

THE  
**Free Presbyterian Magazine**  
and Monthly Record

Vol. 85

July 1980

No. 7

## The General Assemblies

### The Church of Scotland

The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland opened in Edinburgh on May 17, when Rev. W.B. Johnstone of Colinton, Edinburgh was appointed Moderator. The Lord High Commissioner representing the Queen was the Earl of Elgin. As Chaplain, the Lord High Commissioner had with him his sister, Lady Alison Stewart-Patterson who is a minister in the Presbyterian Church of Canada. When she addressed the Assembly she pleaded with Scottish congregations to let more women into their pulpits. This call did not go altogether unchallenged. Rev. Brock White spoke against women in the ministry and eldership and called for reconsideration of this whole question. His proposal, however, was rejected. The Principal Clerk to the Assembly, Rev. Donald MacDonald, in answer to a question pointed out that if a minister refused to ordain women his Presbytery could take up a complaint against him and require him to answer for his actions. If he continued to disobey the Acts of Assembly the Presbytery could take appropriate action. This means that the ministers of the Church of Scotland who adhere to the Scriptural view that women should not be ordained to the ministry or eldership and refuse to ordain women to these offices will be subject to the discipline of the Church. It is as though Paul had never written under divine inspiration: "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law." 1Cor.14:34.

In connection with the ministry, the General Assembly by 559 votes to 370 voted to allow an auxiliary ministry to be set up, whose members will be fully ordained but will not be inducted to charges and will not receive a stipend. They will undergo a two-year part-time training and will be

under the direction of Presbyteries. It was claimed that something had to be done to meet the shortage of ministers in the Church. One advantage is that they may not be required to run the gauntlet of the heretical teaching in the divinity colleges. However, Christ has given direction as to how the shortage of ministers is to be supplied: "Pray ye the Lord of the harvest that He may send forth labourers into His harvest." Such sent labourers are greatly needed in the Church of Scotland today.

The publication of 'Yes' magazine, the Church of Scotland's magazine for teenagers came up for review. With a circulation of 8000 it received a subsidy of £12,000 and would require to double its circulation to become self-sufficient. An attempt to suspend its circulation did not succeed. The Editor claimed it was intended for all Scottish teenagers. The content of this Magazine may be gauged from the question the Editor posed and answered. He said: "You might say, 'What has pop music, television and films got to do with the Christian message?' The answer is, that you have to begin where young people are."

The General Assembly created a powerful central Council or Committee under the Convenership of Dr James Matheson. The result is likely to be that there will be a major reduction in the number of Church committees and power will be concentrated in fewer hands. Rev. Robert Logan, Inverness moved against it on grounds of cost. Mr David Maxwell Q.C., who seconded the motion against the proposal, declared: "This proposed Council is not a body with a limited remit but a new tier of Government alien to our presbyterian democratic system." Rev. James Matheson attempted to refute this by saying that the Council must be the servant of the Assembly. In reality there is little doubt that it will tend to undermine the Presbyterian character of the Church of Scotland. Professor Torrence's claim that only through such a powerful body could the Kirk face up to the fundamental problems of today appears to us to be an erroneous one.

The General Assembly gave continued backing to ecumenical parishes though opposition was strongly voiced to the Livingston new town ecumenical experiment on the ground of cost. This experiment has been in operation for 13 years. One minister described it as a complete disaster. One of the most unusual features of this experiment is the Lanthorn Community Centre where Protestants (Church of Scotland, Episcopal, Methodist and Congregational) and Roman Catholic congregations use the same premises for worship. Joint services of Roman Catholics and Protestants are held annually. Rome-wards is the direction in which ecumenism is leading the Church of Scotland.

Opposition to the appointment of a Roman Catholic to the Thomas Chalmers Chair of Theology at Edinburgh University was voiced by Rev. John Gray of Dunblane Cathedral when he proposed that consideration be given to a College for training ministers which would be financed and controlled by the Church. This suggestion was not adopted. Rev. James Fraser, Glasgow also spoke against Professor Mackey's appointment. Professor Mackey, he said, had professed his loyalty to the Roman Catholic Church and to the Society of Jesus since his appointment to the Chair. He reminded the Assembly that the Society of Jesus was resuscitated at the time of the Reformation to suppress Protestantism so it was difficult to reconcile this with his appointment.

To avoid the usual nuclear debate it was proposed merely to vote on the Committee's recommendation in favour of the maintenance of a nuclear deterrent. When this procedural issue was won by 344 votes to 323, no less than 164 commissioners recorded their dissent. The vote on the recommendation was won by 481 votes to 222. Lord Macleod still managed to get in his pacifist views later by a motion stating that the Assembly in our nuclear age practise now Christ's example of non-violence. This was rejected by 170 votes to 150.

