore have I spoken; we also *believe*, and therefore speak." When a professed minister cannot say this because he is an unbeliever at heart, then he cannot speak and preach the gospel, and that is pathetically obvious.

Let us hold to this view of the office of the ministry: that it is a most *honourable* office. It is an office greatly superior in honour to the great offices that men may hold in the world. Certain men have the high honour of being ambassadors for Britain in various countries, but being an ambassador for Christ is a far more honourable office. This generation does not believe this, but that is because of their spiritual darkness. There is another day coming when things will appear in a very different light, as we see here, (verses 15 and 16), "Knowing that He which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you. For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God."

Address to a Newly Inducted Pastor

Rev. L. MacLeod

This address was delivered on the occasion of the Induction, as noted above, of the late Rev. D.B. MacLeod to the pastorate of the Edinburgh Congregation.

MR MACLEOD, I have great pleasure in welcoming you back again into the Southern Presbytery. We were sorry some years ago to lose you, but we are now very pleased indeed to welcome you back. I now have these few remarks to make

You will remember that the apostle Paul, when addressing the elders of the church in Ephesus, said, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."

Paul had just reminded them of what he had been doing among them: that he had been "serving the Lord with all humility of mind". This shows us that those who serve the Lord in the ministry of the gospel have much need of *humility and lowliness*. Those who serve Him in this way have this promise, along with many other promises, "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word."

You are to take heed to your *life, walk and conversation*, that they are as becometh the gospel of Christ - and it is only by the teaching of heaven that this can be achieved. Therefore you are to be much in prayer, seeking the Lord's keeping continually. "Hold up my goings, Lord," must be your prayer over and over again. I do not doubt for a moment but that your prayer is that the Lord would enable you to adorn the doctrine of God your Saviour in all things, nevertheless you must continue to watch and pray so that you would be "kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time".

You are to take heed to the *flock*, the charge of which you have been inducted to this evening by the authority of the Presbytery and in the name of the great Head of the church. The apostle reminded the elders of Ephesus that it was the Holy Ghost that had made them overseers of the church there. We believe the same is true here tonight - that it was the Holy Spirit, in answer to much prayer, who moved the Edinburgh Congregation of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland to address to you a unanimous call to become their pastor. We believe also that it was the Holy Spirit who directed you, after much prayerful consideration, to accept the call.

When the apostle laboured in Ephesus he fed the church there by *expounding the word of God* to them. He kept nothing back which was profitable to them. He preached law and gospel, testifying both to Jews and Greeks, repentance towards God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. You are to do the same in Edinburgh. Declare to them the whole counsel of God. Say unto the righteous that it will be well with them, and to the wicked that it will be ill with them.

I need not remind you that it is your duty to *visit* the congregation, especially those in it who are ill and in hospital, and those who are old and are not able to attend the public means of grace. Pastors also have a duty to help the young, especially when they live in this wicked and adulterous age. There are also *young people* who have come from their homes to this city to study, and it would be your duty, and I'm sure it will be your pleasure also, to encourage them to attend the means of grace

You have been a minister of the gospel now for more than thirty years, so you know from personal experience that there are *difficulties and trials* connected with the work. Satan is as opposed to the true gospel as ever he was, and is continually seeking to stir up trouble. However, you are to remember that the One who sent you to preach the gospel has promised that He will never leave you nor forsake you. "Lo, I am with you always," He says, "even unto the end of the world"

You are also to remember that the servants of the Lord have this great *promise*, "No weapon that is formed against thee will prosper; and every tongue that shall arise against thee in judgement, thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD."

My desire and prayer for you is that your labours in this city will be blessed by the Lord and bear fruit to His glory.

"That man who, bearing precious seed,
in going forth doth mourn,
He doubtless, bringing back his sheaves,
rejoicing shall return."

Address to a Congregation

Rev A. McPherson

This address was given to the Edinburgh Congregation on the occasion of the Induction, as noted above, of the late Rev. D.B. MacLeod to the pastorate of the Congregation.

MY BROTHER in the ministry who has just spoken had no difficulty in identifying the person he was speaking to. I have some difficulty in identifying the Congregation. In front of me there is a considerable throng and it is only here and there that I recognise individuals who belong to the Edinburgh Congregation. But, I'm sure all of them who can be here are here, and what a pleasure it is to see the effort made by your elder to come from his sick bed and be present on this occasion.

Well, through the kindness of the Lord, you as a congregation, once again have a minister; one who is not a novice, who is godly, experienced, and an earnest preacher who will give you well balanced, scriptural preaching, addressed to heart, mind and conscience.

The settlement of a pastor over you affects you as individuals. You have reason to be thankful that the Call was accepted. Therefore, it is your duty to humbly resolve to avail yourselves to the full of the benefits of

this ministry. This means regular attendance upon the public means of grace, and that under them the Lord's people among you would seek growth in grace and knowledge, and pray that your minister will be helped to open up the Scriptures to you so that your souls will be nourished by heart warming views of the great salvation of the triune God.

And let your desire be to meet with the Lord in the public means of grace. He has promised that where two or three are gathered in His name He is in the midst of them. Be praying that in the public means of grace you will be meeting with the Lord; that you will get views of the Saviour Himself, and come under the influences of the Holy Spirit.

