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The Christmas Vanity Fair*

Christmas is said to be a religious festival celebrated on 25th December, in memory of the birth of Jesus Christ. The word "Christmas" of course is not to be found in the New Testament or any reference to such a religious observance. The word was no doubt "coined" by Romish ecclesiastics long ago. The dictionary tells us that it was an annual festival, originally a mass in memory of the birth of Christ. Obviously the word is made up of two words, viz., Christ and Mass.

The ordinance of the Lord's Supper is called in the Roman Catholic Church "the Mass". In the Creed of Pope Pius IV, it is said: "I profess likewise, that in the Mass there is offered to God a true, proper, and propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead, and that in the Most Holy Sacrifice of the Eucharist there is truly, really, and substantially the body and blood together with the soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ — that there is made a conversion of the whole substance of the wine into the blood: which conversion the Roman Catholic Church calls Transubstantiation; I do also confess, that under either kind alone Christ is received whole and entire and a true Sacrament."

This doctrine of the Mass, reveals great darkness, deceit, superstition and blasphemy. Because Christ, "once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." (Heb. Chap. 9: 26). He is as to His person now glorified at the right hand of God. It is madness and folly to even imagine that unholy men can be instrumental

* The following article (originally entitled "A criticism of Christmas") is reprinted from the December 1958 issue of *The Free Presbyterian Magazine*.

in doing what the doctrine of the Mass claims, that a little wafer and some wine are turned into the body, blood and divinity of Christ, and all who believe that Christ can thus be offered afresh upon thousands of Romish altars at one and the same time, throughout the world, have been sent in judgement by God this "strong delusion that they should believe a lie." (2nd Thess. 2: 11). And so the word "Christmas", made so familiar today, and by many dissociated from anything of a superstitious nature, yet on examination savours of the creed of Rome.

The festival was first celebrated in the ancient Church, by the Eastern Church on January 6th, and by the Western Church on December 25th. The gospels give no date of Christ's birth. The 6th of January apparently was settled upon from the fact that the first Adam was created on the 6th day, and the conclusion that Christ the second Adam ought to be born on the sixth day. The Roman date of December 25th has no solid foundation and is quite arbitrary, as the actual date of the Saviour's birth is really unknown.

During the dark middle ages, it is recorded that "the celebration assumed in accordance with the taste of the time, quite a theatrical aspect. The manger was shown, with the Virgin Mary sitting beside it, surrounded with chanting angels. The wise men, the shepherds etc., were also represented, and a complete mystery was formed." But this practice of the middle ages in all the theatrical and superstitious details thereof, is now back in Scotland in some congregations of the professed protestant Churches, such as the Church of Scotland. The narrative of the birth of Christ recorded in the inspired Word of God is not enough for the carnal, unconverted hearts of ministers, members and adherents, of backsliding and worldly Churches who profess protestantism. The Roman Church and her people, and also the Anglican Churches are of course steeped by centuries of tradition in this idolatrous practice, an image of Christ as a babe in a manger, being obviously an idol. The sight of the eyes and the emotions of unrenewed hearts, and not faith upon Christ as revealed in the truth of God and the gospel, are thus the order of the day here. Symbolism, idolatry and supersition are weapons of Satan and anti-Christ, directed at setting aside the Word of God as *the* warrant of a spiritual faith, and to eliminate the preaching of the gospel. "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe," and not by dolls, cradles, and candles.

In the origin of the celebration of Christmas there were many features of a non-Christian character, such as the use of lighted tapers reminiscent of the Jewish festival of purification, the giving of presents which was

a Roman custom, and the use of the Yule-tree and the Yule-log which were remnants of old Teutonic nature-worship. In England the Reformation did not do away with Christmas, but sought to exclude every feature which had not a religious character. The dissenters of the Church of England however abolished Christmas altogether as far as they were concerned, seeing so much of an un-christian character connected with it, which came down from the middle ages.

In Scotland in the sixteenth century, John Knox, in the First Book of Discipline, "thought good that the feast of Christmas, Circumcision, Epiphania, with the feasts of the Apostles, Martyrs, and Virgin Mary, be utterly abolished because they are neither commanded nor warranted by Scripture . . ." (Extract from Act of Assembly of Kirk of Scotland, at Glasgow, 10th December, 1638).

And certainly Scotland was remarkably free from the observance of this unscriptural festival, by the people in general since those times of Reformation until indeed recent years. But now Scotland is practically as foolish about Christmas as England. The Scottish reformers observed about Easter to quote the aforesaid Act of 1638, as follows — ". . . superstitiously the people run to that action at Pascheven; as if the time gave virtue to the sacrament, and how the rest of the whole year they are careless and negligent; as if it appertained not to them, but at that time only."

How clearly applicable the aforesaid quotation is to the most of people today in reference to their observance of Christmas. They make a great noise and fuss about it in the month of December; but have no thought or concern about the advent of Christ the Lord, as the Saviour of lost and ruined sinners, and their need of Him as such. And this great gospel and Christian truth is out of mind more or less for the rest of the year. Empty churches, the faithful preaching of the gospel of Christ despised, materialism, a mad thirst for the pleasure of sin, and widespread ungodliness, are outstanding witnesses to this assertion.

If the recognition and observance of the so-called Christmas was enjoyed by Scripture and commanded by God, would this back-sliding generation in religion and morals in Scotland, be increasingly enthusiastic about it, as they appear to be? That is a pertinent question. Does even a lighthearted and worldly recognition of this festival, render a subtle and superstitious salve to the consciences of many and engender in them a false hope of having somehow or other a personal interest in the Name of Christ which will be to their benefit here and hereafter. We think it does and dangerously so. Men are satisfied with everything and anything short of Christ himself

dwelling in the heart of faith. Now God commands us to "Remember the Sabbath Day keep it holy." Yet many professed Christian ministers, and multitudes of professing Christians, along with the Churchless masses, are utterly lax and sinful in their treatment of this Command from God. And among other vital matters, the Sabbath Day is a memorial of the Resurrection of Christ. But this is flouted and disregarded by hearty supporters of Christmas.

This man-made festival occurring at a stated time once a year, has become the occasion for concentrated carnal activity. Big business is out to make millions of profit from the sales of a thousand and one articles with the Christmas label. The order of the season includes Christmas plays, carnivals, concerts, balls, dances, card-parties, football matches and a host of other activities of a like nature. There are illuminated trees in public places and elsewhere; and even in the quiet places of northern Scotland miniature trees lit up with coloured electric lights are to be seen at night in the windows of many homes. What a nation-wide Vanity Fair! Is there reverence here for the holy mystery of the Incarnation? Is there in all this an understanding of the goodwill of God in Christ Jesus toward lost sinners? Is there a desire for the promotion of the glory of God in the highest? Surely not.

The god fearing lover of the Lord Jesus Christ appreciates and rejoices in the coming of Christ into the World, as revealed in the gospel, time and again during the year, as the Holy Spirit leads into the preciousness of that great event. Such do not need the 6th of January or the 25th of December to remind them of their blessed Redeemer's appearing to work out Salvation manifold in the midst of the earth.