Dr Runcie, the new Archbishop of Canterbury received a thunderous welcome in addressing the Assembly. He saw ecumenism as an increasing part of joint mission. He maintained that the needs of today are too great to waste Christian energy in pursuing old rivalries. The Moderator of the Assembly said he hoped the two Churches would come closer together in the developing society of the Eighties.

An attempt to have raffles accepted as a means of raising funds was overwhelmingly dismissed by the Assembly which was very gratifying. Drink was referred to as the scourge of Scotland and a source of shame to its people. It was suggested that steps should be taken to eliminate mass media advertising of drink.

The Assembly expressed profound disquiet at the lack of progress on mixed marriages between Protestants and Roman Catholics. Because of this, couples in this situation faced intolerable pressures. The stumbling block was the baptism and religious upbringing of children of such marriages. The Roman Catholic Church, the Chairman of the Joint Commission said, although it requires no more from the non-R.C. partner than that he or she be made aware of the R.C. partner's obligation, still insists that the R.C. partner do everything in his or her power to have the children baptised and brought up not simply as Christians but as R.C.'s.

## Free Church of Scotland

The new Moderator of the Free Church of Scotland Assembly was Rev. Hector Cameron, Aberdeen.

Rev. Maurice Roberts, Ayr in presenting the Report on Public Questions and Religion and Morals declared that it was imperative for the Churches in the present unsettled age to hold fast to the Apostolic position in terms of doctrine and preaching. He went on to say: "The tragedy is that so many Churches are not holding fast. They are absorbing the spirit of the age. They have virtually stopped preaching the Gospel of Christ altogether. They are going in for the trendy and are ignoring the absolutes of Scripture. To do that is to misread completely the age in which we live." This warning was not misplaced in view of the readiness even within evangelical circles to water down the Gospel and to resort to very questionable methods of attracting the young. Mr Roberts went on to lay the blame for the sorry state of the nation's morality on an unconverted ministry and called on the mainstream Churches to repent of their unhappy experiment with error and return to Biblical orthodoxy.

The Assembly decided to appoint a special Committee to examine the desirability and practicability of setting up a Christian school in Scotland either alone or in co-operation with others, for children whose parents wish them to have the privilege of a Christian education. This was proposed by Rev. Murdo MacRitchie, Stornoway. The school would be non-denominational. This notion was passed over against an amendment by Rev. John Murray, Oban seeking to ask the Special Committee on Education to examine ways in which parents rights could be restored. It will be interesting to see to what conclusion the Committee will come in this matter.

An appeal by a security officer from Lewis against loss of church privileges for working on Sabbath aroused considerable interest as the Kirk Session and Synod had found against him while the Presbytery had found in his favour. The Assembly after a private hearing sustained the appeal and reversed the Synod's judgment on the ground that his work was of the nature of necessity and mercy. The Kirk Session were instructed to restore his privileges. The Principal Clerk to the Assembly stressed that this decision does not represent a resigning from the Biblical authority of the Fourth Commandment. Whatever may be true in the case of this security officer who works with Lewis Offshore at Stornoway, it is certain that the oil production industry is responsible to an alarming degree for many of the inroads that have been made on the sanctity of the Sabbath in Scotland. For this our land shall yet have to pay dearly.

A call for strong opposition to the Abortion laws also came before the Assembly, as well as a call to oppose the squalid industry of pornography. The need to fight for the legal right of parents to ban their children from sex education classes in schools was also stressed. This right, it was stated, was likely to be lost if the Education Bill at present before Parliament was lost.

## Sermon

by Rev. Thos. Boston

"Mine eye trickleth down, and ceaseth not, without any intermission, till the Lord look down and behold from heaven." Lamentations 3:49,50.

Wonder not, that upon this occasion, we have read a mournful text to you; for I suppose if every one of us were taking liberty to express the affections and present frame of our hearts, it would be as Ezra 3:12, 13. "When some wept with a loud voice, and many shouted aloud for joy: so that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy, from the noise of the weeping of the people." So among us, some would weep, some rejoice; and in the meantime, others would stand as unconcerned spectators, who have not found Christ, and therefore cannot rejoice; and do not feel the want of Him, and therefore cannot lament after Him. Yea, perhaps, some would be found, who with one eye would look joyfully, because they have got so much; and with the other weep, because they have not got more. But alas! it is the misery of many that they are too soon pleased. They may begin in the course of mourning with the church here, but cannot hold up with her, but stand still, long before *the Lord look down, and behold from heaven*, and so lose the things which they have wrought. In the text we have,

1. The church's present exercise, and that is mourning. The ground of her mourning was great guilt and heavy affliction, chap. 5:16. Her grief was great, *mine eye trickleth down*. Her sorrow was such as if her eye had been turned into a fountain of tears, and her head into waters. It was lasting, it ceased not: it was not for a fit and away again, and so ended; but it was without intermission, a continual sorrow.

