

The *Rev. Dr. Maclean*
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Why be a Free Presbyterian in 1976?

As another year opens, a question which ought to concern us is whether or not it is necessary to maintain our separate existence as a denomination. For each of us, as individuals, the question will take this form — Is it really necessary for me to be a Free Presbyterian in 1976? Having, as a Church, maintained a separate existence from the other Churches in Scotland for over eighty years, must we still maintain that separation or may we now safely abandon it? As individuals, must we continue to insist on being Free Presbyterians or may we now safely cease to be so?

One reason which might appear to suggest that a relaxation of denominational identity is called for, is the fact that evangelicalism is under attack from atheism, materialism, ecumenism, and other forces. In the face of the growing threat to evangelical Christianity from these sources, would it not be more realistic for Churches that are broadly evangelical to draw together and present a united front to the enemy at the door. However attractive such a proposal might seem to be on the surface, in reality it could not be effected without compromising our witness as a Church to the whole counsel of God.

But to answer our question, let us ask — What is Free Presbyterianism? Is it just the maintaining of certain precise dogmas and practices handed down to us by our forefathers but which have no relevance for a more advanced age? If this is so, then the sooner Free Presbyterianism is abandoned the better. But this is not so. Free Presbyterianism is just Biblical Christianity. Did it differ in any respect from this, then in that particular respect it would not be worth maintaining. Where we differ from those of other denominations in the doctrines we believe and teach, it is not because we just wish to be different from others, but because the Word of God compels us to accept and teach only those doctrines. Where we differ from others in the form of worship we practise, it is not

merely to suit our own taste in religion, but because the Word of God compels us to adopt only the form of worship we possess. Where we differ in the order of Church Government, it is not because Presbyterianism is more democratic than other forms of government, but because the Word of God compels us to recognise Presbyterianism as the divinely ordered and appointed form for the Christian Church. Where we differ in the exercise of Church discipline it is not because we judge it useful to maintain order in Church Courts, but because the Word of God compels us to follow in this respect the Apostolic and Scriptural pattern.

As Free Presbyterians we believe that Christ, as Head of the Church, has set up the worship and order of His own house and that we are not warranted to abandon or modify what He has commanded in His Word. This outlook involves us in an uncompromising stand against all unscriptural dogmas and practices; a contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints; an unrelenting exposure of whatever would seek to undermine the faith of the gospel and the practice that is after godliness; an irreconcilable struggle against sin and Satan in our own hearts and lives as well as in the world; a fearless witness on the side of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; and a faithful proclamation of the whole counsel of God.

This is as necessary in 1976 as in the past eighty or more years of our existence as a denomination. While the powers of darkness are rallying their forces it is our privilege as Free Presbyterians, possessing as we do a full-orbed testimony to the doctrines, worship, government and practice of God's Word, to be in the vanguard of those forces which are set against the Kingdom of darkness. If we are faithful to the Lord and to His Cause in a dark day let us not fear, for the Lord shall go before us and the God of Jacob shall be our rereward. Let us remain resolute and uncompromisingly faithful to the witness handed down to us by Mr MacFarlane, Mr MacDonald, and other godly Fathers of the Church, and we think that the day is not too far distant when that witness will be vindicated before men by Him whose it was to begin and maintain it in perhaps the darkest day of the Church's history.

No weapon that is formed against thee
shall prosper; and every tongue that
shall rise against thee in judgement
thou shalt condemn. This is the
heritage of the servants of the Lord, and
their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord. Is. 54:17.

Synod Sermon

by Rev. D. Campbell, M.A., Retiring Moderator.

Rev. 2:25 "But that which ye have already, hold fast till I come."

Thyatira, a Macedonian colony, situated on the road between Pergamos and Sardis, had its first known contact with Christianity through Lydia, the purple seller. This pious woman met Paul and Timothy at a prayer meeting at Philippi and the Lord having opened her heart to attend to the things spoken by Paul, was, with her household, baptised. She also constrained the Apostle to partake of her hospitality, Acts 16: 14, 15. By this contact it is suggested the Gospel was first brought to Thyatira. It is not clear whether she entertained her apostolic guests at Philippi, where she first met them, or brought them to her home in Thyatira. In this unobtrusive manner the Church of Thyatira began, and the terms of the epistle sent to it by Christ Himself clearly show that it was a well established and witnessing Church. It was one of the Churches to which the Lord sent the messages recorded in the second and third chapters of Revelation. Consequently it formed part of an ecclesiastical pattern which could represent a period of Church history already partly fulfilled. Illustrative of the concept of the Kingdom contained in the parable of the mustard seed, it grew into a lodging place for souls. Let us now proceed to consider:

1. What the Church in Thyatira already had.
2. The divine injunction served on it.
3. Attempt an application.

Firstly, what the Church had; she had works (v 19). This fact was acknowledged by the Son of God, Who hath His eyes like unto a flame of fire and who said "I know thy works. . . " vs 18, 19. The title "Son of God" was taken from Psalm 2: 7-9 " . . . the Lord hath said unto me Thou art my Son; this day I have begotten thee." The phrase "eyes like unto a flame of fire" is illustrative of Divine omniscience, by which reins and heart are searched. The other Divine attribute described in the words "his feet are like fine brass, also a reference to the second Psalm, was a forecast of the Divine power necessary to accomplish the taking over of the heathen by Messiah." Ps. 2: 8, 9.

In the foregoing figurative language, Christ intimated to the Church in Thyatira the fact that it was His purpose to save His Church generally and that He possessed the power to implement His purpose. It was therefore to the advantage of the faithful in Thyatira to seek and prize His commendation.

The word "works" in the Greek contains principally the idea of works accomplished by master and servant and not an individual achievement but rather a combined effort, reflecting the elements of superiority and inferiority respectively. This distinction does not affect the quality of the works. Instead it enhances it and strikes the proper balance between superiors and inferiors. Balaam's description of Israel encamped round about the Tabernacle is an example. In his description he traces the skill and labour of men merging into the creative power of God. Numbers 24: 6. This combination of human labour and Divine power is a prominent feature of the Kingdom of God. "We then as workers together with Him beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain." 2 Cor. 6:1. In both the Old and New Testaments the record shows that Christ worked with His people to accomplish His purpose. This was also true of the Church in Thyatira, as an analysis of the "works" shows.

The first was "charity" which is essential to the Divine approval of the "works". Speaking with tongues, alms giving, even martyrdom without it are all in vain. 1 Cor. 13. It moved Christ to save His people from their sins; it moved the Father to give His Son as the propitiation for our sins and those of the whole world. It moved the Holy Spirit to engender the grace of love in the souls of those who love the brotherhood. It moved Ruth to say "Thy people shall be my people and thy God my God." The Church in Thyatira had this essential part of the "works". Otherwise she could not have merged her image into Christ's and reflected His.

