

The Free Presbyterian Magazine and Monthly Record

Vol 101

December 1996

No 12

Christmas-keeping and the Reformed Faith

A review article on *Christmas-Keeping and the Reformed Faith* by *David C. Cason*. Published by Presbyterian Heritage Publications, USA. Thick booklet, 64 pages, price £2.25. Available from The Free Presbyterian Bookroom, 133 Woodlands Road, Glasgow, G3 6LE.

IN Scotland, the Reformation was more thorough than in other countries, as was confirmed by the Scottish Church's rejection of unscriptural, pseudo-Christian and Romish "holy days", although these were being observed by Reformed churches in other countries. When the General Assembly of the Scottish Church had considered the Second Helvetic Confession of 1566, it wrote to Beza that the Confession was perfectly scriptural, except in what it said about such festivals as that of "our Lord's nativity... These festivals at the present time obtain no place among us; for we dare not religiously celebrate any other feast-day than what the divine oracles have prescribed..."

Today, we see even some who claim to be Reformed, and once rejected Christmas-keeping, now happily participating in not only the usual festivities but also in such religious observances as Christmas services and carol concerts. The pressure of popular opinion makes some of them observe what they once avoided. Their fear of being thought odd if they hold to former convictions makes them cave in and go with the crowd. Others justify their Christmas-keeping by religious arguments - and in this they are bolstered by professedly Reformed ministers who defend Christmas.

Last year, Professor David J. Engelsma of the Protestant Reformed Churches (PRC) gave a plausible defence of Christmas-keeping in the PRC magazine, *The Standard Bearer*. His arguments have been answered by David W. Cason, a teacher in Dallas, USA, in his booklet, *Christmas-Keeping and the Reformed Faith*. Cason argues closely, and in our judgement effectively refutes the points made by Prof. Engelsma.

The observance of Christmas by the PRC, says Prof. Engelsma, "is a long and honourable tradition." Tradition, of course, cannot establish what is right in the worship of God, and in any case, says Cason, Prof. Engelsma is condemned out of his own mouth when he says elsewhere that "Jesus pitilessly condemned this holding of traditions as hypocrisy".

Prof. Engelsma adds that the Synod of Dordt *required* that "the Reformed churches *shall observe*, in addition to the Sunday, also Christmas...", and saw no conflict between the Synod's requirement and the regulative principle. He argues that Christmas-keeping is permissible because the regulative principle allows the church to gather for worship on other days besides Sabbath — and that the Westminster Assembly allowed the observance of days of public fasting and thanksgiving.

What Prof. Engelsma does not show, and cannot show, is that God, in His Word, actually requires the Church to observe Christmas Day. Indeed, as Cason points out, Prof. Engelsma denies any such origin for the practice, when he says, "There is no basis in Scripture for the Reformed churches' commemoration of Christ's birth on December 25." But the professor is quite mistaken when he also asserts that there is no basis in Scripture for the days of public prayer and thanksgiving which the Westminster Assembly allows. As Joel 2:15 shows, there are occasions when it is the duty laid upon the church and nation by God, to "sanctify a fast" and to "call a solemn assembly".

"Prof. Engelsma," says Cason, "professes to believe in Christmas-keeping as a matter of liberty," that is, as Cason explains, "the liberty of the government of the church to require Christmas-keeping." But, of course, in granting this liberty to the government of the church, Prof. Engelsma denies liberty to her subjects should they *not* wish to keep Christmas. "This," Cason rightly says, "is the very opposite of the Biblical and confessional doctrine of Christian liberty."

Cason concludes that Prof. Engelsma's "arguments are both erroneous in themselves, and based upon principles harmful to the liberty of Christ's church, the purity of God's instituted worship, and the kingly prerogatives of Christ. Furthermore, in presenting his arguments, Prof. Engelsma has made misrepresentations of important reformed figures, doctrines and events... The professor's defence is likely both to mislead many [in the reformed community], and to perpetuate the darkness and confusion which have overtaken the church of Christ today with regard to those truths."

We believe that this valuable publication will be helpful to many. □

Sermon

The Manner in Which the Salvation of the Soul is to be Sought

*Jonathan Edwards*¹

(Slightly edited to remove some obscurities in punctuation, vocabulary, and syntax. - Editor)

Part 2 - Conclusion

TEXT: "*Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he,*" Genesis 6:22

Note: In the first part, the preacher, after commenting on the building of the ark, stated: "The doctrine here is that we should be willing to engage in, and go through, great undertakings, in order to our own salvation.²...I shall particularly handle this doctrine... under the three following propositions:

First, there is a work or business which must be undertaken and accomplished by men, if they would be saved.

Secondly, this business is a great undertaking.

Thirdly, men should be willing to enter upon and go through this undertaking though it be great, seeing it is for their own salvation."

The preacher's handling of the first two propositions having been given in the last issue, we now give the concluding half of the sermon. - Editor

III. The third proposition is that men should be willing to engage in and go through this business, however great and difficult it may seem to them, seeing it is for their own salvation.

They must be willing to engage in it because *a deluge of wrath will surely come*. The inhabitants of the old world would not believe that there would come such a flood of waters upon the earth as that of which Noah told them, though he told them often; neither would they take any care to avoid the destruction. Yet such a deluge did come; nothing failed of all those things of which Noah had forewarned them. So there will surely come a more dreadful deluge of divine wrath on this wicked world. We are often forewarned of it in the Scriptures, and the world, as then, doth not believe any such thing. Yet the threatening will as certainly be accomplished, as the threatening denounced

¹ See the last issue for a biographical sketch of Jonathan Edwards.

² The term "salvation" is used not only in its sense of the initial deliverance of the sinner from the guilt and power of sin, but also includes the ultimate glory of the redeemed in heaven.

against the old world. A day of wrath is coming; it will come at its appointed season; it will not tarry, it shall not be delayed one moment beyond its appointed time.

Secondly, men must undertake this great business because *all such as do not seasonably undertake and go through with it will surely be swallowed up in this deluge*. When the floods of wrath shall come, they will universally overwhelm the wicked world: all such as shall not have taken care to prepare an ark, will surely be swallowed up in it; they will find no other way of escape. In vain shall salvation be expected from the hills, and from the multitude of mountains; for the flood shall be above the tops of all the mountains. Or if they shall hide themselves in the caves and dens of the mountains, there the waters of the flood will find them out, and there shall they miserably perish. As those of the old world who were not in the ark perished (Genesis 7:21 and 23), so all who shall not have secured to themselves a place in the spiritual ark of the gospel, shall perish much more miserably than the old world. Doubtless the inhabitants of the old world had many contrivances to save themselves. Some, we may suppose, ascended to the tops of their houses, being driven out of one storey to another, till at last they perished. Others climbed to the tops of high towers; who yet were washed thence by the boisterous waves of the rising flood. Some climbed to the tops of trees; others to the tops of mountains, and especially of the highest mountains. But all was in vain; the flood sooner or later swallowed them all up; only Noah and his family, who had taken care to prepare an ark, remained alive. So it will doubtless be at the end of the world, when Christ shall come to judge the world in righteousness. Some, when they shall look up and see him coming in the clouds of heaven, shall hide themselves in closets, and secret places in their houses. Others flying to the caves and dens of the earth, shall attempt to hide themselves there. Others shall call upon the rocks and mountains to fall on them, and cover them from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb. So it will be after the sentence is pronounced, and wicked men see that terrible fire coming, which is to burn this world forever, and which will be a deluge of fire, and will burn the earth even to the bottoms of the mountains, and to its very centre. "For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn to the lowest hell, and shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains," Deuteronomy 32:22. I say, when the wicked shall, after the sentence, see this great fire beginning to kindle, and to take hold of this earth; there will be many contrivances devised by them to escape, some flying to caves and holes in the earth, some hiding themselves in one place, and some in another. But

let them hide themselves where they will, or let them do what they will, it will be utterly in vain. Every cave shall burn as an oven, the rocks and mountains shall melt with fervent heat, and if they could creep down to the very centre of the earth, still the heat would follow them, and rage with as much vehemence there, as on the very surface.