2. The term of the continuance of this exercise. *Till the Lord look down and behold from heaven*. She would take no comfort till the Lord should give it to her. She was seeking the Lord sorrowing, and her eyes cannot dry till she find Him. It was the light of His countenance only, that could

restore her joy. She was resolved her cry should be continually going to the throne, till He that sits upon it, should look in mercy on her, and deliver her.

*Doctrine.* — As it is the duty, so it is the disposition of the godly, exercised under the hidings of the Lord's face, not to give over, nor to sit down contented, till such time as the Lord be pleased to give them a favourable look. We see it was thus with Jacob. He said to God, "I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me." Gen. 32:26. Hosea 12:4. And the woman of Canaan. Matt. 15:22-28. I shall here,

I Show what this imports.

II Give reasons why they are thus disposed.

I I am then, to show what is imported in this. It imports,

1. That a child of God may be under the hidings of God's face. When it is said, *till the Lord look*, this imports that the Lord refused to look on them for the time. *Thou didst hide Thy face*, says David, *and I was troubled*. God will have a difference betwixt the upper and the lower houses. When the saints are above, all the shadows shall flee away, but now clouds may intercept the light of His countenance. This implies that a controversy is apprehended betwixt Christ and the soul. The soul conceives the Lord is angry, for the turning away of the face is the way how we signify our displeasure. When the Lord turns His back, conscience turns its face to the soul, and tells that the Lord is displeased. And O! how bitter must be God's anger to that soul that knows Him. Is His favour sweet as life, then His anger must be bitter as death. It implies also an apprehension of the Lord's laying aside any special concern about them. I do not say but it is a mistaken apprehension, but surely such a thing is here implied for the wife will be ready to think that her husband has forgotten her, when he locks up himself in his chamber, and does not give her a look through door or window. This was David's exercise when he said, "How long wilt Thou forget me, O Lord? for ever? how long wilt Thou hide Thy face from me?" This was Zion's conclusion, though she was mistaken, Isaiah 49:14, 15. The children of God may be under that apprehension, that their high priest hath let them out of His mind, though He remembers them still, and doth them many good offices, which they know not, till afterwards. But it is so long between visits, that they think He hath forgot them.

2. It imports that the hidings of the Lord's face, may continue long with a child of God. The tears for His absence, may trickle down long, ere He

come and wipe them away. "I am afflicted," says Heman, "and ready to die from my youth up." Sovereignty hath the disposal of the time, and sometimes may prolong it, so as it may appear a kind of eternity. Hence such complaints as, "the harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." God will have His people's faith and patience tried, and therefore makes their clouds return after the rain.

3. A holy dissatisfaction with all things, while Christ hides His face. The soul is difficult to please when the Lord is gone. Nothing will stop the fountain of tears here, till the Lord look down from heaven. The word will not please them, and ordinances will not please them, without Him. Psalm 6:6-7 and 27:4. An angel's presence could not satisfy Moses, Exod. 33:15, nor dry Mary's cheeks, while her Lord was taken away. Their life is bound up in His favourable looks, and as Rachel weeping for her children, refuses to be comforted, because they are not, so they cannot be comforted till He return.

4. A wearisome longing after the Lord, Job 7:2-3; and 23:3-4. The soul is looking for his appearance, as the traveller in the night longs for the day-breaking. Most of the causes of weariness concur here, as solitude. The wife lives but a solitary life, when the husband is from home, though the house be thronged with servants; so does the child of God, while the Lord hides His face. Darkness also causeth weariness. It is a pleasant thing to behold the sun; but now the Sun of Righteousness hides His face, and it is a dark hour with the soul, Job 29:2-3. Here also there is some toil. A time of desertion is a toilsome thing to the people of God. "I am weary with my groaning," says David. Duties are hard work, when Christ withdraws. Labour in vain much more causeth weariness. Hope deferred makes the heart sick. Sometimes they no sooner call but God hears, then they need not weary. O but to be standing alone, in the dark hour of the night, trying to break up heaven's gates, to get corruptions mortified, and temptations overcome, and all without felt success, how wearisome must that be? A man's not seeing the end of his work, makes weary work. It refresheth the labourer, to think that when the sun goes down, he will go to his rest; but the people of God, in this case, *see not their signs, nor know the time how long*. They know not what hour of the night it is, and how long it will be till day-break. Finally, continued disappointments from every quarter, from which the soul expects ease, makes weariness in full measure. Job 23:8,9. Jer. 8:15.