The second part of the "works" was "service" and is a reference to the office of a deacon, the origin of which is given in Acts 6: 1. When the number of the disciples was multiplied there arose a murmuring by the Grecians against the Hebrews because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. In response to this complaint the disciples appointed seven men, full of the Holy Ghost, "over this business." Acts 6:3. The qualifications specified by the Apostles for this office were of the highest order. The office itself operative in the Christian Church since Apostolic times, and by Apostolic authority, demanded that its bearers be truly converted, chosen by a multitude of disciples and ordained in terms of Apostolic authority. The original function of the deacons' court was the "daily ministration." In this ministration the care of the poor is an important part but not the whole.

The third part of the "works" was "faith". The importance of this part is contained in the words, "without faith it is impossible to please Him." Heb. 11:6. It is the "substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" and has been appropriately described as an expression

of confidence based on knowledge. There is a close and essential connection between faith and the Word of God as stated in the words, "faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God." Romans 10:17. The grace of faith is wrought by the Holy Spirit in the hearts of the heirs of salvation and the instrument used is the word of God which is the sword of the Spirit.

The fourth part of the "works" was "patience," a remaining behind, endurance. John, himself a prisoner in Patmos for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ, was there in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ. As patience aims at perfection it is the duty of believers to cultivate this grace, especially when their faith is tried. In the face of trials patience is a great asset. "Knowing this that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." James 1:3, 4. The Church in Thyatira, having these essentials, received her Lord's commendation. She was also in a progressive state; "the last more than the first" v. 19. Her works, commitments, and responsibilities daily increased. With this assurance the faithful were encouraged. All the evidence would show that this church was well established and active in the use of her graces.

2. The Divine injunction served on the Church.

What she had already, as described in verse 19, she was requested to hold fast until He would come, but she was not asked to add to her responsibilities and the section of the Church which did not have "this doctrine", that is Jezebel's, was relieved of all responsibility in the matter, verse 24: "I will put upon you none other burden"; a reference to the depth of Satan and the doctrine of Jezebel. However, contesting these was the official duty of the whole church and the fact that the duty was neglected accounted for the Divine complaint in verse 20 "I have a few things against thee" (the church).

The depths of Satan were the pretensions of the Gnostics to the knowledge of the mystery of the deep things of God. This class of philosophers considered themselves full of knowledge but the Lord described their knowledge as "the depths of Satan." As already stated the injunction was not primarily served on those in the church who had not "this doctrine" but on the church organised and officially active in the practice and defence of Christianity. The reason therefore for the injunction was "this doctrine" and the "few things" against the church were the constituent parts of "this doctrine." The complaint was that she suffered the propagation of these by their author, Jezebel. Suffered in Greek means (1) to discharge or send forth; (2) let alone; (3) suffered or

connived at. While the church in Thyatira may not have officially approved of "this doctrine", she connived at its progress.

Let us now consider the particulars of "this doctrine." Its author's name was Jezebel, meaning without cohabitation, her profession, which was self-styled, was a prophetess, and her relationship, which was illicit, in the Church, was with the servants of Christ. The symbolical Jezebel was to some of the servants of Christ in Thyatira what the historical Jezebel was to Ahab. An unscriptural affinity was formed which represented an organisation dedicated to the displacement of the true religion with the false.

The historical Jezebel was the daughter of Ethbaal i.e. Baal's man, king of the Zidonians, once priest of Astarte, who after murdering Philes, the king, held the throne of Tyre for thirty two years. Jezebel herself married Ahab, King of Israel. It was a notorious alliance whose objective was the displacement of Jehovah's worship with that of Baal. This policy was grievous in respect of its application and consequences. Divine judgments, intrigues, murders, wars and the destruction of many dynasties were among the baneful fruits of that policy. The Jezebel of Thyatira is reminiscent of all this. The Jezebel of the Old Testament was the very personification of intrigue and danger to those who loved the Lord God of Israel but the Jezebel of the New Testament was more subtle in her approach. Her self-styled title, prophetess, could mean either a personal claim to have prophetic powers, or, as the feminine gender in Hebrew was used collectively to mean a multitude, the title in this context could mean a body of false prophets closely attached to the Church in Thyatira. Whether considered individually or as representing others, the presence of Jezebel constituted a grave danger and threat to the church. This danger stemmed from her relationship to the church. She had the power to seduce, i.e. lead astray mentally. With this power to seduce, contact with her was most dangerous and the danger was increased by the fact that she had access to Christ's servants. Thus the servants of Christ sustained the same relationship to the Jezebel of the New Testament which Ahab had to his Jezebel. Both Ahab and Christ's servants were bound as the custodians of the oracles of God to serve the Lord and preserve His worship intact as delivered to the fathers but both proved themselves too weak to resist Jezebel's pressure.

Furthermore, both Jezebels were capable of committing whoredom and witchcraft. While retaining the freedom implied in the name, the Thyatira Jezebel formed an affinity with Christ's servants and while laying claim to inspiration considered herself free to teach libertinism to

Christ's servants, inducing them to commit fornication and to eat things sacrificed to idols, thus introducing into the church in Thyatira that false spiritualism which claimed to make a distinction between the outer and inner man. According to this theory the former's conduct was unimportant as the latter was what mattered. Needless to say this pernicious doctrine would lead the church in Thyatira or wherever condoned, deeper into heathenism. Fornication in this context was an illicit relationship which had most damaging consequences. The reference to "adultery" and "children" indicated the productive capacity of that illicit relationship. The practice of fornication was obvious by the presence of children, whose existence was the most conclusive proof of illicit conduct. The foregoing signified spiritual fornication between the servants of Christ and the "prophetess." These same unlawful results were seen in the form of idol worship and converts to it. The unlawfulness of that relationship between Jezebel and Christ's servants was emphasised in the call to repentance which was addressed to all concerned for their evil deeds. Moreover, the danger of the above affinity was implied in the Divine threat to kill her children with death or certain destruction. It is worthy of note that the fruits of idolatry in a Christian form, are, as in other forms, destined to destruction and what was the scene of spiritual fornication's greatest success has become the place of its destruction. "Behold I will cast her into a bed and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation except they repent of their deeds" v. 22. As there was still room to repent of those heinous sins, the injunction was timely.

3. The application. In attempting the application of the foregoing, several questions arise:

- (1) Can the reformed church in Scotland at any time in its history fit into the pattern presented by the church in Thyatira?
- (2) During that period has or had the church works reflecting the power, love and wisdom of God, along with the pious labours of His servants? Can we trace in its history the finger of God in man's work?
- (3) Was the fact of her having works acknowledged by God in that He endowed her with the necessary graces to perform the works and thus project an image of piety which convinced men of the church's Divine origin, commended by the One best qualified to judge her because He knows her?
- (4) Have her works' dimensions increased or decreased; has her light grown clearer and stronger?
- (5) Have Christ's servants in the church continued faithful without

exception or have some dissimulated?

(6) What has been the church's official attitude to dangerous affiliations and affinities; did she connive at the existence and progress of these; or did she heed the Divine warning and call to repentance?