So when wicked men, who neglect this great business in their lifetime and are not willing to go through the difficulty and labour of this work, draw near to death, they sometimes do many things to escape death, and put forth many endeavours to lengthen out their lives at least a little longer. For this end, they send for physicians, and perhaps many are consulted, and their prescriptions are punctually observed. They also use many endeavours to save their souls from hell. They cry to God; they confess their past sins; they promise future reformation; and, Oh what would they not give for some small addition to their lives, or some hope of future happiness! But all proves in vain: God hath numbered their days and finished them; and as they have sinned away the day of grace, they must even bear the consequence, and forever lie down in sorrow.

Thirdly, men must undertake this great business because *the destruction, when it shall come, will be infinitely terrible*. The destruction of the old world by the flood was terrible; but that eternal destruction which is coming on the wicked is infinitely more so. That flood of waters was but an image of this awful flood of divine vengeance. When the waters poured down, more like spouts or cataracts, or the fall of a great river, than like rain; what an awful appearance was there of the wrath of God! This, however, is but an image of that terrible outpouring of the wrath of God which shall be forever, yea forever and ever, on wicked men. And when the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the waters burst forth out of the ground as though they had issued out of the womb (Job 38:8), this was an image of the mighty breakings forth of God's wrath, which shall be, when the flood-gates of wrath shall be drawn up. We may suppose that the wicked of the old world repented that they had not hearkened to the warnings which Noah had given them, when they saw these dreadful things, and saw that they must perish! How much more will you repent your refusing to hearken to the gracious warnings of the gospel, when you shall see the fire of God's wrath against you, pouring down from heaven, and bursting on all sides out of bowels of the earth!

Fourthly, men must undertake this work which is necessary in order to their salvation because *though it be a great work, yet it is not impossible*. What was required of Noah, doubtless appeared a very great and difficult

undertaking. Yet he undertook it with resolution, and he was carried through it. So if we undertake this work with the same good will and resolution, we shall undoubtedly be successful. However difficult it be, yet multitudes have gone through it, and have obtained salvation. It is not work beyond the faculties of our nature, nor beyond the opportunities which God giveth us. If men will but take warning, and hearken to counsel, if they will but be sincere and in good earnest, be seasonable in their work, take their opportunities, use their advantages, be steadfast and not wavering; they shall not fail.

Application. The use I would make of this doctrine is to exhort all to undertake and go through this great work, which they have to do in order to their salvation, even although the work seem ever so great and difficult. If your nature be averse to it, and there seems to be very frightful things in the way so that your heart is ready to fail at the prospect; yet seriously consider what has been said, and act a wise part. Seeing it is for yourselves, for your own salvation; seeing it is for so great a salvation, for your deliverance from eternal destruction; and seeing it is of such absolute necessity in order to your salvation, that the deluge of divine wrath will come, and there will be no escaping it without preparing an ark; is it not best for you to undertake the work, engage in it with your might, and go through it, though this cannot be done without great labour, care, and difficulty, and expense? I would by no means flatter you concerning this work, or go about to make you believe that you shall find an easy light business of it: no, I would not have you expect any such thing. I would have you sit down and count the cost; and if you cannot find it in your hearts to engage in a great, hard, labourious, and expensive undertaking, and to persevere in it to the end of life, pretend not to be religious. Indulge yourselves in your ease; follow your pleasures; eat, drink, and be merry; even conclude to go to hell in that way, and never make any more pretenses of seeking your salvation. Here consider several things in particular.

How often you have been warned of the approaching flood of God's wrath. How frequently you have been told of hell, heard the threatenings of the word of God set before you, and been warned to flee from the wrath to come. It is with you as it was with the inhabitants of the old world. Noah warned them abundantly of the approaching flood, and counselled them to take care for their safety, (1 Peter 3:19, 20). Noah warned them in words; and he preached to them. He warned them also in his actions. His building the ark, which took him so long a time, and in which he employed so many hands, was a standing warning to them. All the blows of the hammer and axe, during the progress of that building, were so many calls and warnings to the old

world, to take care for their preservation from the approaching destruction. Every knock of the workmen was a knock of Jesus Christ at the door of their hearts: but they would not hearken. All these warnings, though repeated every day, and continued for so long a time, availed nothing.

Now, is it not much so with you, as it was with them? How often have you been warned! How have you heard the warning knocks of the gospel, Sabbath after Sabbath, for these many years! Yet how have some of you no more regarded them than the inhabitants of the old world regarded the noise of the workmen's tools in Noah's ark!

But possibly it may be objected by some, that though it be true they have often been told of hell, yet they never saw any thing of it, and therefore they cannot realize that there is any such place. They have often heard of hell, and are told that wicked men, when they die, go to a most dreadful place of torment; that hereafter there will be a day of judgement, and that the world will be consumed by fire. But how do they know that it is really so? How do they know what becomes of those wicked men that die? None of them come back to tell them. They have nothing to depend on but the word which they hear. And how do they know that all is not a cunningly-devised fable?

We answer: the sinners of the old world had the very same objection against what Noah told them of a flood about to drown the world. Yet the bare word of God proved to be sufficient evidence that such a thing was coming. What was the reason that none of the many millions then upon earth believed what Noah said, but this, that it was a strange thing, that no such thing had ever before been known? And what a strange story must that of Noah have appeared to them, wherein he told them of a deluge of waters above the tops of the mountains! Therefore it, is said that "Noah was warned of God of things not seen as yet," Hebrews 11:7. It is probable, none could conceive how it could be that the whole world should be drowned in a flood of waters; and all were ready to ask, where was water enough for it; and by what means should it be brought upon the earth. Noah did not tell them how it should be brought to pass; he only told them that God had said that it should be: and that proved to be enough. The event showed their folly in not depending on the mere word of God, who was able, who knew how to bring it to pass, and who could not lie.

So the word of God will prove true in its threatening a flood of eternal wrath to overwhelm all the wicked. You will believe it when the event shall prove it, when it shall be too late to profit by the belief. The word of God will never fail; nothing is so sure as this: heaven and earth shall pass away, but the word of God shall not pass away. It is firmer than mountains of brass. At the

end, the vision will speak and not lie. The decree shall bring forth, and all wicked men shall know that God is the Lord, that He is a God of truth, and that they are fools who will not depend on His word. The wicked of the old world counted Noah a fool for depending so much on the word of God, as to put himself to all the fatigue and expense of building the ark; but the event showed that they themselves were the fools, and that he was wise.