Now, I would seriously advise the unconverted among you to pray that you may be brought, under this ministry, to faith and repentance. Do not be resentful should heart secrets, which you thought were known only to yourself, be brought to your attention in the preaching of the minister. It is not that he personally knows the state of your heart or the things that pass through your mind, but it has been given to him by the Lord to mention these matters. The Spirit of the Lord has brought him to say these things and therefore you should take them as addressed by the Lord Himself to you, and act upon them by God's help.

There should be a sense of urgency on the part of every unsaved sinner because the natural heart does not become softer with the passing of time, and procrastination and rejection of Christ may seal the doom of the church attender who never gives himself or herself over to the genuine, urgent seeking of Christ and salvation.

To parents I would say, keep your families under the influences of the Word of God. This will help to strengthen your own authority, it will promote filial obedience on their part, and it will instruct them in moral conduct. Above such benefits, of course, there is the possibility for them of salvation by grace. Welcome your pastor's visits (and it is certain that he will visit for he has a reputation for that) and let it be apparent to all the household that you regard your minister as a servant of Jesus Christ.

You are affected not only as individuals but also as a congregation. Your minister's duty is to promote your spiritual and moral interests. The fruit of his piety, prayers, experience, accomplishments and studies are now yours. Obtain the benefit by prayerful, regular attendance on his ministry. Seek God's power to go with that ministry so that there will be the arresting, convincing, illuminating and drawing of the lost, and the strengthening and comforting of the saved.

Guard your minister's reputation. Do nothing, or say nothing to others, that will diminish respect for him. Ministers, not least in this day which

we live, are vulnerable to the aspersions which thoughtless, or disgruntled, or spiteful persons may cast on them.

And guard against the egalitarian spirit which is so powerful in our day, and which takes this form sometimes, "What are ministers more than other men?" Well, one of the many answers of the Bible to that is this, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you." Esteem your minister very highly in love for his work's sake. Personal affection for him, I am sure, will develop also.

So may the Lord be with you as you enter a new stage in your history as a congregation. It may be that His blessing on this ministry will extend beyond yourselves to this community, this historic city in which you as a congregation are placed. Who can tell but this may happen — that your minister may be enabled to exercise a great, a good and a scriptural influence upon those who govern this city, those who belong to it, those who think themselves to be the intellectual lights and opinion formers, and so on. May the Lord Himself, with whom nothing is impossible, grant it.

We are apt to think that there will be a continued decline of the church of God; that it will weaken more and more; that there will be no betterment. That is wrong. When it pleases the Lord He will arise and plead His cause and build up His Zion. Let us be earnestly praying that the Lord Himself, by His great power, will bring about a tremendous spiritual and moral change in this city, in this land, and in the whole world. The day is coming, we are sure, when all the ends of the world shall remember and shall turn unto the Lord. May He grant it in His mercy.

Useful Directions for Reading and Searching the Scriptures

Thomas Boston

The Rev. Thomas Boston (1676-1732), famed author of *Human Nature in its Fourfold State*, was minister in Simprin near Duns in Berwickshire for eight years, and then in Ettrick where he remained until his death in his fifty-seventh year. The following extract is from the selection of his writings entitled *The Beauties of Boston*, edited by Rev. Samuel McMillan.

FIRST, keep an ordinary in reading of them, (that is, read them regularly in course each day) that ye may be acquainted with the whole; and

make this reading a part of your secret duties. Not that ye should bind up yourselves to an ordinary, so as never to read by choice, but that ordinarily this tends most to edification. Some places are more difficult, some may seem very bare for an ordinary reader; but if you would look on it all as God's word, not to be slighted, and read it with faith and reverence, no doubt ye would find advantage.

Second, set a special mark, one way or other, on those passages you read, which you find most suitable to your case, condition, or temptations; or such as ye have found to move your hearts more than other passages. And it will be profitable often to review these.

Third, compare one scripture with another, the more obscure with that which is more plain, (2 Peter 1, verse 20). This is an excellent means to find out the sense of the Scriptures; and to this good use serve the marginal notes on bibles. And keep Christ in your eye, for to Him the scriptures of the Old Testament (in its genealogies, types, and sacrifices) look, as well as those of the New.

Fourth, read with a holy attention, arising from the consideration of the majesty of God, and the reverence due to him. This must be done with attention, first, to the words; second, to the sense; and third, to the divine authority of the scripture, and the bond it lays on the conscience for obedience, 1 Thessalonians 2, verse 13, "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe."

Fifth, let your main end in reading the Scriptures be practice, and not bare knowledge, James 1, verse 22, "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving you own selves." Read that you may learn and do, and that without any limitation or distinction, but that whatever you see God requires, you may study to practice.

Sixth, beg of God and look to him for His Spirit; for it is by the teaching of the Spirit who dictated it that it must be savingly understood, 1 Corinthians 2, verse 11, "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." And therefore before you read, it is highly reasonable you beg a blessing on what you are to read.

Seventh, beware of a worldly fleshly mind: for fleshly sins blind the mind from the things of God; and the worldly heart cannot savour them. In an eclipse of the moon, the earth comes between the sun and the moon, and so keeps the light of the sun from it. So the world, in the heart, coming betwixt you and the light of the word, keeps its divine light from you.

Eighth, labour to be exercised unto godliness, and to observe your case; for an exercised frame helps mightily to understand the Scriptures. Such a Christian will find his case in the Word, and the Word will give light to his case, and his case light into the Word.

Ninth, whatever you learn from the Word, labour to put it in practice. For to him that hath shall be given. No wonder they get little insight into the Bible, who make no conscience of practising what they know. But while the stream runs into a holy life, the fountain will be the freer.