(7) Was there in Scotland a section of the church whom the Lord spared the agony caused by the "depth of Satan" and spiritual fornication with false prophets but instead commended the works of that section?

(8) Is there now in Scotland a branch of the visible church to which the promises of verses 26, 27 and 28 apply?

(9) What part have we, the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, in all this? Namely, "works," the graces to accomplish these, this Divine acknowledgment, preservation from spiritual fornication, being spared the molestation caused by indulging in the "depth of Satan" in our midst. Before attempting an answer to these questions let us emphasise the importance of the whole injunction but particularly the words "have already."

The answer to the foregoing questions is "Yes." The history of the Reformed Church in Scotland fits well into the pattern of the Thyatira church. No church has more clearly shown the genuineness of its relationship to the Head of the Church. No other branch of the Christian Church fought more uncompromisingly for Christ's crown rights. When Christ's claims were at stake John Knox in the defence of the same feared neither the Queen Regent nor the Queen, even though their wrath knew no bounds. The Son of God was to him above worldly sovereigns and this was also largely true of the church which he led out of the darkness of popery into the glorious light of the Gospel. The same applies to the second Reformation of the Scottish Church. The covenanting fathers would accept no earthly king as the head of the church. Like their predecessors they would accept for this role Jesus Christ only. For this reason they took up the mighty challenge of the Stuarts and "not counting their own lives dear unto them," they committed themselves to a struggle they knew would be long and dangerous. Presbyterianism was essential if Christ should have His due place in the Church. Episcopacy tended to give man the pre-eminence. Presbyterianism gave it to Christ, "Whose eyes are as a flame of fire and His feet as fine brass."

The Disruption of 1843 also fits into the pattern. That assembly, reputed to be one of the finest on record, represented a church which was not prepared to cringe to king or court in the ruthless attempt to force patronage on the Kingdom of Christ in Scotland. The majority, which was the cream of the nation in respect of piety and learning, would not

accept interference from anyone where Christ's rights were involved. In their capacities as ministers and elders they served the Son of God and anything impinging on that relationship they rejected. The Church must be free to rule its own house, without interference from the civil courts. Therefore to preserve its hard won liberty, the Church of Scotland, still sound in doctrine, practice and worship, protested against state interference and its commissioners, having claimed their rights as the true representatives of the reformed church declared themselves free to serve the Lord Jesus.

Notwithstanding the high ideals which motivated the Disruption worthies, the need to serve the injunction soon became evident. A Jezebel like affinity with the servants of Christ in the Free Church became evident. Heresy within the church became rife and the church courts lacked the power to root it out. In fact a time came when the church courts weighed their influence against those in the church who opposed the so called "higher criticism" of Scripture which cast aspersion on the inspiration of the Bible. The Confession of Faith was attacked as oppressive and to relieve complainers of their obligations under their ordination vows the Declaratory Act was passed. This paved the way for Voluntaryism in the Free Church, which a few decades before had left the Established Church in protest against Erastianism — the subjection of the church to the state. Voluntaryism is the principle by which the church claims independence from the state. Both these extremes are dangerous and to be avoided. The Apostolic injunction, "Let all things be done in moderation" applies here. That "moderation" was best observed by adherence to the establishment principle of religion which left the church scripturally free within its own scriptural sphere and the state responsible for the maintenance and defence of the true religion.

The Free Presbyterian Church holds this view and of all the branches of the visible church in Scotland she fits into the pattern best of all. The reason for her formation is stated in the Deed of Separation of 1893. The reason was to continue intact the reformed faith as contended for by the Reformers who delivered it to posterity not to be destroyed but preserved as that which is essential to salvation from sin. Our position then is that inherited from the Fathers as constituted at the Revolution Settlement and the Disruption. This position, identical with that taken by the Reformers, was in defence of the Word of God, the Confession of Faith, and the Catechisms. If we are worthy of the trust placed in us by God and man we must without wavering hold fast what we already have.

The Divine injunction served on the faithful in Thyatira is a reminder

to us of two things; (1) The preciousness of the gifts Christ bestowed on us as a church; (2) The danger of losing our hold of these. Hence the great significance of the injunction, "Hold fast that ye already have." Therefore all officebearers, including ministers, members and adherents of the church should abide by Resolutions of Synod democratically adopted by the court. The duty of holding fast continues until Christ comes. Our responsibilities as a church are commensurate with our opportunity for usefulness throughout the world and in this respect our last works are more than the first. The church began with minimum strength, largely confined to the Highlands of Scotland. Today it is spread across the globe. This spectacular growth presents a challenge which demands an outward looking attitude towards the work of the ministry in the church. Gone are the days when our labours were confined to Scotland. The field is the world and the Lord has opened in that field doors for the church to enter. "Let all flesh bless His holy name for ever and forever."

Low views of Personal Holiness

A Scriptural view of sin will prove an admirable antidote to the low views of personal holiness prevalent in these last days of the Church. This is a very painful and delicate subject, I know; but I dare not turn away from it. It has long been my sorrowful conviction that the standard of daily life among professing Christians in this country has been gradually falling. I am afraid that Christ-like charity, kindness, good-temper, unselfishness, meekness, gentleness, good-nature, self-denial, zeal to do good, and separation from the world, are far less appreciated than they ought to be, and than they used to be in the days of our fathers.

Into the causes of this state of affairs I cannot pretend to enter fully, and can only suggest conjectures for consideration. It may be that a certain profession of religion has become so fashionable and comparatively easy in the present age, that the streams which were once narrow and deep have become wide and shallow, and what we have gained in outward show we have lost in quality. It may be that the vast increase of wealth in the last twenty-five years has insensibly introduced a plague of worldliness, and self-indulgence, and love of ease into social life. What were once called luxuries are now comforts and necessities, and self-denial and "enduring hardness" are consequently little known. It may be

that the enormous amount of controversy which marks this age has insensibly dried up our spiritual life. We have too often been content with zeal for orthodoxy, and have neglected the sober realities of daily practical godliness. Be the causes what they may, I must declare my own belief that the result remains. There has been of late years a lower standard of personal holiness among believers than there used to be in the days of our fathers. The whole result is that the Spirit is grieved! and the matter calls for much humiliation and searching of heart.