Consider, secondly, *that the Spirit of God will not always strive with you; nor will his long-suffering always wait upon you.* So God said concerning the inhabitants of the old world, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh; yet his days shall be a hundred and twenty years," Genesis 4:3. All this while God was striving with them. It was a day of grace with them, and God's long-suffering all this while waited upon them: "Which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing," 1 Peter 3:20. All this while they had an opportunity to escape, if they would but hearken and believe God. Even after the ark was finished, which seems to have been but little before the flood came, still there was an opportunity; the door of the ark stood open for some time. There was some time during which Noah was employed in laying up stores in the ark. Even then it was not too late; the door of the ark yet stood open. About a week before the flood came, Noah was commanded to begin to gather in the beasts and birds. During this last week still the door of the ark stood open. But on the very day that the flood began to come, while the rain was yet withheld, Noah and his wife, his three sons, and their wives, went into the ark; and we are told that "God shut him in," Genesis 7:16. Then the day of God's patience was past; the door of the ark was shut; God himself, who shuts and no man opens, shut the door. Then all hope of their escaping the flood was past; it was too late to repent that they had not hearkened to Noah's warnings, and had not entered into the ark while the door stood open.

After Noah and his family had entered into the ark, and God had shut them in, after the windows of heaven were opened, and they saw how the waters were poured down out of heaven, we may suppose that many of those who were near came running to the door of the ark, knocking, and crying most piteously for entrance. But it was too late; God himself had shut the door, and Noah had no license, and probably no power, to open it. We may suppose, they stood knocking and calling, "Open to us! Open to us! O let us in! We beg that we may be let in!" And probably some of them pleaded old acquaintance with Noah; that they had always been his neighbours, and had even helped him to build the ark. But all was in vain. There they stood till

the waters of the flood came, and without mercy swept them away from the door of the ark.

So it will be with you, if you continue to refuse to hearken to the warnings which are given you. Now God is striving with you; now he is warning you of the approaching flood, and calling upon you Sabbath after Sabbath. Now the door of the ark stands open. But God's Spirit will not always strive with you; his long-suffering will not always wait upon you. There is an appointed day of God's patience, which is as certainly limited as it was to the old world. God hath set your bounds, which you cannot pass. Though now warnings are continued in plenty, yet there will be last knocks and last calls, the last that ever you shall hear. When the appointed time shall be elapsed, God will shut the door, and you shall never see it open again; for God shutteth, and no man openeth. If you improve not your opportunity before that time, you will cry in vain, "Lord, Lord, open to us," Matthew 25:11, and Luke 23:25. While you shall stand at the door with your piteous cries, the flood of God's wrath will come upon you, overwhelm you, and you shall not escape. The tempest shall carry you away without mercy, and you shall be forever swallowed up and lost.

Consider, thirdly, *how mighty the billows of divine wrath will be when they shall come*. The waters of Noah's flood were very great. The deluge was vast; it was very deep; the billows reached fifteen cubits above the highest mountains; and it was an ocean which had no shore; signifying the greatness of that wrath which is coming on wicked men in another world, which will be like a mighty flood of waters overwhelming them, and rising vastly high over their heads, with billows reaching to the very heavens. Those billows will be higher and heavier than mountains on their poor souls. The wrath of God will be an ocean without shores, as Noah's flood was: it will be misery that will have no end. The misery of the damned in hell can be better represented by nothing, than by a deluge of misery, a mighty deluge of wrath, which will be ten thousand times worse than a deluge of waters; for it will be a deluge of liquid fire, as in the Scriptures it is called a lake of fire and brimstone. At the end of the world all the wicked shall be swallowed up in a vast deluge of fire, which shall be as great and as mighty as Noah's deluge of water. See 2 Peter 3:5, 6, 7. The wicked will have mighty billows of fire and brimstone eternally rolling over their poor souls, and their miserable tormented bodies. Those billows may be called vast liquid mountains of fire and brimstone. And when one billow shall have gone over their heads, another shall follow, without intermission, giving them no rest day nor night to all eternity.

Consider, fourthly, *this flood of wrath will probably come upon you suddenly, when you all think little of it, and it shall seem far from you.* So the flood came upon the old world. See Matthew 24:36. Probably many of them were surprised in the night by the waters bursting suddenly in at their doors, or under the foundations of their houses, coming in upon them in their beds. For when the fountains of the great deep were broken up, the waters, as observed before, burst forth in mighty torrents. To such a sudden surprise of the wicked of the old world in the night, probably that alludes in Job 27:20, "Terrors take hold on him as waters; a tempest stealeth him away in the night." So destruction is wont to come on wicked men, who hear many warnings of approaching destruction, and yet will not be influenced by them. For "he that is often reprov'd, and hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy," Proverbs 29:1. And "when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape," 1 Thessalonians 5:3.

Consider, fifthly: *If you will not hearken to the many warnings which are given you of approaching destruction, you will be guilty of more than brutish madness.* "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib." They know upon whom they are dependent, and whom they must obey, and act accordingly. But you, so long as you neglect your own salvation, act as if you knew not God, your Creator and Proprietor, nor your dependence upon Him. The very beasts, when they see signs of an approaching storm, will betake themselves to their dens for shelter. Yet you, when abundantly warned of the approaching storm of divine vengeance, will not fly to the hiding-place from the storm, and the covert from the tempest. The swallow and other birds, when they are forewarned of approaching winter, will betake themselves to a safer climate. Yet you who have been often forewarned of the piercing blasts of divine wrath, will not, in order to escape them, enter into the New Jerusalem, of most mild and salubrious air, though the gate stands wide open to receive you. The very ants will be diligent in summer to lay up for winter: yet you will do nothing to lay up in store a good foundation against the time to come. Balaam's ass would not run upon a drawn sword, though his master, for the sake of gain, would expose himself to the sword of God's wrath; and so God made the dumb ass, both in words and actions, to rebuke the madness of the prophet, 1 Peter 2:16. In like manner, you, although you have been oft warned that the sword of God's wrath is drawn against you, and will certainly be thrust through you, if you proceed in your present course, still proceed, regardless of the consequence. So God made the very beasts and birds of the old world to rebuke the

madness of the men of that day: for they fled to the ark while the door was yet open: which the men of that day refused to do; God hereby, thus signifying, that their folly was greater than that of the very brute creatures. Such folly and madness are you guilty of, who refuse to hearken to the warnings that are given you of the approaching flood of the wrath of God.

You have been once more warned to-day, while the door of the ark yet stands open. You have, as it were, once again heard the knocks of the hammer and axe in the building of the ark, to put you in mind that a flood is approaching. Take heed therefore that you do not still stop your ears, treat these warnings with a regardless heart, and still neglect the great work which you have to do lest the flood of wrath suddenly come upon you, sweep you away, and there be no remedy.

Luther and the Reformation

Rev. D. J. MacAskill

To mark the 450th anniversary of the death of Martin Luther (1483-1546) we reprint the following article which was written by Mr MacAskill almost 60 years ago. An obituary of Mr MacAskill appears on page 366.

ROME was not destined to fall in a day as it was not built in a day. It was very gradually that Luther came to see the light, as the Spirit of God was illuminating him more and more. When he attacked Tetzels sale of indulgences he did not mean to sever his connection with the Papal See. He still fondly cherished the belief that the Pope was his father in God and the Vicar of Christ on earth. He appealed to the Vatican to obtain redress for his grievances against Tetzels and his followers in their God-dishonouring sale of indulgences. Needless to say he obtained no relief from that direction for his conscience, but on the contrary was buried under a mountain of curses and excommunications.

When the Papal bull was fulminated against him, "the monk that shook the world" burned the bull and declared the Bishop of Rome to be the Antichrist and Man of Sin. The world was aghast at Luther's boldness in publicly committing the Papal bull to the flames.