The influence of Rome and Episcopacy seeks to reassert itself throughout our Nation. Christmas and Easter are now being made popular and are becoming so in Scotland, among a people who neglect the Word of God and have turned their back on the true and faithful preaching of the whole counsel of God, including the Incarnation, Death and Resurrection of Christ Jesus the Lord. Let us guard against and resist, as the Lord may guide and enable, these and other influences which seek to undermine the work of times of Reformation in our beloved land. We must in these days contend for the simplicity of gospel religion and practice.

"But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, where-unto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain. (Galatians 4: 9-11).

Obituary

The Reverend Donald Beaton Macleod MA, Edinburgh

When, on the 16th day of January, the news of the passing from time to eternity of the Rev D B Macleod spread throughout the church and the wider community, the deep sense of sorrow and loss which was felt by those who heard it bore ample testimony to the regard in which he was held. To the godly, especially, who discerned in him "one who feared God and eschewed evil", it was sad and heavy tidings indeed. An alert and faithful watchman had been removed from the walls of Sion and the loss sustained seemed to be irreparable. It had pleased the Head to suddenly translate him to the church triumphant in heaven when we regarded him as being at the height of his usefulness to the church militant on earth. But He who reigns in heaven and earth, who sees the end from the beginning, whose counsel shall stand, and who will do all his pleasure, had so ordered it; and it becomes all who acknowledge His sovereignty to be acquiescent to His will. Surely His thoughts are not our thoughts!



The subject of our obituary was born in the Evelix manse on 16th October, 1929. His father, the Rev Finlay Macleod, a native of Kishorn, had been settled over the Dornoch congregation in 1926 and was to pass through great trials in the course of his ministry there. His mother was a daughter of the renowned and erudite Rev Donald Beaton who was, for more than forty years, a Theological Tutor and also served as Clerk of Synod and Editor of the *Free Presbyterian Magazine*. The parents were to give the name of his grandfather to their first-born son and, in the Lord's holy and wonderful providence, he was, in turn, to serve the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland in these same offices.

From his early youth, he had set his mind on following a seafaring career. At the age of sixteen he left Dornoch Academy and, after attending the Leith Nautical College for a period of time, he went to sea, first of all as a cadet with the Ellerman Line. In due course he passed the examination which was to place him on the first rung of the promotion ladder, but having by then undergone a spiritual change, he elected to

bring his seafaring career to an end; his thoughts were now directed towards serving, in the ministry of the Gospel, the One whom he now owned as his Lord and Saviour. Where, and in what circumstances, the forementioned spiritual change took place we are unable to say; nor have we any information as to the nature of his spiritual exercise in connection with his call to the ministry. He was not wont to speak of these personal matters; they were precious and sacred to him relating, as they did, to the Lord's secret dealings with his soul. It can, however, be safely asserted, from what others recall, that the young seafarer returning to Dornoch had become 'a new creature' and, also, that it was not without much searching of heart, and not without receiving light on the path of duty, that he approached the Kirk-session with a view to being received as a student studying for the ministry of the Church.

Before any steps could be taken in connection with the resumption of full-time education, it was necessary for him, now that he had left the Merchant Navy, to do two years' National Service in the Army and for most of that period (1952 to 1954) he was stationed in the Isle of Wight instructing soldiers in the art of navigating and handling boats. He had been received as a member in full communion by the London Kirk-session on 12th April, 1952, but the following year his name had been placed, by disjunction certificate, on the Dornoch and Rogart congregation's communion roll, and it was that congregation's Kirk-session which recommended him to the Northern Presbytery as one worthy of being received as a student studying for the ministry of the Church. On 2nd February, 1954, he was received by that Court.

After obtaining the necessary qualifications for entry to a university, he matriculated at Edinburgh University in October 1954, and three years later he graduated with a Master of Arts degree. One of his degree subjects had been Hebrew and with the encouragement of the Training of the Ministry Committee he extended his period of study of that language over another session while he, also, by correspondence with the Church Tutors, covered the work prescribed for students entering the first year of their theological studies. There followed a full session of theological studies at Portree under the tutorship of the Rev Donald MacLean and the following year he completed his studies, partly under the tutorship of the Rev Angus F Mackay, in Inverness, and partly under that of the Rev Malcolm MacSween, in Oban.

In addition to his Hebrew studies in Edinburgh he, also, in 1959, attended a ten-week course in modern Hebrew in London. This interest in the language of the Jews was an indication of where he felt himself

led to exercise his ministry. His desire was to be instrumental in bringing the Gospel to their ears. But it was not to be. Some members of the Synod were of the view that the time was inopportune and that the door to mission work among the Jews was not sufficiently open for him to enter. The Court having come to this decision, he meekly acquiesced in it. It was thus in his native Sutherland, but on its West coast in Kinlochbervie that he was ordained and inducted. This was the newly-sanctioned charge of Kinlochbervie and Scourie and he was thus to be the first Free Presbyterian minister to be settled in these parts. There was, as yet, no manse built so the minister and his wife set up home in rented accommodation in Scourie but when, after some time, the Lairg manse became vacant they moved into it and it was from that base that he was to travel the many miles necessary in order to fulfil his pastoral duties. The Scourie and Kinlochbervie congregation much regretted his departure from among them in 1962 when he accepted a call to the London congregation but the bonds of friendships which were then formed were to remain strong for the rest of his life. After eight years in London, he accepted a call to the joint congregation of Lairg, Bonar and Dornoch, and when the Rev D A MacFarlane's long ministry in Dingwall came to an end on his retirement in 1973, it was the Lairg minister who was to be his successor. The induction to the Dingwall-Beaully charge took place in the Dingwall church on 13th January, 1976.

The Dingwall years were to be perhaps the most eventful of his ministry, certainly the most difficult. It was becoming increasingly apparent that there was in the Northern Presbytery an element which was determined to make the Church a more ecumenically-orientated body and Mr Macleod and others like-minded with him did their utmost to resist this movement knowing full well that in proportion to the extent to which it would prevail, so the witness and testimony of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland would be weakened and impaired. Over the years many difficult cases were dealt with, some of which were to reach the floor of the Synod before being finally disposed of by that superior court. Things came to a head in 1989 when those ministers and elders who were to form the APCs removed themselves from the Synod and the majority of those who followed them came, not unsurprisingly, from congregations within the Northern Presbytery, some of which were left almost decimated. But even in the congregations most affected there remained a faithful remnant. No congregation could possibly be favoured with a more diligent, loving pastor than the Dingwall-Beaully congregation; nevertheless, a considerable number removed themselves from his faithful ministry. The deliberate

severing of the tie which bound them to a godly pastor, and which entailed the placing of themselves outside his pastoral oversight and prayers, was a more solemn and serious matter than those concerned realised and for their action in doing so they will yet have to give account. The Dingwall minister, over the course of these difficult days and months which followed the 1989 Synod, did not spare himself. Supply was organised, services were arranged, and, largely through his efforts, the Church's witness continued, even in places where the APCs thought they had carried all before them.