As to the best remedy for the state of things I have mentioned, I shall venture to give an opinion. Other schools of thought in the Churches must judge for themselves. The cure for Evangelical Churchmen, I am convinced, is to be found in a clearer apprehension of the nature and sinfulness of sin. We need not go back to Egypt, and borrow semi-Romish practices in order to revive our spiritual life. We need not restore the confessional, or return to monasticism or asceticism. Nothing of the kind! We must simply repent and do our first works. We must return to first principles. We must go back to "the old paths." We must sit down humbly in the presence of God, look the whole subject in the face, examine clearly what the Lord Jesus calls sin, and what the Lord Jesus calls "doing His will." We must then try to realise that it is terribly possible to live a careless, easy-going, half-worldly life, and yet at the same time to maintain evangelical principles and call ourselves Evangelical people! Once let us see that sin is far viler, and far nearer to us, and sticks more closely to us than we supposed, and we shall be led, I trust and believe, to get nearer to Christ. Once drawn nearer to Christ, we shall drink more deeply out of His fulness, and learn more thoroughly to "live the life of faith" in Him, as St Paul did. Once taught to live the life of faith in Jesus, and abiding in Him, we shall bear more fruit, shall find ourselves more strong for duty, more patient in trial, more watchful over our poor weak hearts, and more like our Master in all our little daily ways. Just in proportion as we realise how much Christ has done for us, shall we labour to do much for Christ. Much forgiven, we shall love much. In short, as the Apostle says, "with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. 3:18) — *J. C. Ryle*.

Men that will not follow the direction
of the Spirit of God shall lack the
consolations of the Spirit.

Samuel Bolton.

Memoir of John Janeway

This very extraordinary individual was born at Lilley in Hertford on October 27, 1633. He had the early part of his education at Paul's School in London, under the care of Mr Langley, where he made great progress in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Mathematics, and Astronomy. He was afterwards sent to Eton College, where he was accounted the glory of the school, and the wonder of the age. At seventeen, he entered King's College, Cambridge, where the electors contended for the patronage of so promising a youth. Here he afterwards became a Fellow. In addition to his astonishing proficiency in literature, he possessed many other endearing qualifications. He was candid and agreeable, courteous and ever obliging, without the least appearance of vanity. His great learning was attended with great modesty and prudence and such a command of his passions, as preserved him from the follies and the vices of youth; but still he had no relish for religion. The concerns of an eternal world, as yet, gave him no uneasiness.

But God, who had chosen him to shine like the morning star in His Church, in the good pleasure of His goodness, wrought in his soul the work of faith with power, and Mr Baxter's "Saints Everlasting Rest" was the principal means of his conversion to God. This important change in his life and character was soon made manifest to all. His time and talents were now less employed in the contemplation of the stars, the rectitude and rapidity of their motions, and all the glory of their arrangement, seeing the Day Star from on High had visited his benighted soul, and the Sun of Righteousness had arisen upon him with healing under His wings. His great concern now was to learn the will of God in His Word, and to please and enjoy Him for ever. For this he laboured with indefatigable pains and industry in studying the Scriptures, which are able to make men wise unto salvation. He began to pity those who were curious in their inquiries after almost every thing but Christ; and though he accounted human learning exceedingly profitable, and even praiseworthy, when wisely conducted, yet, when fixed on any thing short of Christ and Him crucified, he accounted it all but loss; and when not employed for His glory, a sword put into the hand of a madman, wherewith to destroy himself and all that came in his way. In this state of mind, he was exceedingly concerned he might express his gratitude to God, who had called him from darkness into His marvellous light; and for this purpose, opened a correspondence with his relations, his friends, and many of his acquaintances, to whom he addressed many letters on divine subjects, so judiciously written, that they seemed more like the productions of age

and long Christian experience, than that of a youth. He could not help announcing to others what he himself had seen and heard, felt and experienced, of the grace and condescending goodness of God. To exalt the glory of his dear Redeemer, and persuade perishing sinners to shelter themselves from the wrath to come, under the immaculate covering of His righteousness and atoning sacrifice, was the great object of his solicitude. But the gravity of his manner, the striking majesty and pathos of his expressions, the vehemence of his expostulations, and the pressing power of his applications, can only be seen in his own language.

Before he had reached the age of nineteen, in writing to his father, who was in great distress of mind, he thus addressed him: "The causes of your despondency, and the dejection and melancholy that overshadows your soul, give me leave to guess. The first, I think, arises from your reflecting on your entering on the work of the ministry, without that reverence of God, love to Christ, and compassion for the souls of perishing men, which are requisite in all who undertake this holy office. It may be there was also a greater regard to your living in the world, than your living to God and the spiritual interest of His people. Be it thus, the remedy is still the same. These reflections have in them a heart-corroding power when felt unaccompanied by the light of a pardoning grace. But bad thoughts and continual sorrow keep the wound open too long, and are not, therefore, available in removing the disease. Wounds indeed must be opened in order to be cleansed; they must be opened that their filth may be discovered; but no sooner has the balm of Gilead been applied, than they ought to be bound up that the balsam may have its undisturbed efficacy and operation in removing the symptoms, and closing up the wound.

A second cause of your heaviness may arise from a sense of the untoward disposition, and unimproving state of the people committed to your care; and, indeed, who can help mourning over a people who have no pity, no charity, nor compassion for themselves?

I have often wrestled with God that He might guide your steps in the way of duty concerning them, which I am persuaded is also your humble request at the throne of mercy. Now, after seriously examining your own heart as to the necessary steps to be taken, whatever your conscience points out as the present duty, that do; and having done so, leave the result to God, who works in us both to will and also to perform.

You may perhaps have, besides these, some uneasy thoughts respecting your family when you are gone, but let faith and former experience teach you to drive away all such thoughts. Our good God is the Father of the

fatherless, and the widow's strength and support. Your constitution and solitary habits may likewise contribute to your present melancholy; but there is a duty which, if properly performed, will remove then all and that is, heavenly meditation, and the contemplation of the glory yet to be revealed. Would we walk with God in this duty but one hour in the day, what a powerful influence it would have on the whole day! And were it duly performed during the whole life, the happy and comfortable consequences are not to be calculated. I knew the nature and utility of this duty in some measure before; but Mr Baxter's "Saint's Everlasting Rest" has given it a more deep and lasting impression on my heart, for which I have great cause ever to bless God. It is a bitter sweet; bitter to corrupt nature, but sweet and ravishing to the regenerate part. I entreat you, therefore, yea, charge you, with all humility and tender affection, that you spare at least half-an-hour for God every day, in the delightful exercise of heavenly contemplation, in this most precious soul-reviving, soul-ravishing, soul perfecting duty. Take this from your dear friend, as spoken in reverence, faithfulness, and filial affection."

Having arrived at the age of twenty years, he became Fellow of his College, and wrote many letters to his brothers, accompanied with his earnest prayers and tears for their spiritual benefit, who, together with many of his many acquaintances, will have cause to bless God for ever that they received his pious instructions. He spoke to them all in the language of the Apostle, "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for you is that you may be saved." Distance of place, says he, cannot dissolve the natural bond by which we are one blood; neither can it cool our affections for one another, where true love exists in the heart. I can only say for myself, that I feel the power of this amiable affection better than I can express. But love felt, and not expressed, loses much of its use and influence in our own lives and the lives of others. I am therefore anxious to make my love and regard for you all manifest in the best way I can.

Let us look on one another, not only as brethren by blood, but also as being members of the same body whereof Christ is the Head; and happy, thrice happy, will that day be, when Christ shall discover this union. Let this therefore be the object of our greatest regard, of our strongest desires, of our unceasing endeavours, to meet together in Christ; for if we be in Christ, and Christ in us, then shall we be one in each other.