5. Some hope that the Lord will yet look down, and behold from heaven. Psalm 42:5. Should they lose all hope, they lose all. It is true their hope may be very low: yet likely they will be able to say, who knows but

He may return and leave a blessing behind. Sometimes they may draw hasty and heavy conclusions against themselves, but hope will set up its head, and make them say with Jonah, "yet I will look again towards God's holy temple;" though it may be sometimes sunk, but all is not lost that is in hazard. Lam. 3:18-21. Hope feeds these weary labourers, and God never allows His people to sink so low, but everlasting arms are still beneath them, to keep them from falling to the bottom.

Lastly, a resolute persisting in duty till the Lord return: The soul resolves never to give over, and so holds on, *till the Lord look down, and behold from heaven*. Sense may often bring bad news, and tell them they have already got the last look of Him, but the soul is resolute, and will not give over. If it must die, it resolves to die in the bed of honour, even at the Lord's footstool, and to dig its grave at His door. We now proceed:

II To give some reasons why they are thus disposed. I shall offer only these few.

1. Felt need of Christ engageth them to this course. You know what determined the lepers that sat at the gate of Samaria. Many see a want of Christ, that feel not their need of Him; hence a few cold wishes, and if that will do, well and good; but if not, they must ever live without Him. But the gracious soul cannot live without Him. They say with Peter, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." Now, necessity hath no law, and hunger will dig through stone walls. And if it cannot dig through them, it will leap over them. The soul still cries, *Lord help me*.

2. Superlative love to Him, engageth them to this. Song 8:6-7. Love can endure any thing but absence, or the loss of the beloved party. Christ hath appeared in His beauty to the gracious soul, and hath captivated his heart, and it is so fixed with the sight of His transcendent excellency and fulness, that he cannot take it back again. The eyes of the soul are opened, and can see no happiness in any other. But in the meantime, the soul cannot cease to desire to be happy, and therefore can never rest, till the Lord look down, and behold from heaven.

*Use 1.* Hence we may see why so many professors fall short of Christ. They are utter strangers to the disposition of the godly. There are many who have not so much sense as to complain of the Lord's distance from them, because their consciences were never so much as touched with any notable common work of the Spirit of God on them. There are others, whose character may be that, "ever learning, and never coming to the knowledge of the truth," they have some movings upon their souls, and they complain; but their complaints are dead, heavy, and inactive. They

may at a communion or so, have something like mourning after the Lord, but all their exercise is like a slight shower, that wets only the surface of the earth, which a little wind presently dries up, ere it can do any good. The concern of their souls for Christ does not last till, but is gone, *ere the Lord look down, and behold from heaven*. Reasons of this are:

1. They have not the living spirit of Christ in them, and so they cannot follow the Lord fully. Numbers 14:24. John 4:14. It is but awakening, and not changing grace they have; therefore it decays by little and little, as the light after sunset, till it grow to perfect darkness. Their reigning sloth being only covered, not subdued, rises again, and overspreads the soul, as weeds do in the spring. Take a branch and ingraft it, it will keep green a while; but if it do not take with the stock, and unite with it, it withers. "If a man," says Jesus, "abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered."

2. There are difficulties in the way to heaven, which their hearts cannot digest. Few see heaven; and why? ease is sweet, and the gate is strait. They love gold, but cannot exert themselves to dig for it. "The desire of the slothful killeth him, for his hands refuse to labour." They see heaven afar off, and would fain be there. But there is a great gulf between them and it, that they dare not venture to swim. Heaven will not drop down into their mouths, hence finding the fruitlessness of their attempts, they despair of mending their case, and then sit down to contrive ways to smooth their consciences.

3. The world and their lusts were never made sapless to them, but still have the chief room in their hearts. Hence, when Christ will not answer, they have another door to go to. They are unlike those who said to Jesus, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." They find rest is sweet, to sit down, and fall short of Christ. They are like a wife called to go forth and meet her husband; but her children, in whom she delights, cry after her, and hold her still. And thus many part with Christ, as Orpah with Naomi.

*Use 2.* You that are in earnest for Christ, yet under the hidings of His face, and all things else insipid to you without Him, you see here how you are to behave, you must hold on seeking *till the Lord look down from heaven*. Take up with no comfort in the world, till you get it from Himself, and from His blood; and be resolute that you will never give over till He look down from heaven, and be sure you shall get a healing look from the Lord. "Shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them." Have you missed Him, have you come short of what God promiseth to His people of what is necessary to

your case; of what you desired of Him? then go from this place, resolved to hang about His hand, and to cry for it till you obtain it; protesting that nothing shall satisfy you, till the Lord look down and behold from heaven; and be sure you shall get your communion yet, though the table be drawn, and not more bread and wine on it.