In the south, the Edinburgh congregation was, in 1989, reduced to a very small but a faithful remnant and it was to them that Mr Macleod was to devote the last years of his ministry. His induction took place on 14th June, 1991. Within a few months the APCs voluntarily handed back the Gilmore Place church to its rightful owners and Free Presbyterian services were resumed within it. We have no doubt that Mr Macleod regarded this unexpected development as an answer to prayer. It was certainly an encouragement to him as was also the fact that he was to witness, with the passing of time, a modest increase in the number of worshippers attending. Just when the future appeared to be looking brighter, it pleased his Master suddenly to call him into His own presence to receive His commendation and reward. On Sabbath, 15th January, he preached morning and evening in his own pulpit and apparently in good health. Early on Monday morning, however, he felt unwell and the doctor was summoned but initially there appeared to be no cause for alarm.

The doctor recommended that he should be taken to a hospital for tests and in order to make matters easier for his wife suggested that an ambulance be called. Before the ambulance arrived, however, or the doctor for the second time, our friend and colleague, sitting in a chair, had shut his eyes and quietly taken his last breath; his soul had departed "to be with Christ; which is far better". The funeral, on 20th January, was from the Gilmore Place Church and was very largely attended. His mortal remains were buried out of sight in Morningside Cemetery, there to rest until the trumpet sounds and the dead in Christ shall rise to meet Him at His coming.

In one of the obituaries printed in the public Press one writer commented that the Rev D B Macleod was "never off-duty" by which was meant that he was from morning till night absorbed in the service of his Master. Time was precious to him, a commodity to be redeemed and not squandered, because the days were evil. Every duty undertaken was performed to the best of his ability and it was a source of wonder to many how one frail back was able to carry so many burdens all at once. In May 1966, the

Synod appointed him Convener of the Religion and Morals Committee and three years later Editor of *The Free Presbyterian Magazine*. On the death of the Rev Malcolm MacSween, he was appointed a theological tutor with special responsibility for the teaching of Hebrew, Old Testament Studies, Pastoral Theology and Church History. When the Rev Donald Campbell passed away, he took on, in 1984, the responsibilities of the Convenership of the Dominions and Overseas Committee. He had a very special interest in the Ballifeary Home of Rest and from 1989 was Convener of the committee responsible for its administration. In 1990 he was appointed Clerk of Synod and he performed the duties of that office faithfully and efficiently. For many years he was a member of the Trinitarian Bible Society and at the time of his death was one of its vice-presidents.

Mr Macleod had a great interest in, and concern for, our congregations in Canada, Australia and New Zealand. He not only visited them himself as a deputy; he, also, did his utmost to move others to do. However busy he was, he still found time to correspond with friends overseas and for that reason, among others, they felt his death keenly. As a member of the Jewish and Foreign Missions Committee, he took a very active interest in our African mission. When the prospect of extending our mission work beyond Zimbabwe to Malawi and Kenya became real, it was he, who, in 1987, willingly undertook to spend three months in Africa, at Ingwenya most of the time, patiently tutoring in theology three Kenyan and three Malawian men who had been recommended as likely to be useful in the service of the Church. From then on he endeavoured to visit these countries as often as he could and it was very evident that his desire and prayer to God on behalf of poor benighted African sinners was that they might be saved.

For twenty-five years he edited the *Free Presbyterian Magazine* and in doing so did his level best to produce, month after month, a periodical which maintained the standard of spirituality set by his predecessors while including polemical and topical articles as the circumstances required. His "Notes and Comments" indicated that he was alert to all that was happening in the world around him, in both the secular and ecclesiastical spheres, and when it was necessary to make known the Church's view on moral questions, he did so in very plain and unequivocal terms. The number of letters which were written by appreciative readers of the magazine, some of them living far firth of these shores, bears eloquent tribute to his abilities as an editor. The proofs of the February issue were in his hands for correction at the time of his death. It was very significant

that his last editorial, written just before laying down his pen forever, bears the title: "Death, Judgment and Eternity". The tenor of the article reveals that the writer was much aware of these solemn realities himself and one wonders if, as his pen flowed, he was not somehow aware of the fact that he was shortly to finish his own course and that the time of his departure was at hand.

His diligence as a pastor was well known. Many will remember him, and not only within the bounds of his own congregation, as the one who punctually arrived at their homes seeking to comfort them when passing through affliction or experiencing bereavement. Many a hospital bed he stood beside praying for the sick and directing attention to the greatest Physician of all. He often recalled words which one of his Primary School teachers often drew attention to and urged her pupils to live by: "I shall pass through this world but once. Any good, therefore, that I can do, let me do it now; for I shall not pass this way again." Her loving advice was not lost on him. As a preacher of the everlasting Gospel he set life and death solemnly and faithfully before his hearers. Christ and Him crucified was a theme never far from his mind and never absent from his sermons. He was well-endowed intellectually but his humility and modesty were such that this was perhaps properly appreciated only by those who were in close contact with him as, for instance, the students who attended his classes. In church courts he was wise, discerning and balanced in his judgment, and ever faithful to the Church's constitution and testimony. He was invariably courteous and honest in his dealings with his fellow-men and evinced the spirit of His Master to a wonderful degree in that "when he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not".

A few weeks before his induction in Kinlochbervie, in 1960, he was joined in marriage to Miss Una M Macleod, of Edinburgh, and she was to be a faithful support and helpmeet to him over the years until death did them part. To them was born one son, who died in infancy, and four daughters. To his widow, daughters and sons-in-law we would desire to extend anew our sincere sympathy. We would, also, express our sympathy with his brother in London and his three sisters domiciled north of the border. The Edinburgh congregation has been bereft of a loving, faithful minister and we trust that the One who removed him will, in due time, provide them with another pastor, one after His own heart.

Donald Beaton Macleod entered upon his adult life a seafarer and he thus knew by experience what it meant to arrive at peaceful havens after having weathered mid-ocean storms. He saw menacing, fearful waves

ahead, bearing down on the ship, but, on arrival, only to break themselves over her bow and fo'c's'le head and then spend their remaining energy in the foam astern. His course through life was answerable to that. The storm has now been changed into a calm and the waves thereof are still; he has crossed over to Immanuel's land.

“Then are they glad, because at rest
And quiet now they be:
So to the haven he them brings
which they desired to see”

John MacLeod

The Basis of Spiritual Peace

A Sermon preached by Rev. D. B. Macleod, Edinburgh
on the morning of January 15th, 1985

“And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he showed them His hands and his feet.” Luke 24: 36-40.

We have been left on record in this part of God's word what took place on the resurrection day, when the Saviour broke asunder the bands of death and of the grave; when He rose triumphant over death and the grave. He did that not only for Himself but also for His people. For it is in virtue of Christ's resurrection that His people shall rise in the last day to a glorious resurrection.

As we see from what is recorded here, the disciples were very slow to believe the truth concerning the rising again from the dead of the Son of man. They were witnesses of the awful events that had taken place when He was delivered into the hands of wicked men to be crucified and slain.