You cannot complain of the want of instruction. God hath not been to us as the dry and barren wilderness. He has given us line upon line, and precept upon precept. He hath planted us by the rivers of water; and

though the Lord alone giveth the increase, we are not to stand by and do nothing. The ground must be cultivated if we are to look for an abundant harvest; our corruptions must be overcome, and all our spiritual enemies discomfited before we receive the crown. These are subjects worthy of our best efforts, and our most exalted ambition. Seek them by earnest prayer and daily meditation. Keep our hearts always in a praying frame. These are not only necessary duties, but privileges, unspeakable privileges. If you can say nothing, oh! lay yourselves in the dust before the Lord. You will find more sweetness, more internal pleasure and satisfaction, in one glimpse of the love of God, than all the empty glories and grandeur the world could ever communicate. O try the experiment! O taste, taste and be satisfied how good our God is! Say unto God, let me be any thing in this world, but let me have Christ in me the hope of eternal glory; and wrestle with Him in prayer till He has in some measure satisfied your longing soul with His goodness. Oh! my brothers, how my heart works, how my bowels yearn towards you! O that ye but knew with what affection I now write you, and with what prayers and tears these lines have mingled. The Lord send these things home to your hearts, and give you grace to consider and apply them to yourselves.

Give me leave, my dear brothers, to deal plainly with you; I love you so well, that I cannot endure the thought of your souls being lost. Know, then, that there is such a thing as the new birth; and that except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of Heaven. This new birth begins in a sense of sin, and proceeds with a sorrowing for sin, and with a resolution to strive against it; and at last with a hatred, an irreconcilable hatred of sin, and a love of holiness without which no man can see the Lord. Without this there can be no salvation. May the Lord deliver us from a secure heart, crying, peace, peace, while there is no peace; for unless we are brought to relinquish our own righteousness, as well as our sins, there is no hope of our salvation. We must see our absolute need of Christ, and give ourselves up to Him to be covered by His righteousness, atoned by His blood, and governed by His law. Upon our faith and repentance we are justified, and the Spirit of Christ, dwelling in us, subdues our corruptions and invigorates the new man; so that we are enabled to make progress in a life of true holiness.

It is unworthy of a Christian not to act for Christ in the face of every opposition. Be not ashamed of Christ, nor the doctrines of His Word, nor afraid of the frowns of a wicked world; but be careful always to keep a conscience void of offence, and by no means yield to any known sin. Read the Scriptures daily; these are they that testify of Christ and His

salvation; and, O pray, pray without ceasing; and my greatest desire on earth is, that you may be all found in Christ, not having your own righteousness."

Mr Janeway was a man of prayer, and some times so transported in that devout exercise, that he scarcely knew whether he was in or out of the body. His conversation was in Heaven, and the consolations of his soul, when engaged in this duty, were such, that he frequently found it difficult to leave off; and by happy experience, he could subscribe to the declaration of the wise man, "That wisdom's ways are pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." Like Jacob, when engaged in this holy exercise, he wrestled with God for the blessing, and was ever unwilling to return from his knees without some gracious manifestation of His love and favour; and his requests were heard and often remarkably answered, as appears in the following instance. His father, when on his deathbed, was deeply exercised with doubts and apprehensions as to the state of his soul; and in this perplexity of mind, disclosed his heart to his son, saying, "O son, the passing of an immortal spirit into eternity is a momentous concern. Dying is a most solemn business, oh! a fearful business, for one who has not his pardon sealed, and his evidence clear for Heaven. I am under no small apprehension respecting my own state for another world. O that God would clear up His love, that I might be enabled, with cheerful composure of spirit, to say, I can die, I can look death, with all his terrors, in the face, and venture on an invisible eternity with well-grounded peace and comfort of soul." Mr Janeway observing the desponding spirit of his dear father, retired to wrestle with God in prayer, that He would lift upon him the light of His countenance, restore him the joy of His salvation, and the comfortable assurance of the love and pardoning mercy of his God and Saviour. On returning to the bedside of his dying father, he asked how he did; but for some time received no answer, his father being unable to speak, though he wept exceedingly. Recovering himself at last, he burst out in these expressions: "O son, now He is come, now He is come, blessed be God He is come, and now I can die. The spirit of God hath witnessed with my spirit that I am one of His children; and now I can look up to God as my father, and Christ as my Redeemer. My heart is full of consolation, it is brim full, I can hold no more. Now! now, I know what is meant by 'the peace of God that passeth all understanding'. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me magnify His holy Name, who hath forgiven all mine iniquities, and sealed my pardon. Blessed be God, I can now die, and my desire is to depart and be with Christ. Now, O Lord, let Thy servant

depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation. When I walk through the vale and shadow of death I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me. When one is dying, O how pleasant and transporting it is to behold the smiling countenance of his Redeemer. How refreshing the consideration, that, when heart and flesh, and all fail, to have God for the strength of our heart, and our portion for ever."

In this happy frame of spirit the old man departed this shifting scene of showers and sunshine.

News of Italy

Last month readers were given the testimony of a converted priest whom I met while in Italy in September. This month I would like to give a more systematic account of my visit.

The friends who meet in Fornaci di Barga are still very few, but Emelia and her mother appreciate any opportunity they get of hearing the gospel. The first night that I called at their house Emelia was speaking about how difficult she found it to be different from her relatives. She said, however, that she could do nothing but be different; it was the Lord's work to give her a desire for salvation, and to bestow that salvation on her.

On the first Sabbath morning it was only the two women who were at the meeting. However, it was a happy time, and Emelia's mother said that she preferred it when there were few. If there were anyone there who contradicted what was said, she found it upsetting. Emelia said she could understand that, but on the other hand if others came to hear the word they could gradually come round to be of the same mind as themselves. When we spoke about the various experiences of Jacob's life, Emelia agreed that a child of God passes through many changes. She said that, when reading Ecclesiastes 3:1ff, she had thought to herself, Yes, and a time to receive grace and a time to feel our need of grace: we need both, and the one is a preparation for the other.

In previous articles reference has been made to Giorgina and Arturo Mazzei, who are friends of the Canpani family. They were both at almost all the meetings that were held during this visit. One evening Arturo was talking about 'our religion,' meaning the Roman Catholic religion. Emelia said that she could not from the heart speak of it as 'our religion.' She then listed some aspects of it with which she took issue in a spirited way, and ended by saying that it was a source of boredom and annoyance to use the rosary; but to speak for hours of the things of the Bible was no sacrifice. She did it willingly and joyfully.