Thus, in this dramatic manner, a new era was ushered in and liberty rose from the ashes of the Vatican document. The nine-centuries-long dominion of darkness and superstition was ended, (we hope, for ever), by the agency of one weak man. Yet, he was not alone for God was with him. He had more than human strength and courage. He had the Rock of Ages as his strength

and support in this most memorable action. He was now more than "a weed in the Pope's garden".

It was far from Dr. Martin Luther's original intention to be a schismatic, or to cause a division, but his hand was forced by the march of events, until he found himself compelled to stand alone against the world, like Athanasius in the early Church. Even his most intimate friends kept aloof and feared to be entangled in his downfall.

The Reformer's only source of power and consolation was prayer. In this he excelled. He prevailed with God, and over all his enemies and the assaults of the kingdom of darkness. His hands were full of business, as he was continually writing and studying and lecturing in addition to preaching. Yet on one busy day he spent three hours in prayer to facilitate his work. A saying of his was that to have prayed well was to have studied well. He poured out his heart to the Almighty in secret prayer as to a friend in heaven, and yet with an awe of His infinite majesty upon his spirit. Some of his prayers were overheard and they can be read as they were spoken. We can see what apostolic fervency he used in his petitions to Heaven. This was the secret of his success as a Reformer although he encountered fearful opposition.

So Luther was used by God to begin the restoring of His Church to its primitive purity, just as it had been when Christianity was disseminated by the Apostles in the first century. Nine dreary centuries had intervened, rightly called by historians the Dark Ages.

As a doctor of divinity he had graduated in the text books of the schoolmen such as Aquinas and Duns Scotus, but when the light of the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ shone in his soul, he forsook the way of justification by works, and embraced justification by faith as the article of belief by which the Church either stood or fell. This he now preached to the common people and to his students at Wittenberg. The quiet German town was stirred into life and no little strife was raised by his contentions for truth. There were many powerful adversaries to the gospel thus restored, such as Dr. Eck, a furious Romanist protagonist, and the Papal Legate before whom Luther appeared to vindicate his opinions.

A diet of princes met at Worms to suppress heresy in the Empire. Before it Luther appeared although warned by his friends not to obey the summons as it would mean certain death. When asked to retract his doctrines he read out a summary of them in Latin and German and then uttered the historic words, "Here I stand. I can do no other. God help me." In the midst of the vast assembly of temporal and ecclesiastical powers he remained unabashed, although, like the Apostle Paul, he had been "in much weakness" on the

preceding night in his private lodging. He had been wrestling for victory on his knees, and consequently in the presence of earthly kings he was calm and undismayed.

During his stay in the castle of Wartburg, to which he had been taken by the Elector of Saxony for protection, he used his leisure in translating the Bible into German. By thus giving the people access to the Scriptures the battle for the Reformation was won. Although prohibited by law, his writings were carried to England in bales of merchandise. Pious merchants bought his writings in bulk and distributed them throughout Europe. Tyndale later translated the Bible into English, for which he suffered martyrdom. Luther, however, evaded, in the providence of the Most High, all attempts upon his life, and lived to see the flourishing of the movement away from Rome which he had set on foot.

Obituary

The Rev Donald John MacAskill, MA

IT is now well over a year since the Rev Donald John MacAskill passed away and it is a matter of regret that this period of time should have elapsed before the appearance of an obituary in the pages of our Magazine. The delay is partly due to the difficulty that has been experienced in gathering sufficient biographical information, especially that which was related to his spiritual pilgrimage. Most of his contemporaries pre-deceased him. Had his brother John been spared longer, he would, no doubt, have provided all the information required but three short weeks after Mr MacAskill's death he was to follow him to the house appointed for all living. It is not on account of any unwillingness on the part of Mr MacAskill to speak of the Lord's dealings with his soul in bringing him from darkness to light that we have this dearth of information, for he quite often referred to it; it is just that the opportunity of writing it down at the time was let slip and in the absence of anything formally written by himself one now feels rather hesitant in putting on paper what is almost solely drawn from memory.

Born in Stornoway on 30th July, 1909, Mr MacAskill was, on his mother's side, the great grandson of Alexander MacIver of Ranish who, in his day, was much revered as a man of God. He stood firm on the side of the Truth in 1893 and was foremost among those who formed the nucleus of the Free Presbyterian congregation in Stornoway.

As a matter of interest, the first entry in the Record of the Stornoway

Kirk-Session is dated 16th February, 1894. The interim Moderator was the Rev Donald Macfarlane, and Alexander MacIver and Murdo MacFarquhar were the ruling elders who were present to make up the quorum. The Clerk, in whose handwriting the minute is entered, was John MacLeod, then a divinity student but at the time temporarily a teacher of Classics in the Nicolson Institute. He was later to be the first Free Presbyterian Church minister in Lochbroom before moving to Kames, from where, in 1905, he was persuaded to move to Edinburgh - some would say enticed - in order to occupy a professorial chair and in due time become the Principal of the post-1900 Free Church's College in Edinburgh.

Mr MacAskill's grandfather, Donald MacIver, was for long an elder in the Stornoway congregation and also served for some time as a missionary in South Harris and North Uist. His father's people came from Sandwick and were also connected with the Free Presbyterian Church from 1893.

Although Mr MacAskill did not, as already noted, formally leave on record any biographical material, he did, however, towards the end of his life, write many letters, and in one addressed to the writer he, in passing, briefly referred to his conversion. "My brother-in-law", he wrote, "drove us to the pre-Reformation church at Rodel. It made me sick to see, on the old walls, an image of Christ on the cross. That was not the living Christ that came into my soul after the November communion in St Jude's when I was twenty years of age. I had often wept in Stornoway when listening to the Rev Ewen MacQueen on the promises and on the love of Christ, but I never got such full assurance of God's love in the three Persons, and peace of conscience and joy in the Holy Ghost, as the Shorter Catechism says, till my third year at the University." We thus gather - and this is what is confirmed by one of his contemporaries still with us - that Mr MacAskill was outwardly circumspect from his youth. The same source confirms that he was in soul trouble prior to the occasion mentioned in the letter and that he was earnestly seeking relief in the means of grace over the days of that communion season but that he did not obtain what he sought. It was afterwards, and in his room in his lodgings, that the portion of Scripture - "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee" - brought comfort to his stricken soul. "I wrote home to mother", his letter states, "that I thought that I had passed from death to life, and from the power of Satan to God's dear Son, by the Spirit of adoption by Whom we say, 'Abba, Father'. 'For 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'." Mr MacAskill's life, walk and conversation over the many

years that he was to be spared, made it evident, even to the world, that he was indeed one who had passed from death to life.

After completing his secondary education at the Nicolson Institute, Mr MacAskill matriculated at Glasgow University in 1927 and four years later graduated with an honours degree in Classics. In the meantime, he was, on 30th August, 1930, accepted as a member in full communion by the Stornoway Kirk-session and on 17th September, 1931, the Rev Malcolm Gillies reported to the Outer Isles Presbytery "that the Stornoway Kirk-Session had examined Mr Donald MacAskill and had agreed to recommend him to the Presbytery as one who should be received as a student of the Church." He explained that this student was to sit his final examination in Arts during the next week, that he had spent a goodly part of the last three years in Glasgow, and that it would be more convenient for him to be translated to the Southern Presbytery for reception and trials. Subsequently Mr MacAskill offered his services to the Jewish and Foreign Missions Committee with a view to going out to Rhodesia as a teacher but the Synod, meeting in May 1933, was informed that, as he was not suitably qualified for the post, it had been decided not to send him. He was eventually, on the 2nd October, 1934, after having completed his divinity studies, licensed to preach the Gospel by the Outer Isles Presbytery. Later that year, on 12th December, he was ordained and inducted to his first charge, that of the South Harris Congregation. There being, as yet, no manse built to house the minister, he stayed in the home of Mr and Mrs Norman MacKay, Geocrab. From that base, he shepherded a scattered congregation, regularly walking many miles, mostly over rough village footpaths, to visit homes and keep services. Much to the regret of the people, he left South Harris in 1948, moving across the sound to the neighbouring island of North Uist. After seven years in that charge he was translated to Lochcarron from where he removed to Raasay after a period of time. In 1968, he accepted a call addressed to him by the Uig Congregation and so returned to his native island.