There were those of them who had taken the body from the cross, and had carried it to the sepulchre and laid it there. The women who came very early on the first day of the week, came expecting to find, not a risen Christ, but the body of the Saviour, for them came to anoint the body. But the body had already been anointed to the burial, when the woman came and poured upon His head an alabaster box of very precious ointment. They had come too late, for the Saviour was now alive, as He

is alive for evermore and has the keys of hell and of death (Rev. 1: 18). This was the message of the angels to the women. They put this question to them, "Why seek ye the living among the dead?" The message for them was, "He is not here, but is risen; remember how He spake unto you when He was yet in Galilee" (v. 5).

The Saviour Himself had foretold the events that had now taken place, that on the third day He was to rise again from the dead. Yet they were very slow to believe, as we see in connection with Peter, when he came to the sepulchre. "He departed wondering in himself at that which was come to pass." (v.12)

The two who went to Emmaus, as they spoke of the things that had taken place, said to the One whom they knew not, who had joined them there as they walked by the way. "We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel, and beside all this, today is the third day since these things were done." (v.21)

The Saviour then revealed Himself to one and another of His disciples and His followers. There is the instance that is brought before us here in the 36th verse, when we read of the disciples that they were gathered together. "Jesus himself stood in the midst of them and saith unto them, Peace be unto you."

We would seek to notice *first* of all the message with which the Saviour greeted them at this time. Here was their risen Lord, their Saviour, their Redeemer, the One in whom their hope was. The message He had for them was this message: "Peace be unto you". Then *secondly* we may go on to notice the effect of His appearance among them at this time. We are told that "they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit". The Saviour Himself reveals what was in their hearts when He says to them, "Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?" Then *last of all*, the assurance that He gives to them, or the evidence that He gives to them, that He is indeed alive. That was by saying to them, "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when He had thus spoken, He showed them His hands and His feet". And as the Saviour did this on this occasion for His disciples, in order that they might be confirmed in the belief of His resurrection, and that it was indeed Himself, their Saviour, their Redeemer, — "He showed them His hands and His feet," — so He can do it at all times to His people for their encouragement: manifest Himself to them in such a way that they behold His hands and His feet, as the disciples did here when they saw the marks of the nails that were in His hands and in His feet, giving

evidence that this was indeed the One who had suffered on the accursed tree of Calvary.

The message then first of all that the Saviour has for His disciples and followers at this time is one of comfort indeed, when He has to say to them as their risen Lord, "Peace be unto you". The word of God makes it very plain that it is a very different word that God is speaking to sinners who go on in sin. It is not peace that God is speaking to such, but He is declaring that there is no peace to the wicked. "There is no peace, saith my God, unto the wicked." (Isa. 57: 21). As long as sinners go on in unbelief, as long as sinners go on in the broad way that leads to destruction, then there is no message for such, "Peace be unto you". That is not the road of peace; that is not the road of blessing.

It is to those who enter by the strait gate into the narrow way that the Lord speaks in this manner, saying, "Peace be unto you". That was the comforting word that the Saviour had for His disciples after His resurrection, as it was the word that He had for them, before He suffered, when He spoke to them in the upper chamber at Jerusalem. (John 14, 27.) He had many words of comfort to speak to His people there, in view of the solemn transactions that were shortly to be fulfilled, when He would engage in that great work that was given Him to do, making an end of sin, and bringing in everlasting righteousness. Before He suffered, He poured into the hearts of His disciples words of comfort. He had to say to them, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God; believe also in me" (John 14, 1). And He had this to say to them, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid". (John 14, 27.)

Here is One then, speaking words of peace to the tried, sorely tempted hearts of His children, that they might be comforted with the comfort wherewith the Lord alone can comfort His people. The One who is speaking peace here to his followers is the One to whom the name belongs "The Prince of peace". He is the One who made peace between God and man, peace through the blood of His cross.

It is very clear from the word of God that sinners are not at peace with God. God is not at peace with sinners as they go on in the ways of sin, and as long as we go in these ways of sin and death, there is no peace between us and God. God is angry with the wicked every day. There is no peace to such.

Sinners must be reconciled to God if there is to be peace between God and them, and if they are to enter into peace, and enter into the rest that is to be found in Jesus Christ for sinners such as we are. Christ came to

make peace through the blood of His cross. He was to pour out His soul unto death on the accursed tree of Calvary, in order that sinners might be reconciled to God, through the atonement that He made on the accursed tree; for that was the end that Christ had in view, in giving His life a ransom for many, that sinners might be reconciled to God, and that they might experience the peace that is spoken of here, when He said to them, "Peace be unto you". "The peace of God which passeth all understanding" (Phil 4, 7) — that is the peace which the soul needs; that is the peace that our souls need on our way to eternity, that we would be reconciled to God through the blood of the cross. That is the only way of reconciliation between God and man. Apart from the great work of redemption, wrought out by Christ, there is no hope for a sinner, but a sinner continues under the curse of the broken law, and remains exposed to divine wrath and judgment.

But here the Saviour, as the risen Lord, has a message for His disciples, when He has to say to them as He comes unto their midst, "Peace be unto you". This is the One who can speak peace to the needy soul. Here is the One who wrought out the great work of redemption, and who paid the redemption price in His own blood on Calvary's accursed tree. Now He is saying to His disciples, His followers, as He said before He suffered, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you." Now He is to say to them on His resurrection, in revealing Himself to them once more, "Peace be unto you". Peace was to be theirs on the basis of what Christ had accomplished, for there could not be any peace for them, apart from what the Saviour had accomplished on the tree of Calvary.

As that was true concerning them, so it is true concerning ourselves: there is no peace for us but peace through the blood. The blood that was shed on Calvary is the peace-seeking blood of Emmanuel: it speaks peace to the guilty soul because it has effected reconciliation between God and man, through the one offering that was made on Calvary for sin, when Christ suffered there and made an end of sin by the sacrifice of Himself, when He gave His life a ransom for many. (Matt 20, 28.) What a message of comfort this should have been to the disciples on this occasion when the Saviour spoke to them. What comfort they should have drawn from it, as the Saviour Himself spake these words unto them, "Peace be unto you!" what a comfort this would be to a guilty soul, a soul seeking reconciliation through the blood that was shed on Calvary, coming to God through Jesus Christ who is the Way unto the Father, for that soul to know in their own experience this message given to them, "Peace be unto you." "Thy sins, which are many, are forgiven thee." What comfort,

what consolation that would mean for that soul, a soul now at peace with God, reconciled to God, a soul at peace with God as to his state, a soul at peace with God in the enjoyment of the peace which passeth all understanding.

Surely we are to ask ourselves what we know of this peace in our own spiritual experience, whether we have ever come into this peace, to enjoy this peace in our own experience, to enjoy the favour of God and the love of God, for there can be no peace where love is not. These two things go together; peace and love, love and peace. When the love of God is shed abroad in the heart, then that soul knows peace, "the peace of God which passeth all understanding." God is spoken of as "the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep." (Heb 13, 20.) What a blessing then for any poor sinner to be brought into a reconciled state with God, on the basis of the finished work of Emmanuel.