*Objection 1.* I dare seek Him no more, guilt so stares me in the face, that prayer is a terror to me. *Answer,* This is a fit of indisposition you are under, and sometimes Christians are carried away with it. But if you belong to Christ, you will even take up with prayer again, seeing yourself the greater fool, that ever you laid it aside, if it were ever so short a while. But O hear what Christ Himself says to you. Song 2:14.

*Objection 2.* But I am burdened with a hard heart, I cannot mourn after the Lord; could I seek Him to purpose, I would have hope that He would look down, and behold from heaven. I fear He has nothing to do with me. I see I am all wrong, but I can do nothing to help it. *Answer,* I suppose you may find three hopeful things, even in that case. 1. Self-dissatisfaction. There is a secret discontent with yourself in you. Weak grace is frowning on corruption, though it is not able to master it. 2. Self-condemnation. The man is the vilest creature in his own eyes. He has nothing to commend him to Christ, and he would wonder if He cast him a crumb; saying, "it is of the Lord's mercies, that I am not consumed, and because his compassions fail not. But to this man, saith the Lord, will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word." 3. There is a spark of kindness to Christ in the heart, though the soul has written the bill of divorce, and put it in Christ's hand, yet the soul would not sign it for thousands of worlds. Well then, if you cannot mourn, will you sigh and groan after Him. Rom. 8:26-27. If you cannot sigh, will you give Him an earnest look. "I am cast out of Thy sight," said Jonah, "yet I will look again toward Thy holy temple."

*Objection 3.* The Lord has let me fall into such a gross sin as has wounded my conscience, and I fear He has shaken me off, by letting me fall into it. And whenever that comes in my mind, I cannot think that the Lord will ever look more to me. *Answer,* Have you fled to Christ for a refuge? If you have, then your greatest sins may hide God's face, but shall never part God and you. Psalm 89:30-34. *The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin.* The Lord has designs of good, even in permitting His people to fall. He raises profit to them out of it. Thus God left Hezekiah, in the business of the Babylonian ambassadors, to try him, *that he might know all that was in his heart.* It also brings a revenue of glory to Himself, by His having mercy upon them. And for your continual

disquiet, look that you have not trusted more to your repentance for your sin, than to the blood of Christ, which "alone can purge the conscience from dead works to serve the living God."

*Objection 4.* I have met with so many disappointments, that I can scarcely think but I must give it over. *Answer,* You are not the first that have met with them. Job 23. Song 3. Disappointments are needful for us in several respects. But if you should meet with one on the back of another, till your dying hour, if Christ come at last, you have no reason to repent your waiting on; and come He will, to them that will not want Him. There are three signs when your disappointments may be near an end. 1. When your heart is duly humbled, and you are as a weaned child; when you leave off limiting God; resolving to wait on God, but to prescribe no time to Him. "Lord Thou hast heard the desire of the humble; Thou wilt prepare their heart, Thou wilt cause Thine ear to hear." 2. When you get your case touched, and laid open in the public ordinances. "The watchmen that go about the city, found me," says the spouse, and after this she found her beloved. 3. When you are carried above means, to look over them all to Christ Himself, even passing on from the watchmen, till you find Him whom your soul loveth.

*Lastly,* My case grows worse and worse, heavier and heavier, and always the longer the more hopeless. *Answer,* Wait on till the Lord look down. There is hope in Israel, concerning this thing. Man's extremity is God's opportunity, Isaiah 41:17-18. "For the Lord shall judge His people, and repent Himself for His servants, when He seeth their power is gone, and there is none shut up or left." Christ usually times His visits, so that He may be the more welcome when He comes. It is as with Hagar, who never saw the well, till she gave over the child for death. The darkest hour is readily before day-break. Amen.

## Letter

by Rev. Hugh Martin, D.D.

LASSWADE, 30th April, 1875

My Dear Friend,

Many thanks for the volume you have so kindly sent me. I read part of it last year at Lodgehill with great pleasure, and please accept my cordial thanks for it, and for this proof of your friendship. Let me also say what a pleasant savour I retain of our last conversation at ———. If we are enabled by grace to help each other in any degree in our efforts after a truly Christian life, O! what help should we expect from that "Mighty One" on whom God hath laid help, a help that must go for nothing,

except for being expended on the helpless; a help, that with all its spending, can yet never be spent.