In 1974, however, mainly for health reasons, Mr MacAskill retired from the active ministry and took up residence in Stornoway. In 1988, when our Home of Rest in Leverburgh was opened, he and his wife were among the first residents to arrive, and it was there that he was to be suddenly called into His Master's presence in 1995.

He was married twice; first to Mary Mackay, of Stornoway, who died in 1962, and then to Catherine MacLeod, of Raasay, who passed away in 1992. Both of them were worthy helpmeets.

Mr MacAskill regarded the office of the ministry as one which carried

with its solemn obligations, and throughout the years of his ministry he was deeply conscious of his need of Divine help in the discharge of them. He was well aware of his own limitations as far as preaching gifts were concerned but what he lacked in that direction was more than compensated for by his faithfulness to the Truth and to his ordination vows - and after all is said and done, it is the *faithful* servant who is to receive the Lord's commendation at His coming. The trumpet, even if he was not able to sound it as expertly as others, did not give an uncertain sound, and his hearers could not honestly say that life and death had not been set before them.

He loved the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland and its testimony and when it came under attack, as it did on a number of occasions over the course of his ministry, his attachment to it remained unshakeable. In 1989, for instance, Mr MacAskill had no difficulty in deciding that it was his duty to stand by the Church of his fathers when it was called upon to witness against the blasphemy of the Romish mass and the total impropriety of Free Presbyterian office-bearers being present where such heaven-provoking idolatry was being practised.

A peaceable and guileless man, he will be remembered (to quote the Synod tribute) as one who was "a diligent pastor, much loved and respected by the godly in all his charges, one whose aim ever was to bring souls placed under his care to a saving knowledge of Christ. The day shall declare the measure of his success. His approach to the throne of grace was marked by a solemnity which indicated that he was aware of the holiness and majesty of the Divine Being to Whom he was then drawing near."

His death, on Wednesday, 8th March, 1995, was sudden. In the forenoon he had, with the help of a kind friend in Leverburgh, visited the shop and attended to other mundane matters before returning to the Home. When he did not, as usual, arrive in the dining room for his lunch a member of the staff, on investigation, was to find him sitting upright in a chair but inanimate, his spirit having returned unto Him who gave it. Death came without warning but he who was summoned was not found unprepared; in the twinkling of an eye, he was absent from the body and present with the Lord. The Matron and staff at the Leverburgh Home of Rest were greatly attached to him and much lamented his passing.

The removal of Mr Macaskill means that a voice often heard praying for the good of Jerusalem is now silent, and that is to our loss. To the end he was alert, keeping abreast of current affairs, and, having an intense interest in all matters relating to Christ and His cause, he earnestly longed for the coming of His kingdom. Like those of David, the son of Jesse, his prayers are now

ended and shall yet be answered: "Let the whole earth be filled with His glory; Amen, and Amen."

(Rev) *John MacLeod*

Obituary of Mr John MacAskill, Elder, Stornoway

MR John MacAskill, as mentioned in the foregoing obituary, was a younger brother of the Rev D. J. MacAskill. He also was born in Stornoway and he departed this life on 3rd April, 1995, seventy-six years of age. Jackie, as he was popularly known, was apparently circumspect from his youth up. The parental home at 2 Garden Road was one much frequented by the Lord's people at communion seasons and at other times and this early association with those who were of the 'salt of the earth' doubtless had its own beneficial effect upon him. His mother was a woman of strong and independent character who did her utmost to bring up her children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. His father was known as one who lived 'an upright life and regularly attended the means of grace' but it was not until he was sixty-eight years of age that he showed 'a definite and personal concern for his soul's salvation'.

It is not possible to give any detailed account of John MacAskill's spiritual experience in connection with his translation from the power of darkness and into the kingdom of God's dear Son. He was himself reticent when it came to divulging these matters to others and all that can be said is that the change appears to have been gradual. A brother and a sister, older than himself, both of considerable promise, died of tuberculosis while still in late adolescence and Jackie often spoke feelingly of these sad and solemn bereavements. In the early Sixties he underwent a major surgical operation when, it would appear, his life was for some time in the balance and that apparently further brought his mind to bear on eternal realities. Like others before him, however, he could not date his spiritual birthday. That may well be the explanation for the delay in professing his faith in Christ. He eventually appeared before the Kirk-Session in February, 1979, and at that communion sat for the first time at the Lord's Table.

He was elected to the eldership in 1982 and fulfilled the duties of that office with zeal and devotion. For many years he performed the duties of Clerk of Session and Deacons' Court and kept the records of both courts in a most meticulous manner. Latterly, when his memory began to fail, he found it necessary to hand over these duties to a younger person.

He was a schoolteacher by profession. Like his brother he was a graduate of Glasgow University but on the breaking out of hostilities in 1939 he was called up to serve in the Forces. After the war he was for a period teaching in Golspie and at the time attended the Rogart Church. Thereafter he took up a post in the Sir Edward Scott School in Tarbert and, after some years there, he came to the Nicolson Institute where he was to remain until he retired as an Assistant Principal Teacher in the English Department.

Jackie MacAskill was a Christian gentleman; a true-hearted Free Presbyterian who ever sought to uphold and maintain the Church's witness and testimony. He, like his brother, knew where he stood in 1989 and he thus remained in the Church within which his grandfather and great-grandfather had been such prominent pillars in their day, while others, with similar antecedents, turned their backs on it. Within his own sphere, he laboured to advance the interests of Christ's kingdom. His mental abilities were such that he was able to express his mind in a clear and logical manner and his gifts in this direction, sanctified by grace, were usefully employed in His Master's service over the years in supplying congregations throughout the bounds of the Presbytery and sometimes further afield. His labours in this connection - always most willingly undertaken - were very acceptable to his hearers as also were his contributions to communion Friday fellowship meetings and for that reason, among others, his departure is keenly felt.

Highly esteemed by his colleagues and well-known and respected throughout the Church and the wider community, his unexpected removal from time to eternity was much lamented. The 3rd day of April, 1995, was the Monday of the Achmore communion and it was while standing in the precentor's place and in the act of leading the singing of certain verses from Psalm 27 that he suddenly passed away. His desire was fulfilled and his soul departed to enter that realm of existence where 'the spirits of just men made perfect' behold and admire the 'beauty of the Lord' and where, unwearied, they glorify Him in offering praise without ceasing.

We would anew express our sympathy with Ancris, the sister who has sustained the loss of two beloved brothers within a short space of time. Our prayer is that the God of her parents and that of her brothers, who served Him so faithfully here in time, would be her God also and that she would be comforted and sustained by Him.

"Help, Lord; for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men."