Obituary

Mr Roderick MacLeod, Deacon, Stornoway

THE subject of this brief obituary was born in Swordale, Point, Isle of Lewis, in 1900. His mother was a communicant member and his father, although he never made a public profession, was a morally upright man and highly respected in the community. Roderick was thus brought up in a home where by precept and example he was taught the way that he ought to walk if he was to glorify God and enjoy him forever. As has so often been the case, many years were to pass by before it became evident that parental guidance given at a tender age had not been given in vain.

At an early age he left home. He was wont to tell of how his mother placed a Bible in his bag within which she had placed a ten-shilling note. On his return home she was to discover to her sorrow that the note was exactly where she had placed it an indication that her son had not even as much as opened it in the interval. Not only was the Bible neglected by Roderick, he was wont to confess that were it not for the love and respect which he had for his mother he would have thrown it away. But that was to change, even if after the lapse of many years, and the Bible came to be esteemed by him his most precious possession. In his old age the worn appearance of the copy which lay beside him bore ample testimony to that.

While only yet sixteen years of age he was found experiencing the horrors of war. By then a seaman on a naval ship, he was to be saved from certain death in a most remarkable way. The ship was torpedoed and in the explosion he was severely wounded. A spike had pierced his skull transfixing him in such a way that he was left for dead on the ship's deck when it was abandoned by the surviving members of the crew. When drawing away from the fast sinking ship someone in the lifeboat noticed that the ship's cat had been left behind and it was decided to go back for it. The man who jumped on board to lay hold of the cat, in passing by

what was thought to be the dead body of young Roderick, noticed some sign of life in him and the outcome was that he was taken on board the lifeboat and survived to reach a hospital where surgeons were able to save his life. He recovered, but the marvellous deliverance from death which had been granted him does not seem to have had any effect upon him as far as his spiritual state was concerned. That was the first of three narrow escapes.

After the war he emigrated to Canada and was for some time in the employment of one of the contractors responsible for building the Canadian Pacific railway. He was also working as a labourer on the construction of the Welland canal and it was while there that he experienced his second narrow escape from death. While working in a rock cutting a blast went off either prematurely, or as a result of delayed action. The man working beside him was killed instantly while he, apart from suffering concussion, remained unscathed. It was in Canada that he met and married the woman and fellow-islander who was to be his helpmeet until she was removed by death in 1969. They returned to Lewis before the outbreak of World War II and Roderick was subsequently employed for the most part in one of the Stornoway Harris Tweed Mills. While in that employment he had his third narrow escape from death. A bale of wool slipped from the back of a lorry and he fell with it and it was again his skull that bore the impact. This time he was unconscious for sixteen days but he survived. It was some time after that that he began to show some concern for the salvation of his never-dying soul.

Up to that time he had not attended the means of grace anywhere. In fact he lived as one who made no secret of the fact that he had no interest whatever in the religion which he saw practised in his parental home. It was atheistic views which he was wont to express. How, and in what circumstances, he came to be awakened is not known. Moved by soul concern to attend some church, he chose to attend a service in a Stornoway Church of Scotland. It happened to be a communion Sabbath and his ignorance of what that meant was such that, on entering the building, he was completely at a loss to understand why it was that some of the pews were covered with white cloth! Thereafter he returned to the Church of his parents and became a regular attender on the means of grace under the ministry of the late Rev Donald Campbell. The spectacle of Ruairidh Ruadh', as he was popularly known, attending church was one which caused no little amazement among neighbours and acquaintances. How, and exactly when, his soul was enlightened in the knowledge of Christ by the Spirit of God we are unable to say, but one had not to be very

long in the company of Roderick to discover that that had taken place. He professed his faith in Christ publicly for the first time in August 1953.

He became well known as a Friday fellowship-meeting speaker at communion seasons throughout our congregations in the Western Isles.

On such occasions he used illustrations which occasionally, it must be admitted, were not all that easy to follow, but which, at other times, were most striking and original. On one occasion he described in his own graphic, inimitable way how, in passing the mouth of a river, at the time of year when salmon ascend for spawning purposes, he noted that, notwithstanding the prolonged drought, none of them appeared disposed to go back down the river. There they remained with their faces up-river waiting, as it were patiently, and as if in hope that the rain would eventually come from heaven, which in turn would flood the river, and enable them to ascend to the next pool and the lochs beyond. He was, of course, thinking of the believer persevering in the means of grace. He, himself, was always, while physically able, present in his wonted place, and from the time of his ordination to the office of Deacon, his figure was familiar standing at the door of the Church. For years even in his eighties and often in inclement weather, he walked over two miles to open the doors of the Stornoway Church and to attend to the heating if need be. In prayer he was always brief, but sincere and earnest. On one occasion the writer said to him after a prayer meeting, in the course of which Roderick's opening prayer had been very short, that he wished he had continued longer so as to reduce the length of the address which had to be given. His reply was that when they were children and hungry they did not like their father to continue long in saying the grace!

Towards the end his memory and physical strength began to fail so that his place in the house of God was no longer occupied.

Invariably, when the writer visited him in his home, he would, in the parting, quote in Gaelic the closing words of Psalm 133:

“As Hermon's dew, the dew that doth
on Sion' hills descend:

For there the blessing God commands,
life that shall never end.”

On 27th May, 1994, he departed this life to take his place, we believe, in glory among the spirits of just men made perfect.