I was meditating this morning on Zechariah, 3rd chapter. How precious what is there unfolded! A sinner clothed in filthy garments, and the "seven eyes" reading him right through, gets laid before him a stone with this wondrous engraving, "I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day." How precious to a guilty one, whose sin has been read to him under the light of the seven eyes, to read now on this stone set straight before him, the writing, "I will remove thine iniquity in one day." O to roll ourselves over on this stone and rest! O to praise God for this most gracious announcement! "I will remove thine iniquity." O to build on this stone, and to be built upon it! The psalmist got a sight of this stone with its wondrous engraving when he said, "Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." He was now in the hiding place, and like Peter on the Mount of Transfiguration, said, "It is good to be here." Ah! David would like to abide there always, to have always a sense of pardoned sin, and to sing a song of deliverance, but he remembers that he has still sin within him and around him to meet and to face; and the Lord, as it were, understands the thought, the unspoken thought, for while David says, "Thou wilt compass me with songs of deliverance," the Lord replies, "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go; I will guide thee with mine eye." As if he said, "Be not dismayed although thy present state is not always realised by thee. Be not afraid to go down from the mount of communion to the tear and war of everyday life. Do not repine at having to go outside from thy hiding-place within the veil. I will preserve thee, I will guide thee, yea, I will set mine eye upon thee, and with my eye upon thee, lift thou thine eye to me; set thine eye toward me, the Lord, as I set mine eye on thee, and thou shalt have light and direction." What a deep, tender affectionateness of intercourse between the psalmist and his God do these verses imply. Is it not sad, and sore, and very sinful to see even a little into this, to get a taste of this sweet reconciliation, and yet to wander and backslide, and fret and be impatient, and have many mournful relapses? What have you to say as to that?

But I must now away to write a lecture I am to deliver on Wednesday evening in Glasgow on "The Relation between the Headship of Christ over the State and over the Church." Too glorious a topic to be treated by me, but Philippians 2, verses 5-11 would help me could I get into them. I think we should have nothing to do with Christ at all, or else make him our all and never stint.

Yours, hurriedly, etc.,  
HUGH MARTIN

## The Conversion of the Jews

There is a day coming in which there shall be a national conversion of the Jews to Christ as stated by the Rev. Thomas Boston in his sermon, 'The Conversion of the Jews'. There are many promises of this in the Old Testament but I shall confirm it from Romans, chapter 11, where the Apostle purposely insists upon it . . . The covenant made with their fathers, particularly with Abraham, Genesis 17, that He would be the God of his seed after him secures their conversion. It was with that covenant, in respect of them, as with some rivers of which it is observed that they run a good way above ground, and then are swallowed up in the earth, and so run many miles underground, but at length break out again, and run above ground till they come to the sea. So the covenant runs visibly till the day of the Apostles, but now its visible efficacy is interrupted, but it will break forth again in their conversion, never to be rejected more. So the Apostle tells us, They are thereby still the *holy nation*, verse 16, The nation particularly dedicated to God, and He will not always want what is consecrated to Himself. The national election is still their privilege, for, verse 28, '*as touching the election they are beloved for the fathers sakes*'. And by virtue of the covenant made with their fathers, God has a love to the nation: and God's will will certainly terminate in good deeds at length: and that because the gift and calling of that nation to the adoption and covenant are irreversible, verse 29 'For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.'

The Apostle expressly asserts it in verses 25, 26. In these he shows that the blindness of the Jews is only in part, and to last only to a certain time, when there shall be a national conversion and so all Israel shall be saved. This is not meant of the spiritual Israel, for their conversion could be no mystery as this is. But as the conversion of the Gentiles was a mystery to the Jews, and to Gentiles themselves under the Old Testament (Eph. 3:3-6), so is that of the Jews to the Gentiles and Jews themselves under the New Testament. And so many Jews then would not believe the one, so many Christians now believe not the other.

Believe it and help it on by your prayers. Ply the Throne of Grace earnestly for it. Join cordially in the public prayers for it and remember it in your family and secret prayers. Be ashamed to say, what is it to us?

They were concerned for us when we were in their case and they in ours, and therefore it is but just that we repay them thus. Song 8:8-9, remember the case seriously. What think ye of Pharoah's butler that remembered not Joseph who was so kind to him in the prison. Brethren

we of the Gentile world were shut up in the prison of unbelief, then they walked at liberty, but minded us. Now they are in that prison and we are let out, and should we forget them. 'For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all'.

God Himself hath shown a peculiar concern for them, not only of old, when He took them for His peculiar people: but since, in that He hath made a particular promise of the conversion of the nation, when that of other nations had been wrapped up in a general promise.

All the means of grace, and acceptance through Christ, that we have now we had originally from them. They were our masters in the knowledge of God, and first put the book, even the book of God into our hands. Isa. 2:3; Luke 24:47. It was their Moses, their prophets, their Apostles (all of them Jews) that wrote this book by which eternal life is brought to us. Nay, it is their countryman Jesus who is the ground of all our hopes, who we believe is the Son of God. 'For of them as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.' He was the light that came out from among them, that enlightened our dark part of the world. And now that their teachers are blinded, will we not put up a petition for them. *Lord that they may recover their sight.*

It is their olive tree unto which we are engrafted, they are the natural branches.