But although Arturo Mazzei spoke as he did about 'la nostra religione,' it seemed to me that he was much less in love with it on this occasion. One evening after I had left, he asked Emelia at what time I would be returning the next day; evidently he did not wish to miss an opportunity to discuss the word of God. This feeling of dissatisfaction with the RC Church is in fact, one gathers, quite widespread. Emelia said that, when she was in hospital some months ago, she heard the other women discussing the Church, and the general attitude seemed to be that the Church was a racket, a money-making business. Also, Emelia's mother had come in contact with a man from the other side of the village with whom she had discussed religious matters. He said that the Protestants were much closer to the Bible than the Roman Catholics and that there were many things wrong with the RC Church. She offered him a Bible and he took it willingly.

Apart from the increased interest of Arturo Mazzei, the visit to Fornaci went much as the previous ones did. The most interesting part of this last trip was a visit to see Franco Maggiotto, referred to at the beginning of this article. I had heard of him earlier in the year, and had since been in correspondence with him. I went to see him after the first weekend at Fornaci.

Franco lives with his wife and two year old daughter in a small flat at Spotorno. This is a small town on the Italian Riviera about 160 miles from Fornaci di Barga, and about 60 miles east of the French border. It was a Wednesday when I arrived. I stayed till the Friday morning and during that time I was able to find out a lot about this remarkable man, and to hear of the gospel work he is doing in his native land. I heard about his leaving the RC Church about 10 years ago around his thirtieth birthday, of his going for some months to Holland, of his coming over to England afterwards and training at the college of the European Missionary Fellowship at Watford. I also heard how Franco returned to Italy almost four years ago with Aurora, a converted Italian whom he had married while at Watford, and began his work at Spotorno.

Franco says that there are about fifteen believers now in the area around Spotorno. They meet for Bible Studies and for more formal services in one or other of the homes belonging to members of his congregation. The first night that I spent in Franco's home I met two of the men from this group. One was a very clever young man, a doctor of geology who was doing research work at the University of Genoa. The other man was a shop owner from a few miles away who had been converted from a life of open sin and complete irreligiosity. His name is Pierluigi. They had come to help Franco with the production of pamphlets for distribution — not in the writing of

them, but in the operation of the duplicating machine.

The next morning Franco and I went out to visit a number of his people. We called first at Pierluigi's shop. When our host had finished doing business in his voluble way with some salesman or other, he came through to the back where we were and his sister made coffee. Here I had the first experience of how Franco's people spoke with deepest earnestness about the basic doctrines of Scripture. I have never heard them expressed in a fresher way. Trying to explain to me man's inability to save himself, this grocer and general merchant reached one hand behind his head, took hold of his shirt collar and pulled it upwards. 'We cannot save ourselves any more than we can lift ourselves up by pulling on our own shirt collar,' he said.

After a little, Pierluigi's mother came back from a shopping expedition to the market. A lively conversation on the basics of true religion ensued.

'But we also believe in God,' this elderly Roman Catholic asserted.

'Ah, but you only believe in him in a vague sentimental way,' said Franco. 'God has revealed himself to us in Christ; that is the only place where we can find God. If we believe in God apart from the gospel, it is only a god of our imagination that we believe in. There is a difference between children who are orphans and those who have their mother. The orphans know that they must have had a mother, but they do not know her. The other children not only know that they have a mother, they really know her for themselves.'

Eventually we left Pierluigi's, and as we went through the narrow streets of Finale Ligure we passed one of Franco's elders and stopped to give him a lift. Mario is the foreman in a factory and he was glad of the lift which gave him a minute longer at home during his rushed lunch-time. In the end it was a lunch which he shared with Franco and myself. When we went in the front door and passed through a large living-room to the kitchen, Franco mentioned that the services were often held in that room. Seated at table, I was busying myself with the rice and tomato juice placed before me when Mario's wife quietly slipped a question about the visitor in Franco's direction: 'Is he reformed?'

Franco had been awake for most of the night because of a troublesome cough his little girl had. So after Mario had gone back to work Franco went through to another room to lie down. It was an opportunity to hear this lady's experience from herself.

'How did you come to know the truth?'

'I was a very fervent Catholic, especially I was a devoted worshipper of Mary. I continued like that for years, until we began to receive leaflets distributed by the Brethren — the gospel of Matthew and also tracts. When I read these I began to think deeply. Eventually I left the Catholic Church

and went with the Brethren and accepted their doctrine. But I did not find satisfaction while I was with them. There was never any mention of the sovereignty of God and there was no sense of sin among them. It seemed that man was able to save himself whenever he pleased. Then I met Franco, and really he has been a gift of God for me. I had never heard the pure gospel before then. To me he is like another Paul. Then I became really founded in the Scriptures and there is no other foundation.

It was a time of real fellowship, but as we came away Franco pointed out the scene of something no so pleasant. The place, below Mario's house, where Franco had found his car tampered with after a previous visit and where, as he had gone to inspect the damage, he had been set upon himself. Providentially a car had driven past and his attackers had been frightened away, though leaving him with an injury to his back.

That evening Pierluigi came again and also Achile. The latter is the father of the young geology student. He also is a gifted man who until recently held a responsible post as a designer to a firm producing photographic equipment. He retired early and lives off his pension in order to help Franco with the secretarial aspects of his work.

That night I heard about Pierluigi's conversion. He had been hearing about the way of salvation for five months: then one night he was searching the Bible and praying, but at the same time near to despair. He knew that he could not do anything, then suddenly he came to see that Christ had died for his sins. It was really a revelation, like the switching on of a light.

That day I also heard from Aurora what her experience was. Like Mario's wife she had been a fervent Roman Catholic, but a Baptist minister had come to her village and her father had taken some tracts.

'After a while he began going to these meetings, and then a while later my mother began going too. They were trying to get me to go, but there were no other young people from our village going and I did not want to go. Then after a time I did go, and the first thing that struck me was the words of the text, written in big letters in the church, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life.' It was then I began to see that everything is in Christ. After a time a few other young people went as well and we used to go out together. We went on the beaches and everywhere with tracts. We were full of zeal but we hardly knew anything. That minister was very Arminian; he did not teach us deeply the doctrines of the Bible. Really, I think that if he had taught us we might have done something, but the church is very small now because it was not built up. I always remember hearing a teacher of that church taking a class of children of about 6 years and teaching them about faith. The children were actually told, "We must force ourselves to have faith". It was only

after going to England that Aurora came to understand deeply the doctrines of grace. As regards the situation in Italy she went on to explain:

'The mentality of the Italian is governed by the teaching of the RC Church. So that if you say to an Italian that he must "accept Christ," what it means to him is that this is something he has to do in order to merit salvation. Perhaps for you in Scotland, if you say that people must accept Christ, they know that this is something they cannot do of themselves because they have a background of teaching. But here in Italy if you say to people that they must do something they think of salvation by works immediately, whereas it does not depend on us but on the will of God before we were born.'

On the Friday morning Aurora's mother appeared. An elderly widow, not very well because of a heart condition, she lives with a son who is a communist. But she is a cheerful Christian. When I went to the station she came with me as the train would take her part of the way back to her son's house. As we approached the station she said,

'I am in Egypt where I am. There is nobody there, nobody. I wish I could be near some of the people of God.' Franco said, 'Perhaps you are in Egypt to do a work for the Lord.'