His grandson and his wife dutifully and lovingly took care of him in his declining years and on to the end. To them we again offer our sympathy. May his God be their God also, and their Guide even unto death.

John MacLeod

The Hope of Endless Life

A Letter of Consolation

This letter was written by the late Alexander MacLennan, Muir of Ord, Home Missionary of the Free Presbyterian Church and an Elder in the Dingwall and Beaully Congregation, who died on 1st January 1972, aged 82. It is addressed to a cousin, the late Miss Chrissie Mackenzie, Gairloch, the eminently godly teacher of Port Henderson School for many years who died in 1962 at the age of 66.

I Tomich
Muir of Ord

My Dear Chrissie,

How kind of you to send such lovely gifts. May we see in all such what has been dearly purchased by the sufferings of the incarnate God. We would value the least token of good will from our fellows if we knew our deserts.

Yes, we had a great season of the pure gospel from Thursday to Monday in Inverness. I don't remember if I ever heard so much of Christ and His works...

Now, I see you are very unwell. I am so sorry, and all I can do is plead with the God of all comfort that He may alleviate your pain and discomfort, prepare you for His will, and give you a desire for heaven — that you may anticipate your end with resignation and calmness — that before you depart you may have assurance of the everlasting love of God, which would make the last messenger welcome.

We should remember that death is terrible only to those who have made no preparations for it. I remember the Rev. E. Macqueen saying that when he was in America he saw written on a tombstone,

Bha losa mo rùn
na luidha san uir
s'rinn E an leabaidh
cùibhraidh dhomsa*

When it is your daily desire to be washed in the precious blood of Christ and to be prepared by His Spirit for the inheritance of the saints, your departure will be a happy event. It is the Bible that says that the day of one's death is better than the day of one's birth.

As far as I know myself, I have been seeking preparation to die for about forty years. I cannot relax in the matter — the end determines our fate.

* Jesus, my Beloved, was lying in the dust, and He perfumed the.

We should be more afraid of sin than of death. My mother's stay and comfort to the end of her pilgrimage was this, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

I am afraid I dishonour God very much by unbelief. Although he has given me such tokens of His good will, I find something within me saying, "You have peace of conscience now but wait till you come to Jordan." One sometimes feels as if "waited for of the sword" (Job 15:22); as if God was planning to fall upon one. What base ingratitude — what distrust of a merciful God it is to believe the father of lies whose work is to harass pilgrims.

However, fear which is within reasonable bounds is a healthy exercise inasmuch as it puts you to prayer. Was it not about Mr Fearing that Bunyan said, "I never saw the river so low as when he was crossing"? My prayer is, May the Blessed One sustain you with the hope of the endless life to be found in the Son of God.

What a glorious prospect this truth reveals when applied to our hearts: "Behold, I make all things new" — a new body included.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

Alex MacLennan.

The Trinitarian Bible Society

Editorial Manager's Report

This report, which was given to the Trinitarian Bible Society's Annual General Meeting in London in June, is taken, in substance, from the Annual Report of the Society.

"DURING the past year the Editorial Department of the Society has experienced the Lord's blessing and faithfulness. We have seen significant progress in the translation, proofreading and checking of a number of translation projects."

With regard to continuing projects, the Report says that progress is being made with the Paragraphed Authorised Version Bible. This Bible will have the standard Authorised Version (1769) text arranged in paragraphs with subject headings taken from the 1611 Authorised Version. The margin will also contain translation notes from the 1611 edition of the Authorised Version as well as the modern equivalents of archaic words and words which have changed in meaning. In addition, the margin will contain modern equivalents for weights, measures, money and time. The project is designed to help people whose first language is not English by increas-

ing the clarity of the language and enabling them to read and understand the Authorised Version with greater ease.

The Read and Review Committee has been checking and evaluating the completed translation of the Catalan New Testament. The translation of the Catalan Old Testament is progressing well. Work is continuing on an orthographic revision of the Spanish Bible in order to produce a reference Bible. The completed draft of the revision of the Romanian New Testament is being proofread, and translation work on the Pentateuch of the Old Testament is continuing. The Latvian New Testament is now being typeset and will soon be proofread, corrected and prepared for publication. The Hebrew New Testament has been typeset and is now being proofread in order to finalize the text for publication.

With regard to Scripture Calendars, the meeting was informed that the 1995 Words of Life Calendar was published in Dutch, English, French, Hungarian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Spanish and Welsh. The Golden Thoughts Calendar was published in Afrikaans, English, French, Hausa, Ndebele, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish and Xhosa. It was noted that the words of Scripture contained in these calendars have been a blessing to many who have received them, and gratitude to God was expressed for His opening the way to have calendars placed in many homes, schools and businesses in which His testimony is needed.

During the year, the Society has been preparing for the needs of the next century. Part of this has been the computerising of various Bibles on which the Society is currently working. Computer-scanned reproductions are available of the texts of some translations, such as that of the Hebrew New Testament, allowing for ease of correcting and flexibility in producing page designs and formats.

Some of the translation projects in which the Society is involved have been in progress for a long period, and many of the translators have laboured in difficult, trying and sometimes dangerous circumstances. The Society requests that prayer be made for these faithful workers. It also thanks God for the progress which they have made and looks forward to the time when, God willing, these projects will be brought to fruition.

The report concludes: "The Editorial Department is thankful to God for His gracious provision in 1994. We are grateful for the leadership of the Committee and the General secretary, and diligent work of the staff, typesetters, proofreaders, translators and many others who have assisted in the work... We would seek the prayers of all the Society's supporters and friends for all the work to prepare His Word in many languages."