Peace through His blood! How precious is that blood to the soul that is reconciled to God on the ground of that shed blood, the "fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness." (Zech 13, 1.) That is what we need, each one, in our own spiritual experience, to be reconciled to God, to be delivered from being under the curse of the broken law, to be reconciled to God through Jesus Christ. If we are reconciled to God through Jesus Christ, through faith in His name, then Christ will be precious to us. "Unto you therefore which believe He is precious." (1 Pet 2, 7.) Christ was a precious Saviour to His believing people, to His followers, at this time. He was the One in whom their hope was. All their expectation was in Him. Although that hope was tried, severely tried, because of the events that had taken place, yet here was the One in whom their hope was. And the message that He had for them was, "Peace be unto you".

Let us then ask ourselves what we know of the sweetness of this peace, and of reconciliation in our own souls. Surely there is nothing more precious than this, to know in our own spiritual experience what it is to taste of this peace and in tasting of this peace taste of the love of God in Jesus Christ.

But we must go on to notice that when the Saviour appeared on this occasion we read of His followers, of His disciples, "They were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit." He shows what was in their heart when He says, "Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?" Instead of being filled with joy, "they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit". They did not take in at the beginning that this was the Saviour Himself,

that He had risen indeed and that He was now their risen Lord; that the One whom they were looking on was not a spirit without flesh and bones; for the Saviour said "A spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." Christ's arrival was so sudden amongst them. He appeared suddenly in their midst — stood in the midst of them: they thought it was a spirit. They had not yet taken in the reality of His resurrection, that He was indeed alive; that He was alive for evermore; that He had the keys of hell and of death. (Rev. 1, 18.)

Notwithstanding all that He had told them beforehand, they were very slow to lay these things to heart. The enemies of Christ remembered that He had said He would rise the third day. His disciples had forgotten these things. They had to be reminded by the angels that He had said to them, when He was yet in Galilee, "The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again." (v 7.) Here we find fear taking possession of the hearts of the disciples at this time: they were troubled; thoughts were arising in their hearts as to what this appearance was — was it a spirit that had come among in them, one without body, without flesh and bones? That is what it seemed to them. Was this the appearance of an angel, like the two men that stood by them in shining garments at the sepulchre? What was it that was here? It was too much for them; they were unable to take in that this was their Saviour, their Redeemer, their Lord.

How slow the children of God are to take in those things that God is revealing in His word. We know this with regard to the promises of God's word — and how full and how overflowing these promises are! Yet how slow on many occasions the children of God are to embrace these promises, as though there was no substance in them whatsoever. And this is reality: where the promises are, they are all yea and amen in Christ Jesus (11 Cor 1, 20), and are assured to all the saints. Yet through the power of unbelief, how slow the people of God are on many an occasion to lay hold upon the precious promises of God's word! So they have no reality for them, just as the appearance of the Saviour here did not seem to have any reality for the disciples at this time, thinking it was a spirit that they were beholding when the Saviour appeared in their midst; and as we saw in connection with the two on their way to Emmaus, they did not know the Saviour at that time when He walked with them. The Saviour was walking with them on the way to Emmaus, and they had the presence of the Lord with them, and yet they knew it not. No doubt that is true of the children of God also on many an occasion: the Lord is with them when they know it not. Ah, the Saviour will be with His people in their going out and their

coming in, in their lying down and their rising up.

He had to say to His disciples before He left that He would never leave them nor forsake them (Heb 13, 5). Here we have the disciples terrified, affrighted, and supposing that they had seen a spirit. They did not take in that this was the Lord, this was their Saviour who was crucified between two malefactors, who had been laid in the tomb, and now had risen, broken the bands of death and of the grave. He had come forth on the morning of the resurrection, the glorious resurrection. One who is the Saviour and the Deliverer of His people. Here He was coming to comfort, to strengthen and to sustain His disciples. Instead of rejoicing, "they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit." Yet the Saviour had to say to them, "Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?" There was no proper ground for being troubled, or for those thoughts arising in their hearts.

So it is with the children of God. How many times they are troubled! How often do thoughts arise in their hearts, unbelieving thoughts, thoughts that are questioning the Saviour's love to them! Yet the Saviour is saying, "Why are ye troubled?" "Why do thoughts arise in your hearts?" The children of God have not reason in this way to be troubled, or that thoughts should arise in their hearts, as though the love of the Saviour towards them is a changeable thing; that one day His love is set upon them, but that another day He has no love to them. The church was saying that the Lord had forgotten; God had hidden His face from it; but the Lord testifies that it was not so, for He could say: "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb?" He says, "They may forget; yet will not I forget thee; behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me" (Isa 49, 15-16). What reason, then, they have to rejoice in God their Saviour! "Why are ye troubled? Why do thoughts arise in your hearts?" The One Who manifested His love in times past is the same God still, the same yesterday and today and forever. Where He has embraced a poor needy sinner in His love, He will never cease to embrace that one in the love of His heart. Therefore the Saviour says, "Why are ye troubled? Is it a time for thoughts to arise in your hearts?" "Is it a time to be troubled? Is it a time for thoughts to arise in your hearts?" Surely not! Christ is alive. Christ is risen. As far as we are concerned now, He is at the right hand of power. He is "exalted . . . to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins" (Acts 5, 31). "Why then are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?", Christ says to His followers.

Let us go on to notice the evidence that He gives that it is the Lord Himself. He says to them, "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Handle me, and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. When He had thus spoken He showed them His hands and His feet." What further evidence did they require that this was the Saviour Himself, when He showed to them His hands and His feet, bearing the marks of the crucifixion? The nails were put in His hands and in His feet, showing to them the evidences of what He had wrought for them. For He went forth to Calvary to suffer and to die in the room and stead of the guilty. He had gone forth bearing the load of their sin and of their guilt, to make an end of that sin for ever, and to bring in everlasting righteousness. (Dan 9, 24.) Here was evidence enough for them: the Lord was showing them His hands and His feet. He was showing to them that He was indeed their risen Lord, the One Who had vanquished death in His death, who had made an end of sin and brought in everlasting righteousness, so that all who believe in Him are blessed in Him, and will enjoy all the blessings that are laid up in Him, who is a storehouse of all good for His people. He had the marks of the nails in His hands and His feet, as He had the mark of the spear in His side.

This is the One who went forth to sufferings unto death, who cried, as we were singing in the 22nd Psalm: "They pierced my hands and my feet", who could say,

"I all my bones may tell; they do
upon me look and stare."

He could count His bones because of the sufferings that He was enduring on the cross of Calvary

"I all my bones may tell; they do
upon me look and stare.

Upon my vesture lots they cast,
and clothes among them share."

(Ps. 22, 16-18)

Who can understand what Christ had to suffer, not only in the awful agony of His bodily sufferings upon the tree, but in the awful sufferings of His soul, as He suffered, the just in the place of the unjust, as he endured the wrath of God against Him, which caused Him to cry out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt. 27, 46). So that the Saviour could say now to His disciples. 'Behold my hands and my feet.' "I have finished the work that was given me to do" (John 17, 4), and your peace is now a fruit of the dispeace that was mine, as I suffered upon the tree. There is peace through my blood. I have reconciled you to God

through the blood of my cross. Therefore peace is yours. "Peace I give unto you," the Saviour could say to them even before He suffered, in view of the certainty of His finishing that work that was given Him to do.