Have you any love to, or concern for the Church, for the work of reformation, the reformation of our country, the reformation of the world? Any longing desire for the revival of that work now at a stand; for a flourishing side of the Church, that is now under decay? Then pray for the conversion of the Jews.

Are you longing for a revival of the Churches, now lying like dry bones would you fain have the Spirit of life enter into them? Then pray for the Jews. For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world; what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the deed. That will be a lively time, a time of great outpouring of the Spirit, that will carry reformation to a greater height than yet has been.

*(Extracts from Sermon)*

*The most tremendous judgments will not reform a nation, without an outpouring of the Spirit; but an outpouring of the Spirit will do it without any outward calamity at all.*

*Thos. Boston*

## Obituaries

### Mdala Philemon Ndebele — An African Elder

No written records of any kind were kept by the Matebele people at the time, therefore Philemon's exact birthday is unknown. He was born at a place called Jingeni, near which today runs the broad Bulawayo-Salisbury highway. Beside the highway, not very far from where his home then was, there is a monument. In Rhodesia, in 1893, the Matabele people made their stand for the overlordship of the land and lost. The monument commemorates their last battle, their defeat and white victory. Their King, Lobingula fled.

Philemon was but an infant of days, when the heavy summer rains came to obliterate all trace of the king's flight across the Gwampa and Shangani forests. As a man, Philemon Ndebele came to know these forests well, dotted as they are now with preaching stations. His father, Warrior Bahlomela, was in the war when he was born, although not engaged perhaps in actual skirmishing. The late elder Mukandla remembered his own father going to Bulawayo with other men "to lay down their spears" after the historic conference in the Matopo hills between an unarmed Cecil Rhodes and the remnants of the belligerent but dispirited Matebele regiments.

Philemon could not remember these events but the pros and cons of the war and the settlement were discussed for years round the 'beer-calabash' by day or by the fire at night. Seventy years later even, I heard these discussed sometimes among the old and sometimes among the young. (Friday evening school debate). It does not require any stretch of the imagination to believe that little Philemon heard very stirring tales. Bahlomele, his father, had four wives, the youngest of whom was Philemon's mother. Dark in more than one sense had Bahlomele been. Had he been given a book he would not have known what to do with it. Had even Philemon 10 years later been presented with a Bible, he would not have been able to read it. Perhaps these few facts may go a little way to show that he was reared, in all respects, in circumstances just like those of other Matabele children of his day. But the subject of this sketch, though 'sometime far off' from God, was 'brought nigh' to Him, despite the obstacles.

There had been a Mission established at Nyathi near the king's home by Rev Robert Moffat, which was followed by other ventures at Shiloh and Hope Fountain. These were ruined by the 1893 rebellion. With peace restored, towns were laid out, as well as roads, and the railway was

extended. The railway was to provide work for Philemon when he grew up, at Bembesi Station. One of the best of these developments was the setting up of 'schools' to teach Africans to read, write and count. These were not attended at this time so much by children as by young men. Part of the daily reading in these Protestant 'schools' was from the Bible. It is remarkable that there were no Roman Catholic priests in the Bulawayo area till the turn of the century. Philemon eventually attended classes organised by the London Missionary Society.

As is well known by Free Presbyterians, their Church, in 1904, sent forth her own missionary in the person of Rev John Radasi, a Fingo tribesman. At Bembesi Station, where there is a Free Presbyterian Church, Philemon Ndebele had his first contact with the black missionary sent from Scotland. Mr Radasi, it seems, taught among other things, that as a matter of duty, people should obtain Bibles for themselves and learn to read them. It appears that from this time forth, Philemon gave attention to reading the Bible regularly. He memorised large portions of the Scriptures. It is impossible to know when in his life Philemon Ndebele experienced the greatest of all changes — his passing from death to life, from the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of God's dear Son. We believe that his reading gave place to a more than ordinary interest in the Bible as the Word of God. He confessed that he was "gripped" by it. That he learned he was a sinner, in need of mercy from God, and that this knowledge he obtained by the illumination of the Holy Spirit, is beyond doubt. That Christ was "all his salvation and all his desire", was equally evident, we think. The desire to be cleansed was often on his lips, as was also another aspect of the nature of the faith that he had, "the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin."