Health Policy in Highland Schools Setback to Highland Health Board Policy

Rev. D. M. Boyd

AN attempt to introduce condom vending machines into the toilets of secondary schools in the Highland Region has been defeated. The Highland Health Board made this suggestion to the Education Committee of the Highland Regional Council, but the Committee rejected it unanimously last month.

The Health Board and the Education Committee commissioned a study of young people in Highland in 1992-3. The findings from this research study, *Lifestyle and HIV/AIDS*, revealed that 39% of schoolchildren in the fourth year of senior schools claimed to have had sexual intercourse. A recently published follow-up *Parental Survey* showed that 51% of parents thought that condom vending machines should be situated in senior toilets at secondary schools.

This was enough for the Health Board to begin a media campaign to promote this idea. The media quickly emphasised that over half the parents believed that condom machines should be sited in the senior toilets in secondary schools, not stopping to explain that this was hardly practical as few secondary schools have "senior toilets" as such. Nor was it helpful that the *Parental Survey* wrongly quotes its own figure as 58% in one of its summaries. Although the public were led to believe that the majority of parents were in favour of condom machines in all secondary school toilets, the media bandwagon chose to ignore the fact stated by the survey: "...only one-fifth (of parents) thought they (condom vending machines) should be in all secondary school toilets". This low figure of 21% demonstrates that there was a majority against any practical change.

This majority manifested itself in a counter campaign over the summer months before the 9th of August meeting of the Education Committee. Hundreds of letters were received by the Chairman of the Committee, (one report said more than 400 letters), and by other members of the Committee. On account of opposition from school headmasters as well as parents, the recommendation from Regional Council officials to the Education Committee was as follows: "The Committee advise the Health Board that it is not prepared to instal condom machines in schools but that they would support the Board in any plans it may bring forward to improve availability outwith the school."

A loophole to be closed

The first part of this recommendation was acceptable, but not the latter. The latter part was too wide; in fact it was a loophole needing to be closed because some of the Health Board's plans are unacceptable. For several years our Church has campaigned against the Health Board's reluctance to actively promote the postponement of sexual activity between unmarried teenagers and pre teenagers in Highland as part of its policy for the prevention of AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases. In fact, earlier this year the Health Board provided the start-up and maintenance funding for a Brook Advisory Centre (which has a liberal attitude to sexuality) in Inverness, without any consultation with Local Health Councils.

At the Education Committee meeting, almost all councillors were thoroughly opposed to having condom machines in schools, and several members of the Committee expressed concern over the Health Board policy. As the Church's representative on the Committee, I highlighted the Health Board's reluctance to give unmarried young people a lead in the direction of postponing sexual activity, and I exposed the lack of "balanced advice at the point of distribution" in its policy of promoting the installation condom vending machines in secondary schools.

The motion that was unanimously passed was: "The Committee advise the Health Board that it is not prepared to instal condom machines in schools *but that it will continue to promote and develop a balanced Health Education programme relevant to the needs of the total school population in consultation with the Board.*"

Stirring the silent majority

The significance of this decision is its showing the stirring of the hitherto silent religious community. There has been cause for disquiet at the Health Board policy for several years (see *Highland Health Board Campaign on HIV and AIDS Prevention in the Highlands* in the Religion and Morals Report to the 1993 Synod, and *Preventing AIDS in the Highlands*, May 1993, Religion and Morals Committee). The eyes of the religious community were opened, too late, when the Health Board suddenly decided to fund a Brook Advisory Centre in Inverness. However, it stirred local people into action. The summer recess gave time for action which resulted in the above victory. However, the leader in next day's *Press and Journal*, the main regional newspaper, showed its bias towards the seriously flawed Health Board policy by saying that the Education Committee decision was wrong.

We may expect the Health Board to come back some other way. When the *Lifestyle* survey was published on 1 December 1993, (World AIDS Day), the Health Board's AIDS liaison officer floated the idea of condom machines in school at that early stage. When this failed, the Health Board came back in December 1994 with its decision to fund the Brook Advisory Centre: a back door policy to make condoms freely and easily available to promiscuous teenagers. The Health Board intends to extend these centres throughout the Highlands once they have "monitored" the Inverness one. We have not had any indication from the Health Board of what it would consider to be proof of success or, more important, of failure of this policy. We suspect that if the figures for promiscuity get worse, these will be used as proof of the need for more centres; if the figures get better they will be used as proof that the Health Board's policies are beginning to work.

Moral ecumenism

The success of the counter campaign also indicates the danger of moral ecumenism taking over in campaigns against social evils. This moral ecumenism was not overlooked by a journalist writing in *The Herald* who noted that Free Church ministers and members stood shoulder to shoulder with Roman Catholics outside the Regional Council Headquarters in Inverness on the day of the committee meeting. In America, the Moral Majority, which has now given place to the Christian Coalition, has fostered a sense of unity between Romanists and so-called evangelicals which resulted in the statement *Evangelicals and Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium*. This statement, after years of cooperation on moral issues, now calls each side to recognise the other as true Christians, and to stop the proselytising of each other.