"He showed them His hands and His feet." What a blessed experience for a poor sinner here in this world, to get a view of the crucified One, to behold the Lamb of God bearing the wrath of God against sin, to see in that One the Divine Redeemer, suffering in our nature on the accursed tree of Calvary. What a blessed experience for the soul, beholding the Lamb of God by faith, beholding Him bearing their own sin, and making an end of their own sin for ever, in the great work that He accomplished when He gave His life a ransom for many.

"He showed them His hands and His feet." What an overwhelming matter that would be, if we obtained a faith's view of the suffering Lamb of God! What a melting experience that would be, through the love of God shed abroad in our hearts! For this is where the greatest display of the love of God is, in the giving of His own Son, His beloved Son, over unto death, even the accursed death of the cross, in order that a number whom no man can number of this fallen race of ours might be delivered from death and from hell.

We are told that they believed not for joy. They were brought to this now, to rejoice in this One, yet though their hearts were filled with joy, they still were left with doubt, while they yet believed not for joy.

What a robber unbelief is! Whenever unbelief comes it must rob the people of God of much of their comfort and of the consolations of the gospel. Therefore we are to seek to be delivered from the power of unbelief, that unbelief would not in this way rob us of the comfort that is set before us in the truth of God's word, but that with believing hearts we would come to that word, and embrace the word, and embrace Christ, who is the centre and substance of that word, to find there consolation for our own souls, and blessing for our own souls on our way to eternity. What could give more comfort to the souls of these disciples, these followers of Christ, than this message "The Lord is risen indeed." (Luck 24, 34.) Christ is alive! He is alive: the grave has no longer any power over Him. He is now risen, and soon He was to ascend to the right hand of power (Matt 26, 26), where He is now and shall be until He will come "in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." (Matt 24, 30).

Our hope must be in One who is not now still here on earth, but who is exalted at God's right hand. Our hope must be in the ever living One at God's right hand, and in Him we will find life and salvation, for He has wrought out eternal redemption through His cross, and He bears in

heaven itself, in His glorified humanity, the marks of that great work, in His hands and in His feet and in His side.

There followed a concluding prayer for the removal of the darkness of unbelief, and for the power and presence of the Holy Spirit.

Psalms 85 was sung in conclusion, beginning from v 8.

Lecture on the Sabbath

by Rev. N. Cameron, Glasgow

Continued from Page 327 of the last issue

II. Let us now consider who are commanded to keep it holy.

(1) We have the father of the family commanded strictly to keep the Sabbath holy, and also to see to it that neither son, nor daughter, man-servant, nor maid-servant, nor his beast of burden, nor the strangers within his gates did any work on it save works of necessity and mercy. If the father should profane the Sabbath and ordered his son, etc., to do any unnecessary work on that day, the son, or daughter, or man-servant, or maid-servant etc., should not obey him, for God alone is the ruler of man's conscience. Each one should tell father, or master, "if you transgress the law of God contained in the fourth commandment, you have no right to ask me to do it; for God commands me not to do any work on the Sabbath day. You should remember that sin is the transgression of the law, and that the wages of sin is death."

(2) The magistrates of our cities and towns are called city fathers, and are bound to obey the fourth commandment, and to see to it that all within their gates, their own families, as regards their own sons and daughters and servants, and also to restrain all, even strangers, or aliens, who may live within their bounds from desecrating God's holy day. I know the most of those in authority in our cities and towns will scoff at the idea, yea rather the fact, of their responsibility in this matter. But will God, who will be, and who is now, their judge, be put off by a scornful laugh at Sabbath Day profanation, or will it serve their turn to say with Cain: "Am I my brother's keeper?" I am very sure that parents, masters and magistrate will see their desperate madness in desecrating the Lord's Day themselves, and in giving their consent to others to do so either in time or in eternity. The Sabbath-breaker may walk about with a high head, laugh at such as make conscience of doing their best to keep it holy; but you will yet see that scoffer, who is a tyrant in commanding to profane it with his head low enough when he will have to answer for his conduct

to the august Judge of eternity. O what pangs of agony will seize the conscience of these men on that day! "Consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver."

(3) Kings, who should be nursing fathers to the Church of God, their Counsellors, both Houses of Parliament, and all in authority under them, are bound to keep the Sabbath day holy, and to prohibit any one who may be within their gates, i.e. so far as their authority reaches, from doing any work save that of necessity and mercy. This will include strangers, or aliens, as well as the natives of this kingdom.

How are men in the highest places of authority in this nation keeping the Sabbath day? The fact is, with very few exceptions, they themselves are the chief transgressors, and their example is followed by the vast majority of the people. Instead of making laws to safeguard the fourth commandment, they allow all manner of profanation to go without any restraint, notwithstanding the many salutary enactments on their statute books for the preservation of the Sabbath; statutes enacted by men of conscience, who had the fear of God in their hearts, and who were the builders of the British nation. But the Author of the moral law has no respect of persons. He is King of kings, and Lord of lords, and He will assuredly make kings and lords to give an account of their Sabbath desecration; but the fact that they do not do their duty will not excuse others who may now be following their example. "Be wise now therefore O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve God with fear." Nehemiah set a good example before all governors, as we find him recording:— "In those days saw I in Judah some treading winepresses on the Sabbath, and bringing in the sheaves, and lading asses; as also wines, grapes and figs, which they brought into Jerusalem on the Sabbath day; and I testified against them in the day wherein they sold victuals. There dwelt men of Tyre also therein, which brought fish, and all manner of ware, and sold on the Sabbath to the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem. Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil is this that ye do, and profane the Sabbath day? Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city . . . Why lodge ye without the wall? if ye do so again, I will lay hands on you." This he said to the aliens from tyre, so that they came no more. Is this not a really good example for the Government of this country? May the Lord open their eyes, and give them grace and courage to do their duty. For God has not changed in His regard for the Sabbath, and He will assuredly, in His own time, punish men and nations for desecrating it.

To be continued in the next issue.

What wise man would bring fishes out of the water to feed in his meadows, or send his oxen to feed in the sea? As little are the regenerate meet for heaven, or heaven meet for them. *Boston*

Glory follows affliction, not as the day follows the night, but as the Spring follows Winter; for the Winter prepares for the Spring. So doth sanctified affliction prepare the soul for glory. — *Sibbes*

Oh, how sweet are the sufferings of Christ! God forgive them that raise an ill report on the sweet cross of Christ! Our weak and dim eyes look only to the black side of the cross, and this occasions our mistakes concerning it. They that can take it cheerfully on their backs shall find it just such a burden as wings to a bird or sails to a ship. — *Rutherford*

We are too apt to bite the stone that hurts us, and not mind the Hand that threw it. — *Reynolds*

Notes and Comments

Religious Education concessions to political correctness

Objections to the exclusive teaching of Christianity in RE in schools sound so intellectually persuasive that few are able to withstand them. So says Peter Murcott, Isle of Man, in his document *The Way We Should Go*, as reported by *Christian Herald*. The drift to multi-faith instruction, he argues, resulted from damaging concessions to political correctness among other things. He complains rightly that a political correctness which objects to the teaching of Christianity as indoctrination of children does not hesitate to use its own brand of indoctrination, namely, telling children that there is nothing to choose between the various creeds.