'Me? What do I do? I don't do anything.'

Standing at the station she spoke of praying always to the Lord for a blessing on those around her (no doubt she was thinking of her son) and added, 'But perhaps it is not the will of God that we should see the answer to our prayers in our lifetime.'

— 'But the prayers of the godly remain before His throne, although they may not be answered immediately.'

'Oh yes, they are there as incense before Him.'

Leaving that family, I was overcome by a sense of the wonder of what I had seen. Italians in Italy talking of the things of God among themselves. Strangers and pilgrims, walking on the way to Heaven. It seemed to me so evident that the Lord himself had been their teacher: 'This is the doing of the Lord and marvellous in our eyes.'

J.T.

(To be continued)

Gaelic Section in Magazine

The Magazine Committee have decided to discontinue the Gaelic Section in the magazine at present. It is expected that the Committee will review at its next meeting how the interests of Gaelic readers can be met.

Book Review

"A Basket of Fragments" by Robert Murray McCheyne, published by Christian Focus Publications; £2.

This book consists of a collection of thirty-seven sermons preached, for the most part, during the last two years of McCheyne's ministry. Indeed, McCheyne preaches as though he were a watchman already looking into the eternal world and describing what he sees there. The more speculative-minded will find these sermons disappointing. Here there is no discussion of rival views on the Person of Christ, on Inspiration of Scripture, or the composition of the soul. To McCheyne, a sermon is "a tool, not a work of art, nor a philosophical enquiry." As one who knows both the terror of the Lord and the constraining love of Christ he believes and therefore speaks with the severely practical intent of communicating "the truth as it is in Jesus."

In a ministry of this kind, much will evidently be lost when the personal presence of the preacher is no longer with us. ("It was not so much what you said," one hearer acknowledged, "as your manner of speaking that struck me. I saw in you a beauty in holiness that I never saw before.") Nevertheless that beauty shines from the printed page likewise, even if only in the way McCheyne so clearly sets out to "know nothing but Christ and him crucified." The name of the Lord Jesus is glorified in McCheyne and, in turn, McCheyne is glorified in Christ.

Particular points that might be underlined are McCheyne's excellence as:—

(a) **a Teacher.** His divisions and sub-divisions are clear and easily remembered. The style is simple and direct with continual application. Although the ecclesiastical state of Scotland was in a ferment during these years, 1842-43, prior to the Disruption, and McCheyne took a lively interest in these things, he rigidly excludes such issues from the pulpit apart from the occasional passing reference.

(b) **a Steward.** McCheyne is mindful of all sections of his flock. Judgment and mercy are proclaimed to the Christless in such sermons as "Future Punishment Eternal," "Christ the Door into the Church," "The Saviour's Tears over the Lost." Christians are fed on a varied diet — experimental (e.g. "The True Pleasantness of being a Child of God"); doctrinal (e.g. Electing Love") and practical (e.g. "The Improvement of Affliction").

(c) **a Herald.** It is as such that McCheyne, probably, excels most. His sermons are entirely without any distracting embellishment, even without extra-Biblical illustration. The end of the lost is faithfully proclaimed. Of one of the sermons, No. 35, on 1 Cor. 9; 27, Bonar says in his "Memoir"

that it was "a sermon so solemn that one said it was like a blast of the trumpet that would awaken the dead." Equally, the trumpet gives no uncertain sound in proclaiming the jubilee, "the acceptable year of the Lord." Such appeals as that in the close of the first sermon based on "Jesus Christ, full of grace and truth," demonstrate the clarity with which he not merely appeals to sinners "stay not in all the plain," but points the way to "the heavenly Zion" and "Jesus the mediator of the new covenant."

Christian Focus Publications are to be congratulated on this their second production in which the Reformed Faith is set forth in a mode more popular, if less comprehensive, than in their first production. Christian Focus Publications are based in 118 Academy Street, Inverness, and take as their motto "To Reach and Teach." I quote from their brochure, copies of which are available from them: "Why another publishing venture? Because the need for sound books far outweighs the present output of the Christian press . . . The Communists, the false sects and the avant-garde of our day are flooding the world with the output of their presses. They are battling for the minds of men. The Gospel, we believe, is of greater relevance to the needs of men, its message more urgent, and the promises of success more certain, than anything else offered to man. This should stir us up to work with conviction and confidence for the day when 'the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea'." Such a work of faith coupled with patience of hope can hardly be too highly commended. It might not be amiss, however, to suggest that the production of present-day material would be welcomed. The Communists do not confine their literature to successive reproductions of "Da Capital" and works of that vintage. Language changes, style changes (as indeed the now empty pulpit of archaic design on the cover seems symbolically to indicate) currents of thought change. The faith remains the same, but the mould in which the faith is presented may make a great difference as to impact on the present-day world.

McCheyne, however, must have the last word. The themes he deals with are timeless and since he confines himself to the Bible and its relation to the souls of men his manner of dealing with these themes is timeless too. It is doubtful, if he lived in the present, whether his manner of preaching would be substantially different. If these sermons are blessed to the edifying of the Church and perhaps to the raising up of McCheynes in our own time, or Bonars who will devote their pen to the service of their master, the patience of hope of the originators of this venture will be abundantly rewarded.

S. FRASER TALLACH.

Notes and Comments

Murder of Mr Ross McWhirter

The death of Mr Ross McWhirter at the hands of two assassins is a blow to the cause of justice and decency in our land on the side of which he so strenuously fought. If it is eventually proved that the IRA were responsible for this vile deed, it will demonstrate once more how utterly degraded in outlook that organisation is and how ruthless in liquidating any person who may challenge them. How blind are these infatuated killers to their own ultimate doom. God has already written the epitaph on their graves: "They that take the sword shall perish by the sword." The sympathy of the nation goes out to Mrs McWhirter on the death of her husband. He died defending the liberties of this nation, liberties which have been dearly bought.

Possible Rhodesian Settlement

The prospect of a Rhodesian settlement appears brighter after talks between Mr Ian Smith, the Prime Minister of Rhodesia, and Mr Joshua Nkomo, the leader of the more moderate wing of the African National Council. It was hoped that a new Constitutional Conference would be held in December. It will be very encouraging indeed if there is a successful outcome to that conference. We would value a settlement that would ensure the continuance of missionary work in that land.

The Home Secretary and the Death Penalty

The spilling over of Irish terrorist activities into this country has renewed the call for the restoration of the death penalty for terrorists. The Home Secretary as before continues to reject this as a solution to the present spate of violence. It may well be that the Home Secretary may yet have to bow to the will of the House of Commons if the attitude of Members of Parliament on this issue changes. This might lead to the Home Secretary's resignation but this would be no great loss as he has consistently taken a weak line on the punishment of crime.