As expected, the counter campaign victory was discounted by the Health Board spokesman as the churches' opposition. The *Press and Journal* described the vote as "deference to religious outrage". The *Parental Survey* paved the way for this hostile reaction by highlighting the opposition of "the more religiously active" to the opinions of those who favoured siting condom dispensers in secondary schools. This hostile reaction has force when only ministers and church leaders are seen to be opposed to these measures. It is therefore good to see the representatives of the community, in the persons of the Education Committee members, coming to such a decision. But there is a need for Christians in public life to speak up for Christian values; if they leave it to ministers and churches, then the opposition can be more readily dismissed. However, if Christians in the community are steeled by the example of the church and are encouraged

to stand up for Christian values in the community, then the lead given by ministers and churches will not be in vain.

It may not be too much to say that some people have been provoked into action by the lead given to them by our own Church, which has been in the vanguard of the public debate. IDEA (Inverness and District Evangelical Alliance) has recently sprung up; CARE (Christian Action Research and Education) now have an honorary regional officer; and SPUC (Society for the Protection of Unborn Children) has become active in the area since the Brook Advisory Centre proposal. However it is better that the opposition comes, and is seen to come, from a wide spectrum of churches and individuals rather than from one focussed coalition which can be handled by the Health Board as a single opponent and dismissed as such. There is an advantage in this diversity.

Protestant Notes

The Queen to attend a Roman Catholic service

MANY of the Queen's loyal Protestant subjects are dismayed that she has accepted an invitation to attend, for the first time, a full Roman Catholic service in Westminster Cathedral on November 30.

It is no ordinary Roman Catholic service — that were serious enough — but a service to mark the 100th anniversary of the cathedral — a cathedral which Rome regards as “the mother church of Catholicism in this country” and a striking symbol that it reentered British public life after an absence of centuries following Henry VIII's breach with Rome.

There will be no mass at the service (for, as the Palace has announced, “The Queen does not attend Catholic Mass for constitutional reasons.”) but we are in no doubt that Rome will regard the presence of the Queen as a significant victory in its strategy to increase its power in the nation.

The Queen's decision, in which she was advised by the Archbishop of Canterbury who “warmly supported the idea”, continues the process of developing ties between the Royal Family and the Church of Rome. This causes us deep concern.

The IRA has not gone away

AS Sinn Fein president Gerry Adams addressed a crowd in Belfast recently someone shouted, “Bring back the IRA!” To loud applause Adams said, “They haven't gone away, you know.” His remark confirms again that Sinn Feinn is backed by terrorist force and that violence will ensue if our Government does not make concessions to it. Republicans view the peace

process as vindicating their violence of the past 25 years.

The retaining of huge stocks of arms by the IRA shows that violence is still on its agenda. Last month the Northern Ireland minister, Mr Michael Ancram, asked: "Why, if a party (the republicans) says it is committed to exclusively peaceful methods, does it need to retain its arms?" Well does he know the answer. Therefore, it is not only folly but a betrayal of loyal British subjects in Ulster for the Northern Ireland Secretary, Sir Patrick Mayhew, and Mr Ancram to have talks with Sinn Feinn.

"But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets." He will yet bring fully to light the hand of Rome in Ulster's troubles, and the cooperation she has received from within Westminster. Therefore let the Lord's people in Ulster continue to look to Him for deliverance and vindication.

Criticism of the vow of celibacy

YET another leading Roman Catholic, Victor Guazzelli, the Bishop of East London, has called on his Church to consider ending the 800-year-old rule for priests to remain celibate. "Priests have left the Church to get married," he said. "The question being asked is, 'Should we insist on celibacy?'" His view is held by several Roman Catholic bishops in Britain and Ireland despite Cardinals Hume and Daly reaffirming Rome's policy of compulsory celibacy for its priests.

Rome teaches that the celibate condition "is holier than that of marriage". Far from being "a gift of the Catholic Church to the enrichment of Christianity throughout the world," as Cardinal Daly says, celibacy has been the root of much immorality among numerous priests and nuns, as the history of the Church of Rome has proved. Increasing revelations of present day cases of fornication, homosexuality and child abuse by Roman Catholic priests confirm this verdict of history.

Notes and Comments

Proposals for 'no fault' divorce

THE Institute of Economic Affairs has criticised the Government's plans to reform the divorce laws by legislating for 'no fault' divorce as proposed by the Lord Chancellor's White Paper, and against which our Religion and Morals Committee made representations some time ago. A couple would be granted a divorce after what is called a 12-month period of reflection and it is hoped that the acrimony in the break-up would be minimised by more mediation and by not apportioning blame to either party.

The Institute points out that our present divorce laws are already so lax that they threaten the stability of society. It condemns these latest plans as "part of a contemptible and unremitting onslaught on the family".

As we made clear in our submission to the Lord Chancellor, the only Scriptural grounds for divorce are "adultery and wilful desertion which cannot be remedied". He knows this well and also is concerned about the maintaining of family life. "The family unit is an important one," he said in a recent interview. "We should do everything to strengthen it." However, to make divorce easier, as these reforms surely will, is to wield another blow at an already weakened and beleaguered institution and to further weaken family life.

Japan's atrocities in World War II

FIFTY years ago a global war lasting six years and resulting in some 55 million people being killed came to an end with the surrender of Japan. This 50th anniversary of VJ Day reminds us forcibly once again of the ferocious brutality of Japan in perpetrating terrible atrocities on its labour camp prisoners — some 50,000 British, American, Australian, New Zealand and other nationals, of whom more than 12,000 died in captivity.

Few realise the mercy of God in giving victory to the Allies in their titanic struggle with the German, Italian and Japanese aggressors. Nor is it understood how low are the depths of inhumanity to which nations can descend which have never had, or have cast off, the truth of the gospel.