(Rev) John MacLeod

Book Review

Directions for Christians by the *Rev John Willison*, Dundee

Published by Reformation Press, 11 Churchill Drive, Stornoway, Isle of Lewis HS1 2NP. Booklet, 32 pages, price £1.80 (p&p free). Available direct from Reformation Press or The Free Presbyterian Bookroom, 133 Woodlands Road, Glasgow G3 6LE.

READERS of *The Free Presbyterian Magazine* will be already familiar with the name of this author. One of the great evangelical ministers of the Church of Scotland in the 18th Century he became well known in Scottish households as the author of several works which were designed to promote the practice of true godliness among the people. His *Mother's Catechism* (reprinted by *Free Presbyterian Publications*), composed with the interests of the young at heart, particularly reveals just how 'apt to teach' he was.

In this new booklet we have in print again directions, based on Scripture portions, which, if carefully attended to, will have the same beneficial effect on the behaviour of professing Christians in the present as they had in the past. At a time when the line of demarcation between the Church and the world is being obscured - if not obliterated in certain quarters - the publication of this booklet is to be welcomed and we wish it a very wide circulation.

"Begin and end every day with God", is a sample of the counsel given by Willison. "Let prayer be the key to open the heart to God in the morning and lock it against all His enemies at night."
(Rev.) J. McL

Notes and Comments

The sin of Sodom and the national Church

HOW low the Church of England has sunk when it recently allowed a service of celebration in Southwark Cathedral for the 20th anniversary of the Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement, which campaigns for the ordaining of homosexual priests by the Church. The weak response of the Archbishop of Canterbury and other members of the ecclesiastical hierarchy has dismayed those in the Church who are trying to uphold Biblical morality.

On the other hand, members and supporters of the Movement have spoken robustly in defence of the immoral lifestyle of sodomites, which they have the audacity to label as "Christian". At the same time some of them, and their supporters, have spoken quite viciously against their critics. To even breathe a

word of criticism of this wicked practice which God explicitly condemns is to be branded by them as "homophobic". None spoke so solemnly against this sin as the Apostle Paul, but on the other hand he rejoiced to see some who were caught up in such uncleanness delivered from it. "Such were some of you, but ye are washed...", he said with gratitude and compassion. And this is the blessing which every genuine minister of the gospel wishes and seeks for all kinds of sinners, including sodomites.

Unborn babies may feel pain at six weeks

FURTHER evidence of the humanity of the unborn child is seen in a report last month by the Commission of Inquiry into Foetal Sentience, chaired by Lord Rawlinson. It concludes that unborn babies may be able to feel pain as young as six weeks, because the foetus responds to sensory stimulation, and most certainly at 24 to 26 weeks. Overwhelming support for the belief that all age groups of foetus feel pain is found among anaesthetists, according to a survey in September. Dr John Wyatt, a consultant in neo-natal paediatrics in London, condemned what he sees as a "conspiracy of silence" among doctors over whether the unborn feel pain. "It seems remarkable there is so little interest in foetal development when we are spending billions on uncovering the origins of the universe," he added.

But need we wonder at the barbarity involved in inflicting pain on the foetus in the process of aborting it, when that murderous process has as its end nothing less than the killing of the unborn child?

"But there is a God in heaven." And will He not take to do with a nation which, with its eyes open, spurns His commandment, "Thou shalt not kill."

Alcopop sales are soaring and are set to treble in five years

THE most popular innovation in alcoholic drinks in the 1990s has been "alcopops", that is, fruit flavoured drinks which are laced with alcohol. It seems clear, despite their denials, that some brewers and retailers are targeting a young market. Health officials are "very concerned that alcopops encourage under-age drinking". In October a survey showed that 12-year-olds claimed that they now prefer the taste of alcoholic lemonade to traditional soft drinks.

The drink trade is notorious for pushing for profits at the cost of moral values, as is demonstrated by its determined opposition to the Christian Sabbath - but this latest development displays a cynicism which beggars belief. School children have too many problems to cope with already without having brewery barons enticing them to become alcohol drinkers.

Mission News

ZIMBABWE

Ingwenya Mission

IT was good to hear that Rev. A. Ndebele is out of hospital and convalescing in the family home in Ingwenya. Mr. Ndebele is improving in health but still very weak. It will be a relief to Mrs. Ndebele to have him at home as the hospital does not provide special diets and Mrs. Ndebele went three times a day to the hospital with suitable meals. We trust that the Lord will restore him to his former strength and vigour, if it is His will. Prayer is still required.

Mr. Donald MacDonald, Dr. Christine, and their little Sarah were visiting Ingwenya recently, and everyone was delighted to see them. The weather was extremely hot, for October is the hottest month of the year there.

It was an added anxiety that the old borehole was giving trouble and there was a shortage of water. The borehole is beyond repair and a new one is being sunk. There are several old wells and boreholes at Ingwenya which may be made use of in a crisis and we may be sure this was done. A project was afoot some months ago to have water piped from the Ingwenya Dam to the Mission but it had fallen through. However, Rev. John MacLeod, Mr Ian MacLean (senior), Mr. Donald MacDonald and Mr. Mziya took up the project again and it is hoped that the water will be flowing in some week's time at a cost of £4000.

The houses at Ingwenya are in a state of disrepair and it is hoped when it is convenient that Mr. Ian MacLean, administrator at Sengeru Mission, Kenya, may be seconded from Kenya to oversee the repair work.

A young lady, a friend of Anne Zekveld, is giving voluntary assistance in the John Tallach School for a few weeks. The secondary and primary pupils are sitting examinations at present. We wish them every success.

Mbumba Mission

Everyone was glad to welcome Anne Zekveld back to Mbumba for a few months after her furlough in Canada. It is hoped that Miss Jessie Coote will come to Mbumba during December and remain for five or six weeks, perhaps for longer if she can be spared from Sengeru, Kenya. Louise Leiper may then be able to go on furlough. It has been estimated that four trained nurses and an additional doctor is required. During the past year the staff found the work in the Mbumba hospital very stressful owing to staff shortages and the extraordinary malarial epidemic and other serious illnesses. Sister Margaret Macaskill is on furlough in Scotland and is enjoying a well-earned rest.

Anne writes that Rev. P. Mzamo recently preached a very instructive sermon on Mark 1:15, "Repent and believe the gospel," giving a good explanation of what true repentance is. Anne adds, "We need the applying work of the Holy Spirit for it to be effective." She adds, "May the Lord yet be pleased to call able, Spirit-filled young men to the ministry. The need is great." J.N.

KENYA

Sengera Mission

Rev John Goldby and his family are settling into their new house. It is expected that Dr. de Jong and his family will move into their new house within two or three weeks. The new office/workshop block is completed, and good progress is being made in erecting the new child welfare clinic.

Shortage of water is a concern. Not only is there an increased drain on the existing supply by extra mission staff but also there has been comparatively little rain this season. A large underground reservoir is being constructed in the compound in the hope of accumulating a supply when the heavy rains come.

The Kuria group has recently erected two church building. It is hoped that someone from our Sengera Mission will be able to visit them again this month to conduct services, God willing. N.M.R.

Eastern Europe Mission Visit

IN the kind providence of the Lord, Mr Edward Ross and myself have returned safely from our visit to Eastern Europe. On the whole it was a successful visit, and we hope and pray that there will yet be evidences of spiritual fruit resulting from our small endeavour.

On the outward journey I met Mr Ross and our laden van at Ramsgate late on Monday evening, 21st October. The vehicle carried 2.2 tons of Bibles, New Testaments, Bible calendars, Christian literature, (including copies of Boston's *Fourfold State* in Russian), medicines and clothing. I am indebted to Dr Tony Martin for kindly driving me to Ramsgate from London, where I had been assisting at the Communion in our congregation there.