Church Notes

New Year 1976

By the time this issue of the Magazine is in your hands it is likely that another year will have opened. What the New Year holds for us we do not know, but if our trust is in the Lord then whether prosperity or adversity awaits us we need not fear. The year that has closed, the year when Britain's entry into the Common Market was confirmed by a national referendum,

has proved a year of adversity for our nation. May the year that has opened prove a turning point in our history. May the hearts of the people of the land be turned back to the worship and service of the living and true God. We pray that all our readers may be richly blessed with the blessings of God's grace in Christ Jesus during this New Year.

Presbytery Meetings (DV)

Outer Isles. At Stornoway on 6th January 1976 at 3.30 p.m.

Southern. At Glasgow on 17th February 1976 at 6 p.m.

Western. At Ullapool on 9th March 1976 at 6 p.m.

Skye. At Portree on 10th February 1976 at 11 a.m.

Northern. At Dingwall on 13th January 1976 at 7 p.m. for the induction of Rev. D. B. Macleod to the Beaully and Dingwall congregation. Rev. John Nicolson, Moderator of Presbytery to preach and preside.

Australia and New Zealand. At Auckland, N.Z., on 23rd January 1976 at 2.30 p.m.

Young People's Conference

It is intended that a conference be held at Kilravock Castle, Croy, near Inverness, between 6th and 8th April, 1976 (DV). Papers are to be given on:

1. Bible Study
2. The Place and Function of a Sound Creed
3. Lessons from the Life of Joseph
4. Distinguishing Characteristics of a Christian.

Rev. A. Murray, MA, has kindly agreed to be the guest speaker. If you wish to attend, please forward your name to Rev. Ian R. Tallach, 77 Nimmo Place, Perth (Tel. Perth 25540) before February 28th, 1976.

London Communion Season

The Kirk Session of the London Congregation have decided that the Sacrament of the Lords Supper be administered, the Lord willing, on the second Sabbath of May, instead of the Sabbath of the 'Easter Weekend' as formerly.

M. M.

Acknowledgment of Donations

The General Treasurer, Mr Wm. D. Fraser, FCMA, 20 Daleview Avenue, Glasgow G12 0HE, acknowledges with sincere thanks the following donations:—

Sustentation Fund: Anon., Finsbay postmark, £5; Anon., Greenock postmark, £30.

Jewish and Foreign Mission Fund: Anon., Londonderry postmark, £5; Anon., Greenock postmark, £30; Anon., Inverness, £200; Achmore Congregation, £50; F.P. Ness, £5, last three for Bulawayo Church Building Fund.

China Mission Fund: Anon., Argyll, £5; F.P., Ness, £5.

Organisation Fund: Anon., Greenock postmark, £10.

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Home of Rest Fund: Anon., Inverness, £100; Visitor, Clydebank, £5; Anon (Collection Plate), £10; Two Friends, £2; Mrs MacD., Lochcarron, £1; A Friend, £250; Mrs F., Inverness, £1; Friend, Lochinver, £10; In loving memory of the late Katie MacDonald, £25, last three per Rev. A. F. MacKay.

The Treasurers of the following congregations acknowledge with sincere thanks:—

Applecross: Miss C. MacK., Ballifeary House, £5 for Sustentation Fund; A Friend, £5 for Home Mission and £5 for Foreign Mission; Raasay Friend at Communion, £3 for Congregational Purposes, all per Rev. A. Murray.

Fearn: In memory of Mrs J. H. Macleod, £5 for Manse Fund.

Fort William: Communion Visitor, £15 per F. R. MacNicol, 2 Cor. 9:15; Harris Friend, £3 per Rev. J. A. MacDonald for Communion Expenses; Visitor, £2 for Manse Fund per Duncan MacNicol, Luke 16:5.

Greenock: A Friend, £10; A Friend, £2; From Wellwisher, Harris postmark, £5, all per Rev. L. MacLeod and all for Congregational Purposes.

Laide: Anon., £5; Wellwisher, Leverburgh, £20; Friend, Leacklea, £5; Friend, Tarbert, £5; Anon., 70p; Wellwisher, Laide, £10; Aultbea Friend, £6; Friend, Porthenderson per A. M. R., £5; Friends, Inverness, £10; Friend, Inverness, £5; From Estate of late Miss M. MacKenzie, Udrigle, £500; Two Friends, Laide, £50; In Collection Plate, Psalm 115:15, £50; Friend, Gairloch, £1.

London: Friend, Ullapool, £5; Friend, Aberdeen, £5, both per Rev. M. MacInnes and both for Church and Manse Building Fund.

North Harris: Misses J. & K. MacK., £3 for Sustentation Fund; West Tarbert, £2 for Home Mission Fund; Harris, £2 for Foreign Mission Fund.

North Tolsta: Anon., £5 for Congregational Purposes; Stornoway Friend, £10 for Sustentation Fund; Two Sisters, North Tolsta, £2 for Communion Expenses, all in Church Plate; Tolsta Friend, £5 for Congregational Purposes per J. Murray, Elder.

Oban: A Friend, £5 per Rev. M. MacSween for Congregational Funds.

Plockton/Kyle: Plockton Adherent (3rd donation), £100 for Manse Building Fund; Envelope in Kyle Plate, £5 for Sustentation Fund, November.

Portree: Friend from Uig, Skye, £2.50 for Home Mission and £2.50 for Blythswood Tract Society; Anon., £5 for Church Door Collection for month of November — in Church Plate; Anon., Braes, £3 for Church Bus; A Friend, £5 for Sustentation Fund; Glendale Friends, £15 for General Purposes, last three per F. M.

Raasay: Roderick MacK., Inveraray, £5 for Sustentation Fund per M. MacKay; M. MacL., Inverness, £2; Skye Friend at Communion, last two per J. M. Macleod and both for Sustentation Fund; Friend, Staffin, £5 for Sustentation Fund per R. D. MacBeath; Friend, Churchton, £3; Friends, £3, both for Communion Expenses and per R. D. MacBeath; Friend, Portree, £5 for Manse Extension per J. M. Macleod.

South Harris: Mrs. R. G., Leacklea, £10; Anon. (Harris House), £5; Mr. R. M., Lingerbay, £2; Mr. J. MacL., Harris House, £5; Mr. D. J. C., Finsbay, £5.

Staffin: Envelope in Plate, £5; Passer-by, £6 per M. M. I., both for Sustentation Fund; Friend, Edinbane, £7; Friend, Edinbane, £1; Friend, £10, last three for Car Maintenance and per Rev. J. MacD.

Stratherrick: Stratherrick Congregation Harvest Thanksgiving Collection, £43 for Home of Rest.

Vatten: £150 from Estate of the late Kenneth MacAskill, Ose, Dunvegan, and Ballifeary House, Inverness, for Congregational Funds.

Wick: Anon., Fearn, £10; Anon., Armadale, £2, both for Communion Expenses and both per Rev. R. R. Sinclair; Anon., Wick, £10 for Foreign Missions.