There are more wars being fought throughout the world today than ever before. Man's inhumanity to man is starkly evident. May God pour out His spirit upon the nations so that they would become subject to Christ the King. Then shall the promise be fulfilled, "They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks."

Mission News

Zimbabwe Mission

AT the John Tallach School in Ingwenya they had the welcome help of Stephen Ramsbottom, brother of Dr Tim Ramsbottom who assisted a couple of years ago in Mbumba Hospital. Stephen taught geography and kindred subjects and engaged in other activities which relieved the staff considerably. Teachers and pupils saw him go with regret.

Mr James Mpofu, the much appreciated Boarding Master at the John Tallach School, has been asked to undertake as much of the late David

Ndlovu's work as is practicable. Mr Mpofu, who was due to retire shortly, had agreed to stay on in the school a little longer as Boarding Master. However, David's Ndlovu's death has altered circumstances, and Mr Mpofu has agreed to switch to working in this new capacity as supervisor of building operations and mission transport maintenance.

Reference was made previously to the accident sustained by Nursing Sister Anne Zekveld at Mbuma. Anne, who spent five or six weeks on crutches, has recovered. The accident was caused by a cow. The cattle at Mbuma roam around the Mission, and on this occasion Anne was on her way to Sister Macaskill's house when the cow, for no apparent reason, came after Anne and tossed her against the wall of Margaret's house. Bruised and shocked Anne looked round apprehensively to see where the cow was. To her relief the cow was grazing quietly a few yards away. Anne had to go to town for treatment where it was discovered that she had a fractured knee. She was therefore unable to take her share in nursing for many weeks. It is a mercy that she suffered no more serious injury.

The staff in Zimbabwe are already looking forward to the arrival in September of the Church Deputy, Rev Neil Ross, Mrs Ross and two of their daughters. After visiting Zimbabwe they will proceed to Kenya, DV.

Kenya Mission

IT was with great anxiety that we heard a few weeks ago that Dr Christine MacDonald was seriously ill with typhoid and malaria. Her illness had been diagnosed in Nairobi Hospital and she was flown home to London accompanied by her husband and little daughter, Sarah. As was noted in last month's news the staff in Sengera Clinic had been extremely busy. Christine had several minor attacks of malaria during June, but early in July she had become extremely ill and had to be flown home to this country. Malaria is a serious problem there.

Rev J Goldby, who flew to Kenya to assist there for five weeks, has sent word home that many people are extremely ill with malaria and many have died. It is possible that the proximity of that huge body of water, Lake Victoria, only thirty miles west of our Mission at Sengera, is contributing to the humidity.

It is a matter for much thankfulness that Dr. Christine has recovered very well and is at home in Lewis. If all is well, her husband, Donald, will proceed to Kenya on the 26th July to arrange matters left in abeyance, and then fly to Zimbabwe where he is expected to see to business affairs. We trust the Lord will make matters plain in this perplexing situation.

J.N.

Church Notes

Synod Reply to the APCs

TOWARDS the end of May the General Assembly of the Associated Presbyterian Churches of Canada and Scotland addressed a letter to our Synod in which it was proposed that a meeting should be arranged to discuss the future of church properties. In making this proposal, the APCs acknowledged that there remained "deeply held differences of principle between the two churches".

The following reply was sent to the APCs and it was agreed that it be printed in *The Free Presbyterian Magazine*:

Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland
Clerk: Rev John MacLeod MA

11 July 1995

Mr David K Laing

Assembly Clerk

Associated Presbyterian Churches of Canada and Scotland

Dear Mr Laing

Your letter dated 19th May, 1995, was drawn to the attention of the Synod when it met in May and I am now instructed to address this reply to you.

As far as Church properties are concerned, the Synod has already made its position clear: the churches and manses in question were built or bought with money and resources provided by the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland and were intended to be used in maintaining the public means of grace within its bounds. It was on that understanding that ministers, on being inducted to these congregations, were given the use of these buildings. It was surely only to be expected that when ministers left the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland to form another religious body common honesty would dictate that they should vacate properties which could not be put to their intended use while being occupied by such ministers.

On the subject of the differences between the two bodies, which you refer to, but do not specify, the Synod is of the opinion that the gulf in doctrine and practice between the two bodies is so wide that no useful purpose would be served in arranging such a meeting.

The Synod has placed this matter in the hands of the Lord who knows the hearts of all men. It would be good if His voice was heard in the courts of the consciences of the ministers referred to above.

On behalf of the Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland,

Yours sincerely,

(Rev) *John MacLeod*

Clerk

Eastern Europe Fund

AT the meeting of Synod it was agreed that donations to the **Eastern Europe Fund** should be sent direct to the General Treasurer, Mr R.A. Campbell, 133 Woodlands Road, Glasgow, G3 6LE, and not to Rev. D.A. Ross, as Mr Ross has found the present method of sending direct to him to be too consuming of his time.

Standing Collections:

THE Synod agreed that the following be the Standing Collections:

the **Foreign Mission Fund** to be taken in **March** and **August**;

the **General Building Fund** in **April**;

the **Home Mission Fund** in **May**;

the **College and Library Fund** in **June**;

the **Dominions and Overseas Fund** in **September**;

the **Book Room Fund** in **October**,

and the **Publications Fund** in **November**.

African mission work

WE are thankful to report that the Rev. John Goldby returned safely from Kenya on 9th August after a very busy five weeks of preaching, teaching and other work at our Sengeru Mission.