We disembarked at Oostende next morning at 5.30 and motored on through Belgium and Germany in the hope of reaching Regensburg by late evening. We made good progress until we had a tyre blow-out near Regensburg. We could not but reflect on how we must be continuously

dependent on the Keeper of Israel for our constant preservation. Next morning, in Regensburg, we discovered that another tyre was also damaged, and had the tyres replaced, but lost much time.

By Thursday morning we reached our first drop-off point, the home of pastor Istvan, in Letavertes, Hungary. We then pushed on to the Hungarian - Romanian border at Bors, but our progress was suddenly impeded. The customs officials at the Romanian side refused to let us go through Romania to Moldova, claiming that we required another document, although the Romanian Embassy in London had said that this particular document was not necessary. We were told to go back through Hungary and go directly into Ukraine via the border crossing at Cop. However, the Hungarian customs refused to let us go by that route without our being cleared for it by the Hungarian Embassy in London; and that could not be done at such short notice. After going back and fore to negotiate with both Customs departments we found ourselves stranded, so it seemed, in no-man's-land. We then succeeded in contacting the British Embassy in Bucharest. The British Consul kindly interposed with the Romanian authorities, and eventually, after almost 12 hours' delay, we were allowed to proceed into Romania.

After a good but tiring drive through beautiful Romania we reached Kishinev in Moldova in the early hours of Saturday morning. We received a warm welcome, even at that unsocial hour, from Mr Gregory Katz, a Christian Jew who is our contact in the city. As well as being a university lecturer he also pastors a group of Christian Jews and oversees the running of an orphanage. A large proportion of the clothing was designated for the orphanage, so after a short sleep we unloaded it, together with literature, Bibles and calendars, which Mr Katz and his congregation distribute.

We had to press on through Moldova into Ukraine and were greatly relieved to reach Kiev that evening. We are deeply indebted to Mr Igor Belosyrov and his mother for their warm welcome and great kindness. On Sabbath, a dozen of us met for public worship in the Ilchenko home in Borispol, when I preached on the nature, necessity and evidences of the new birth. An interesting question and answer session followed the service. It is very kind of Mr and Mrs Ilchenko to open their home for this purpose.

On Monday we had to get clearances from the Customs and other government departments in Kiev so that we could unload our vehicle. This process took two and a half days. We are exceedingly grateful to Pastor Grechenko for organising our entry into the country, to Mr Igor for his constant help, and to Pastor Grechenko's daughter, Luba, for her invaluable assistance in our dealings with the various officials. We were then able to visit

Pastor Grechenko's church, and various needy families who have contacted us, and distribute Bibles, calendars, medicines and clothing.

The next Sabbath was spent in Odessa, 300 miles due south from Kiev. We were very kindly lodged and generously cared for in the home of Mr Igor Zadorozniy and his wife. His daughter Inna and her husband Dimitry were also present for our stay. They, and the group who meet with them regularly for worship, have been in correspondence with the Church, are studying the Westminster Confession of Faith, and wish to be connected with the Church. They were delighted to receive two copies of Boston's *Fourfold State*. We spent some hours on Saturday discussing church principles and leading doctrines of the faith, as well as reformed teaching on the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper. On Sabbath about 20 of us, including some boys and girls, met together in their home for a service, when I preached on "...those things which are most surely believed among us," Luke 1:1. After the service we had a talk about various points of doctrine.

It was with regret that we parted from the Zadorozniy family in the early hours of Monday morning. Our aim was to reach our last contact, Pastor Laszlo at Dobrin (near the border between Ukraine and Hungary), by evening. This we succeed in doing, despite getting lost in the darkness and because of lack of road signs. Mr and Mrs Laszlo kindly gave us a hot meal and even pressed us to remain for the night, but we were concerned about crossing the border at Cop. It was with great relief that we crossed over and then settled down for the night in Hungary. Thereafter it was a case of pressing towards home, and with the good hand of God upon us we arrived safe and well on the evening of Thursday, 8th November.

The prayers of the Lord's people, that we would "have a prosperous journey by the will of God", have been answered, and for this we would seek to be humbly thankful. We hope and pray that their prayers for the Lord's blessing on the work will yet be answered more and more.

Neil M. Ross

Church Information

Induction of the Rev John Goldby, MA, at Sengera, Kenya

THE Synod agreed in May, 1996, that the Rev John Goldby be released from his charge in Scotland in order to serve the Church as an ordained missionary in Kenya, and it was left with the Zimbabwe Presbytery and the Jewish and Foreign Missions Committee to make arrangements for his settlement in his

new charge. Our mission in Kenya does not have the status of a 'sanctioned charge' and there was, therefore, no Call from a congregation to be placed in Mr Goldby's hands. It was, however, agreed that an induction service would be arranged and that the normal procedure adopted in settling ministers would be adhered to as far as was possible in the circumstances.

The Presbytery, accordingly, decided that the Rev John Goldby would be inducted on Wednesday, the 25th day of September, 1996, in the Sengera church. It was agreed that the Rev A. Ndebele and Mr B. Mziya would travel to Kenya and that two members of the Jewish and Foreign Missions Committee, the Rev John MacLeod and Mr Ian MacLean, would also be present to make up the quorum. Regrettably, on account of injuries sustained in Zimbabwe as a result of being knocked down by a bus, Mr Ndebele was not able to go, and the Rev P Mzamo agreed to go in his place.

The Zimbabwe Presbytery duly met on the day appointed. Mr B Mziya was appointed Officer of Court and after the return of the Edict, attested as having been duly served, he was instructed to go to the main door of the Church and there make the usual proclamation three times. This being done and there being no objectors, the Rev P Mzamo, as Moderator of the Presbytery, preached an appropriate discourse from Romans 1, verse 16, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, but also to the Greek."

After Mr Mzamo brought this part of the service to a close, the Clerk *pro tempore*, the Rev J. MacLeod, read a narrative of the proceedings which led to this induction taking place and then, at the request of the Moderator, read to Mr Goldby the Questions appointed to be put to ministers before their induction to a pastoral charge. To these questions Mr Goldby returned satisfactory answers and immediately thereafter he signed the Formula in the presence of the congregation. The Moderator then, after engaging in prayer, did, in the name of the Presbytery and by the authority of the Divine Head of the Church, admit the Rev John Goldby to the pastoral charge of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland's Mission in Kenya.

The Rev J MacLeod, at the Moderator's request, then addressed, in turn, the newly inducted minister and the assembled congregation. Messages of good will from various people were then read and intimated, and after the singing of some verses of a psalm the proceedings were brought to an end. The Rev John Goldby shook hands with the people as they left the Church.

After the service soft drinks and cakes were distributed to all present; the children, in the nearby school, and the adults, within the church. We are grateful to the ladies of our Mission staff for making this provision.

It was reckoned that over 500 souls were present at the service, of whom more than half were children. Some adults came from as far as Kuria, which is over two hours' drive away; others walked considerable distances in order to be present. Some said that they were very impressed by what they saw and heard and we can only hope that the impression will remain. This door has been opened to us in Kenya, and now that a minister of the Gospel is settled there, we hope and pray that his labours will be greatly blessed so that, in the not too distant future, it will be said, "What hath God wrought!"

(Rev) *John MacLeod*, Clerk *pro tem*

Meetings of Presbyteries (D.V.)