In Scotland the same situation prevails. As our Religion and Morals Committee made clear to the Scottish Education Department last year, in response to a Report on RE by HM Inspectors of Schools, it is quite unacceptable that true Christianity should be ruled out of court because it proclaims its own uniqueness.

It is tragic that the rising generation should be subjected to the Satanic lie that no religion can claim absolute truth and that all religions are equal. May the Lord hasten the day when the young people nationwide will learn and believe the truth declared by the Saviour: "I am the way, the truth and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." NMR

"Toronto Blessing" ready to curse Westminster Chapel

Dr R. T. Kendall, the present minister of Westminster Chapel, London, where Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones ministered until 1968, has gone public on his acceptance of the Charismatics' Toronto Blessing. He thinks that it is a divine blessing indeed, for in March 1994 he wrote in the foreword to a book called *Heaven and Hell* by Charismatic Alex Buchanan, "The 'Toronto Blessing' (which is of God) must lead those who have experienced it to the burden of this book if they are to be mature and truly begin to shake the nations." And then in the October 1994 edition of the Charismatic magazine *Renewal*, Dr Kendall spoke of his contact with Holy Trinity Church, Brompton, which earned a place in the national headlines for its wild acceptance of the Toronto Blessing. So what does Dr Kendall think of the appalling scenes of their so-called public worship, where worshippers are falling on the floor making noises like animals? "I have publicly affirmed what is happening at Holy Trinity, Brompton," he says.

Dr Kendall also spoke of his own personal experience of the Blessing. When a member of the Holy Trinity staff prayed for him, Kendall is quoted as saying, "Within a minute or so, suddenly my mind became so relaxed. The nearest I can think of to describe it was when I had sodium pentathol years ago when I had major surgery. Yet I wasn't unconscious. I felt myself falling forward. There I was on the floor in front of all my deacons and their wives." Would he like Toronto to come to Westminster Chapel? Sadly yes: "It may be that is not what God is calling us to do, but I can tell you we are open to it. We will be a bit disappointed if we don't get into it up to the hilt."

Sadly, this dire situation at Westminster Chapel is not altogether unconnected with Dr Lloyd-Jones himself. In May 1986 our Synod issued a resolution warning against the second-blessing teaching contained in some of Dr Lloyd-Jones' books. For a vindication of the propriety of that warning, we have two reliable witnesses. The first witness is the article by Roy Middleton in volume 92 of the *Free Presbyterian Magazine* (pp. 149 ff.), where historical and literary evidence was marshalled forth in irrefutable manner. The second witness is the witness of present providence. For we cannot help but think that if Dr Lloyd-Jones had been more faithful in his own day, and had condemned outright all the distinctives of Pentecostalism and the Charismatic movement, things would not now be in so grave a condition at Westminster Chapel. May God grant its present minister spiritual light to see through the Satanic deception of the curse from Toronto.

KMW

Divorce Law Reforms

The Divorce Law Reform Bill which is to come before Parliament in the course of its next session has already stirred up much controversy at the centre of which is the Lord Chancellor. It grieves us much that we should find ourselves in disagreement with him over the matter. As we understand it — and many others — the introduction of the changes proposed will make divorce even easier than it is at present and that can only lead to the further undermining and demeaning of the divine ordinance of marriage. It will also accelerate the breaking down of the family unit. The Lord Chancellor does not see it that way and that he does not leaves us very perplexed. The Westminster Confession of Faith which all office-bearers in our Church — past and present — subscribe to, on ordination, and the whole doctrine of which they solemnly promise to maintain, assert and defend, to the utmost of their power and in their station, is clear and explicit on this matter: *Although the corruption of man be such as is apt to study arguments unduly to put asunder those whom God hath joined together in marriage: yet, nothing but adultery, or such wilful desertion as can no way be remedied by the Church, or civil magistrate, is cause sufficient of dissolving the bond of marriage: wherein, a public and ordinary course of procedure is to be observed; and the persons concerned in it not left to their own wills, and discretion, in their own case.* How can we possibly fit the concept of “no-fault divorce” into that statement? Lord Mackay denies that he is making divorce easier and because of the present state of the legislation which allows ‘quickie divorces’ within three or four months he may be right, but it is only relatively so. The abolition of the five-year waiting period and the introduction of the one-year period of ‘reflection and consideration’ would perhaps be a step in the right direction if one were sure that it would result in marriages being saved, but since divorcing couples are not forced into mediation, it is not clear that the provision will be of much help. Is it not to be feared that people will enter into marriage knowing that if things start to go wrong the union can be dissolved after a year without either party being blamed for the break-up. The Lord Chancellor’s proposals have stirred up so much political controversy that it is possible that Bill will never pass into law. Lords and Commoners are one day to give an account unto God and it would be their wisdom in matters such as these to conform to His will as the supreme Lawgiver. Is it not the height of folly to tamper with His law when He has plainly stated: “What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder.”?

Mission News

In the last letter received from Sister Anne Zekveld in addition to describing the work done at the Mbuma Hospital she tells of visits to two out-lying districts where the people are too far away from Mbuma to attend the services there.

I quote from Anne's letter: "Our monthly visits to Mjena continue where there are a good number of people who regularly attend the services there. When my sister was here we went to visit three of these families. I was much encouraged by what by what I saw especially in one home where the whole family was together. There was a very pleasant homely atmosphere and we were duly served with a tasty meal of rice and goat meat and home-made buns for dessert. The whole family joined in and one of the children asked the blessing before we started. As a rule children do not eat in the same place as the adults and men and women do not eat together except in Christian homes and I was glad to see this family group. After the meal, one of the children brought out the Bible and psalm books. One could see that this family was accustomed to having worship together and the children joined whole-heartedly in the singing. I am sure the mother, Ma Khanye, takes the lead, but the father is not antagonistic and does attend our monthly meetings quite regularly. It would appear as though the Lord is working among some of our people at Mjena. He works by His Word and Spirit to His own honour glory.

We also have started with monthly gatherings at the Dlawa school, another area far removed from preaching stations and where some people were requesting services. We have been there on three occasions now and it is nice to see the many children who come. This week there was about forty in attendance, with only two men, twelve women and the rest children. Mr Gagisa takes these services. He is the retired schoolteacher who is helping us with our language study. His sight has deteriorated so much that he cannot even read large print any more. So Simon or Thembelani, two young Christian men who work at the hospital go along to read for him. The meetings are quite informal, starting with the singing of different psalms to get them used to the tunes and words and to allow for late-comers. Sometimes Gagisa or Thembelani will explain the words or ask the people questions about a psalm. It is a good way to get to know the people and of finding out how much they are understanding. Then we have an opening prayer and a short Bible reading and a short meditation on the truth and then singing. Then they are given an opportunity to recite their verses which the children very much enjoy.