The Clerk of the Foreign Mission Committee, the Rev James R. Tallach, is presently visiting Sengeru Mission for six weeks, until 6th October.

The Rev. Neil M. Ross has agreed to the request of the Foreign Mission Committee to go to Africa as Church Deputy from 19th September until the end of November. It is expected that he will be in Zimbabwe until 4th October, and then in Kenya for the remaining eight weeks.

Miss Marion Graham, M.A., Headteacher of John Tallach Secondary School in Ingwenya, is due to return to Zimbabwe on 19th September, God willing, after a well-earned furlough.

May the great Head of the church bless the work of those those "who labour in the word and doctrine" there, and of those who assist them, both permanent staff and temporary helpers.

Acknowledgements of Donations

THE General Treasurer, Mr R.A. Campbell, 133 Woodlands Road, Glasgow, G3 6LE, wishes to acknowledge with thanks the following donations:

Eastern Europe: Anon., £100.

Foreign Mission Fund: Anon., £100.

Dominions and Overseas Fund: J. & P. Henderson, £905.

Home mission Fund: "Church in his house", £5.

Sustentation Fund: "Post Assembly 1892", £2. Anon., £165. "Pre Assembly 1893", £2, "Before F.P. Church continuing", £3.00.

The Treasurers of the following Congregations wish to acknowledge the following donations:

Barnoldswick: Anon., £400 where most needed, per collection plate. Anon., £10 for the F.P. Cause. E.K., £40, for use where needed.

Bracadale-Strath: Anon., £100, where most needed, per Rev. G.G.H.

Gairloch: C.G., £5; E.M., Kinlochbervie, £30; Friend, Skye, £30; Anon, Lewis, £20; E.W., £50; Anon., £20; Anon., £5; Lewis Friend, £10; all for congregational funds per Rev. A.E.W. MacDonald. Anon., £150 for congregational funds per J.M.

Laide: Anon., Laide, £10 for Eastern Europe Mission. Residents, Isle View Home, £12.41 for Eastern Europe Mission, per Rev. D.A.R. Mrs B, Bethesda, £50 for travelling expenses to Eastern Europe, and £5 for Bibles for Eastern Europe, both per Rev. D.J.M. Anon., £30 for Eastern Europe Mission; Friend, Skye, £300 for Eastern Europe Mission, both per Rev. D.A.R. Friend Laide, £10 for Eastern Europe Mission. Friend, Skye, £300 for Foreign Mission Fund, per Rev. D.A.R. Anon., Ayr, £350; Friend, Isle View Home £20; Friend, Laide £50; P.J., £50; Friend, Applecross, £10, all for Eastern Europe Mission per Rev. D.A.R. Residents, Isle View Home, £11.15 for Eastern Europe Fund per N.H.R. Friend, Lochcarron, £10 for Bibles for Eastern Europe; Friend, Edinburgh, £40 for Eastern Europe Mission, both per Rev. D.A.R. Residents, Isle View Home, £14 for Eastern Europe Mission per H. Gunn. Friends, £100 for Expenses for Italian Mission; Friend Aultbea, £20 plus £20 for church funds; these three per Rev. D.A.R.

Larne: A friend, £30, where most needed. "Glasgow", £30 for communion expenses. Envelope in plate, £20 for Congregational Fund. Skye friends, £20 for Congregational Fund.

Lochcarron: Anon., £20, Anon., £70; A.M. £40; Anon., £28; all for the Eastern Europe Fund and per E.R. Friend, Carnoustie, £40, where most needed, per C.M.

North Harris: Friend, Kyles, £20 for petrol. Friend, Kyles, £20 for Home Mission; both per Rev. R. MacLeod. R.M.L., Cluer, £4 for Bus Fund per J.M.L. "In memory of a late sister", £100 for church funds. Friends, £20 for petrol; both in collection plate. A Friend, Kyles, £20 for petrol per Rev. R. MacLeod. North Harris friends, £350 for church and manse precinct, per J.F.M. Anon., £10 for Bus Fund and £10 for loop system, per envelope in collection plate. Anon., £100 for church funds, envelope in plate.

North Uist: P.McD., £100 for where most needed. Anon., £25 for Congregational Fund.

Perth and Dundee: M.M. £10 for Congregational Fund per envelope in plate. M.McL., £10 for Congregational Fund per Rev. A. McP. Mrs A. Tocher £100 for Congregational Fund and £100 for Church Magazine, per A. MacP.

Portree: Friend, £20 for Sustentation Fund per F.M. Friend, £10 for petrol per F.M. Friend, £20 for Sustentation Fund; Friend, £20 where needed; these last two per S.Y.M.

Raasay: Anon., Inverarish, £30 for communion expenses per Treasurer. Interested, £50 for where most needed, per envelope in collection plate. M.Duncan, £2 for Congregational Fund per Rev. J.R. Tallach. Mrs Matthew, £20 for communion expenses per Mrs Tallach.

Shieldaig: Anon., £10; Anon., £15; both for communion expenses. Miss C. Finlayson, Allt a Chuirn, Lochcarron, £10.50 towards communion expenses. Anon., £100 for Sustentation Fund. In grateful memory of a loving husband and father, £100 for Sustentation Fund.

Uig, Isle of Lewis: All the following are per envelopes in collection plate: Anon., £200; Anon., £80; both for congregational purposes. Anon., £20; Anon., £15; Anon., £10; these three for communion expenses.