NORTHERN: At Dingwall on Tuesday, 18th February, 1997, at 2.00 pm.

SOUTHERN: At Glasgow on Tuesday, 18th February, 1997, at 6.00 pm.

WESTERN: At Laide on Tuesday, 17th December, at 6.00 pm.

SKYE: At Portree on Tuesday, 11th February, 1997, at 11.00 am.

OUTER ISLES: At Stornoway on Tuesday, 10th December, at 1.00 pm.

AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND: At Auckland on Friday, 24th January, 1997, at 2.30 pm.

Day of Humiliation and Prayer

IT was agreed at the meeting of Synod in May, that Wednesday, 11th December, be kept as a day of humiliation and prayer throughout the bounds of the Church, to pray, and confess our national and personal sins, "and to cry to God for divine and gracious intervention in His way and to His glory."

THEOLOGICAL CONFERENCE - 1996

THE THEOLOGICAL CONFERENCE will be held in Inverness Free Presbyterian Church as follows, D.V.

Tuesday, 3rd December

2.30 pm: *Alexander Henderson*, Rev. K. D. MacLeod, Leverburgh

7.00 pm: *The Church of Rome at the Bar of History*, Rev J MacLeod, Stornoway. (This meeting will be held in public)

Wednesday, 4th December

10.00 am: *The Toronto Blessing*, Rev. K. M. Watkins, London

2.30 pm: *Personal Piety*, Rev. Alex. McPherson, Perth

7.00 pm: *The Need for Creeds and Confessions*, Rev. Donald MacLean, Glasgow. (This meeting will be held in public)

(Rev) *D.J. MacDonald*

Secretarial / Administrative Assistant

Applications are invited for the full-time position of Secretary / Administrative Assistant to the Church's General Treasurer, to be based in Glasgow. In order to fulfil the wide-ranging duties envisaged for this role, the applicant should be:

- an accomplished typist, preferably with audio typing skills
- computer literate, especially in word processing
- proficient to a high standard in written English
- polite and helpful, with a good telephone manner
- motivated, disciplined, reliable and of undoubted integrity
- in full sympathy with the principles of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

Remuneration, which can include membership of a non-contributory pension scheme, will be dependent on qualifications and experience. For an application form, please write to or telephone Mr R. A. Campbell, 133 Woodlands Road, Glasgow G3 6LE (Tel. 0141 332 9283). Closing date for applications: 31 December, 1996.

(Rev.) K. M. Watkins, Convener, Finance Committee

Notice to Congregational Treasurers

The General Treasurer requests Congregational Treasurers to send their final remittances for 1996 to him no later than Friday, 27th December, 1996, to allow these to be banked by 31st December, 1996. All payments not banked by the end of the year will be treated as receipts for 1997.

R. A. Campbell, General Treasurer

List of Communions

THE list of Communions on the inside of the front cover of this magazine has been corrected for 1997. The editor would be glad to hear of any further changes which may require to be made.

Details of Congregations

IT has been drawn to the notice of the editor that some entries under "Free Presbyterian Places of Worship", on the back cover of the Magazine, are incorrect or incomplete. The editor cannot act until he is contacted by the congregations concerned. He would be glad therefore to hear from ministers or Kirk-Sessions about any necessary updating of entries.

Note: Because of lack of space some articles are held over until next month.

Acknowledgements of Donations

THE GENERAL TREASURER acknowledges with sincere thanks the following donations:

Bookroom Fund: J.W.S.D. (Orkney), £50; R.M. (North Uist), £32; both per M.M.

Eastern Europe (Romania): Anon £40; Miss M. Robertson \$100 US; Free Church Friend, £5; London Friends, £5; Anon, London, £25; Friend, Perth, £30; all per Rev. D.A.R.

Foreign Mission Fund: Anon (Oct), \$100 Canadian.

Welfare of Youth Fund: Youth Conference lecture tapes sales, £75.

CONGREGATIONAL TREASURERS acknowledge with sincere thanks the following donations:

Aberdeen: *Bookroom Fund:* Anon, envelope in collection plate, £20, per R.R. Bruce.

Barnoldswick: *Where Most Needed:* Anon, £5; Anon, £35; Anon, £5; all per envelope in plate.

Communion Expenses: Anon, £60, per General Treasurer; Anon, £5; E.K., £50, both per envelope. *Welfare of Youth Committee Fund:* From Youth Conference tapes sales (1995), £10, per envelope. *Towards Cost of Hot Water Installation:* £13, per envelope in collection plate.

F.P. Cause in U.K.: Dutch Friend, £20, per envelope in collection plate.

Bracadale - Strath: *Where most Needed:* Miss M. MacAskill, £1.50; A friend, £60; both per Rev. G. G. H. Broadford *F.P. Church Sustentation Fund:* Mrs J. Curtain, Heasta, "in loving memory of my dear husband," £700. *Bible distribution:* Mrs J. Curtain, Heasta, "In loving memory of my dear husband," £300; both per the Treasurer.

Daviot, Stratherrick, Tomatin: *Communion Expenses:* Anon, £20, per envelope in plate.

Dingwall and Beaulay: *Eastern Europe Fund:* A friend, £100, per Rev. N.M.R.

Dornoch, Bonar Bridge: *Hearing Aid Systems:* Anon, £100, per Treasurer.

Gairloch: *Congregational Funds:* Anon, £20, per J.M.; Anon, £20; Anon, £50; Anon, £200; Anon, £60; Friend, £10; Friend, £20; all per Rev. A. E. W. MacDonald.

Glasgow: *Sustentation Fund:* Miss N. H., £40; Stornoway friends, £15; both per Rev. D. M.; Mrs B., £22, per I.Mck.; Anon, £25; Anon, £13; Mrs N. C., £10; Anon, £100. *Congregational Fund:* Executor of the will of Mrs Taylor, £1000; Mrs C. M., £100; Anon, £25 for maintenance of hearing aid system. *Bus Fund:* Anon, £20; Anon, £40. *Eastern Europe and T.B.S. Fund:* Anon, £40; Anon, £40; Anon, £40. *Eastern Europe Fund:* Anon, £55; Interested, £100; Anon, £100; Anon, £10. *Eastern Europe and African Missions Funds:* Anon, £210. *Foreign Mission Fund:* Anon, £100

North Harris: *Communion Expenses:* Friends, Stockinish, £20; Friend, Kyles, £10; both per Rev. R.McL.

Portree: *Where needed:* In memory of the late Donnie Morrison, £500, per F.M.; *Church Bus:* Anon, Braes, £50, per envelope in plate. *Sustentation Fund:* Friend, £10, per S.Y.M.

Shieldaig: *Where most needed:* "In memory of a beloved husband and father," £100

Staffin: *Where most needed:* Anon, £40, per envelope in plate.

Stornoway: *Sustentation:* K.A.McL., £120; Friend, £10; Friend, £10; all per Rev. J.McL.; Anon, £100, per church plate. *Unspecified:* Anon, "In memory of Donald and Effie Macleod of Stornoway and Oakland, California, and Donald Murdoch Macleod of Stornoway and his wife Helen, both of Long Island, New York," £25, per church plate. *Where Most Needed:* Friend, £3, per church plate. *Communion Expenses:* Friend of the Cause, Breasclete, £10; Anon, £5; both per church plate.

Ulg, Isle of Lewis: *Communion Expenses:* Anon, £50; Anon, £40; Anon, £20; Anon, £10; Anon, £10; per church door collection; C.M. Valtos, £20, per D.A. McK.