The Dlawa people are quite different from the Mjena people in that there are quite a number of illiterate people among the adults. Many depend on their children to read. This encourages the reading of the Bible aloud so that

all the family can have the benefit of hearing it.

Next month, all being well, we hope to have some news of Ingwenya and Kenya. JN

Situation in Malawi and Kenya

For the interest of our Church people, the Foreign Missions Committee at a recent meeting decided that part of a letter written by the Convener to the Mbumba Zending Committee in Holland should be printed in the Magazine. Our Dutch friends had requested information on the situation in Malawi and Kenya. On the information being conveyed to them, they, recognising our need of further financial help in order to get the hospital fully operational, responded in their usual generous way. They made a special donation of Fl45,000 and we are deeply grateful to them.

As far as MALAWI is concerned, it was decided by the Synod that we should dispense with the services of the three men who had been responsible for catechising and holding services. That was done because, sadly, we no longer had any confidence in them. You will remember that it was Ds. Veldman who found and engaged them in the first place, and that it was he, also, who placed them on a payroll. This was done without any consultation with our Committee but we agreed, at the time, and in the circumstances, to fall in with the arrangement made. We have, as you know, not hitherto been able to settle an ordained missionary in Malawi and we feel now that, until such time as the Lord will provide one, we should just maintain a presence in the country. Accordingly we have decided to retain possession of the mission house in Blantyre which at present is being looked after by a caretaker and a watchman. As we did not wish the men who took the services for us — Phiri, Mwase and Tembo — to suffer hardship as a result of sudden termination of employment, the Committee, and Synod, agreed that we would continue to pay their salaries for a year and that we would leave them to occupy the houses and churches which had been built. That seemed to us the most charitable and Christian way of dealing with a very difficult situation. A year's salary amounts to approximately £720, and the buildings were not costly, so that it is important to bear in mind that we are not dealing here with vast sums of money. There is a young man called Nedson Banda, at present a student at a Malawian Bible College, who could possibly be useful to us in the future. At present we are helping in the payment of his fees. Meantime we shall require to send out sufficient money to Malawi to cover the costs outlined.

In KENYA the hospital is now operational and already has been instrumental in saving many lives. There are 40 beds but an average of 70 to 90 patients. Our staff are working extremely hard and have little time off. As you will know, Dr Christine MacDonald has had to return home due to ill health and both she and her husband have now tendered their resignations

to the Foreign Missions Committee. The Clerk of our Committee is due to go out to Kenya shortly for a period of six weeks and as he is a doctor with years of experience of working in Africa he will be able to help at the hospital.

We are very hopeful that the work will continue and extend in Kenya. When we last met, the Committee engaged the services of Mr Ian MacLean who belongs to our Farr congregation. He will, the Lord willing, go out to Kenya towards the end of this year* and will take over as Administrator/Treasurer in place of Mr Donald MacDonald. Mr MacLean is a young man in whom we have the utmost confidence. His wife is a trained midwife and her presence at Sengera will also greatly help. A Dr E de Jong, who lives at Stiens, in the Netherlands, has offered his services to the Committee and, if he is found to be suitable, will be ready to go to Kenya in July 1996. Above all, we have now the prospect of a young ordained minister of the Gospel from Scotland being settled in Kenya by the Summer of next year, the Lord willing.

You will recall that I wrote to you in May drawing attention to the particular needs of the Kenya mission. We have had to spend a lot of money recently. The security fence is now complete and the generator is ready to be bolted to its foundation. We also had problems with the water supply and that involved the hiring of a surveyor. Now, having found water, and having dug a well, we have to install a submersible pump to transport it to the storage tank. Extra accommodation will be required to house the minister and doctor who will be arriving next year, the Lord willing, and until such time as the hospital becomes fully viable the shortfall in running costs will have to be met from mission funds.

* Mr and Mrs Ian MacLean and family will actually be going out to Kenya in January, 1996. (D.V.)

Church Information

Binding of Magazines

We have now managed to get a bookbinder who is willing to bind our magazines. The cost per volume is dearer as they are professional binders, but the finished product is very nice. The cost per volume is £10.50 with a title piece on the spine or £8.50 without a title piece. It would be beneficial if the staples were removed before the magazines are sent in as this will incur further costs. Anyone interested should send complete volumes, with name and address attached, to: *The Free Presbyterian Bookroom, 133 Woodlands Road, Glasgow G3 6LE.*

N.B. It is intended to wait until we have a few volumes before they are sent to the binders so there may be a few months' delay in returning them.
M. Morrison, Bookroom Manager.

Day of Humiliation and Prayer

It was agreed at the Synod "that Wednesday, 6th December be appointed as a day of humiliation and prayer throughout the Church, for the pouring forth of the Holy Spirit, the Lord willing."

Editor *pro tempore*

As the Editor, the Rev Neil Ross, has agreed, at the request of the Foreign Missions Committee, to stay on in Kenya until Mr and Mrs Ian MacLean and family arrive there (D.V.) in mid-January, the next two issues of this Magazine will be prepared for the press by the Rev K D MacLeod, Free Presbyterian Manse, Ferry Road, Leverburgh, Isle of Harris.

Through lack of space other articles have been held over and will appear in the next issue.

Acknowledgement of Donations

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

Foreign Mission Fund: Anon., £100; Anon., England, £200; Anon., Shildaig, £20.
Eastern Europe Fund: Anon., Shildaig, £30.

The Treasurers of the following congregations wish to acknowledge the following donations:—

Aberdeen: "Friend of the Cause", £50, for pulpit supply (Sustentation Fund) per envelope in the plate.

Dumbarton: Anon., £15; Anon., per envelope in plate; £10, per MH, both for Property Fund.

Inverness: Anon., £45; Anon., £20; Anon., £10; Anon., £30; Anon., £100; all for Sustentation Fund and all per envelopes in the plate; Anon., £15, for Tape Fund, per DM McD; £30, per Rev DMB; £20, per envelope in plate; both for use of church for wedding; RM, £15, "Where most needed"; Anon., £30, for Church Funds.

Kinlochbervie: ER, £30 for Manse decoration.

North Tolsta: Anon., £50, "In memory of my mother"; Anon., £20; Anon., £5; both for Sabbath School outing; Anon., £20, for TBS; Anon., £20, "Where most needed"; Friend of the Cause, Breasclate, £10; Friend of the Cause, Tolsta, £10; both for Communion expenses.

Portree: Friends, in memory of a dear mother, £200; Friend, £20, both per SYM and for Congregational purposes; DN McF, £50, for Congregational purposes, per envelope in plate; Friend, £15, for Sustentation Fund, per SYM; Friend, £10, Where needed, per Rev FM; Anon., £10, for Bus Fund, per envelope in plate.

Staffin: Anon., £50, Where most needed, per envelope in the plate.; Friends to help with Church printing, £50.