He must have been both a communicant and a leader of men in the year 1925. He led a delegation that approached Rev John Tallach that year asking him to open a school in their community. By 1927, he was conducting public worship, "preaching the Gospel in a small way" as he put it. "The Gospel of Jesus Christ" was an expression that he used often in his discussions. His affection for it continued to the end. While fit, he walked and cycled miles along sandy tracks in scorching heat, to hold services "in his own small way". He regarded himself as a 'ncedisi' (helper) and had a more than ordinary respect for the 'abefundisi' (ministers) for their work's sake. He was a humble and inoffensive man, one of the most self-effacing one could ever meet. He was not, conversationally, gifted. Yet he could, when compelled, give such a withering rebuke (ever so rarely)! Always polite and civil, he could, with

a few soft-spoken sentences, deflate a most difficult person. "God is light" he often quoted, "and in Him is no darkness, at all. If we say we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth." One cannot help believing that this was the reason for his authority and for the respect he commanded.

In 1939, he was made an elder at Mlizane, and in 1945 he was removed to Zenka and there, with his family, built up a new home. He had been, after his marriage, employed by a Swiss-German farmer. He always spoke well of Mr Gerber, who had taught him 'European' farming methods. Philemon Ndebele was a most diligent worker (it was one of his principles) as a tiller of the soil and stock-rearer. His fields, his flocks, his method, were the admiration of many, the envy of some. Very few could imitate him, apart from some of his own family, whom he taught to be industrious, while others let their young men roam at will. We believe that the Lord prospered him. He preferred more to give, than to receive, and his family of seven never went hungry.

But he taught his children better things. His own private Bible reading was a good example to them. He prayed with them, and for them, at family worship. What was wrong, or even suspect, in the culture of the Matabele people had no place given in his home. He was himself completely liberated from the superstitious reverence commonly given the 'amadlozi' (ancestral spirits). Witch doctors and their kind he would never consult, and he and his like-minded wife regarded these things as "the unfruitful works of darkness". Even flippant discussion of these matters was frowned on. One formed the opinion, years ago, that his family were as much in ignorance about African superstitions, as white children in that land would have been. They, as children, never got initiated. It will be his family's condemnation if any of them have not improved their privileges.

Acting as a 'kraal head' and assisting the African chiefs, he, in this way, co-operated with the "white administration" of the African Tribal lands. When any African had reason to complain to him privately about what they felt was 'European' ill treatment of the Africans, Mdala Ndebele's reply always was, "The Lord knows all about it." (There was much implied in that.) Someone said to me (perhaps questioningly) that Mdala Ndebele "would almost say it was sinful not to pay Government taxes." He knew his Bible well. (Matt 17:24 and 22:17) When offered a position as Councillor, by the Local Office, he refused because, though only a layman, he feared it would interfere with the progress of "the Gospel of Jesus Christ". "No man can serve two masters," he said. He was assaulted

and severely beaten during the recent guerilla warfare. The new Zimbabwe would have given him no joy, we think, had he lived to see it. He would have desired a better Zimbabwe. But he sought a better country still, even an heavenly, whose builder and maker is God.

As related in the Gaelic Supplement of this magazine, when the Rev. B. B. Dube was inducted to the Zenka congregation, there was much terrorist activity in that area, so that many were weakened and afraid. Philemon Ndebele visited Mr Dube and spoke to him about witnessing on the side of Christ in dark and troublous times, emphasising the privilege and honour of doing so. Mr Dube was greatly encouraged by the aged man's advice.

On the Thursday before he died, many of the congregation desired that they should hear Elder Ndebele speak to them, perhaps for the last time. He said he would try, intending to speak to them from the text which says, "for we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved we have . . . an house not made with hands eternal in the heavens", but he could not, through weakness, address them, though the congregation gathered at his home. Another old elder Magaya Ncube, had come and old Ndebele asked him to try to speak from these same words, which he did. On Saturday, Elder Ncube went to speak to him, and he was exhorted by Elder Ndebele to continue teaching and to be faithful to his church, and to those things which they both had knowledge of. Before he died he advised his wife to be firm, not to allow the younger ones to over-rule her in the home, and to ensure the keeping of the Lord's Day as they had used to keep it. Then on Sabbath morning he was taken to his Eternal Rest.

At his funeral, Rev. B. B. Dube conducted worship, and also spoke briefly from the words "for I know whom I have believed and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day." Mr Dube was one of those who heard Ndebele preaching, many years before, from these words and was impressed by them.

Thus ended the unblemished life of one who was reared in the midst of abounding ungodliness.

*"Mark thou the perfect and behold,  
the man of uprightness  
because that surely of this man  
the latter end is peace."*

*A.N. and D.M.C.*

### **The late Murdo MacDonald, Elder, Achmore, Lewis**

This worthy man, for twenty-five years an Elder in the Stornoway congregation, finished his course in time on 16th June, 1979, in his ninetieth year.

From the time of his new birth Murdo MacDonald proved to be a most devoted and humble follower of the Lamb. Of his conversion he was wont to give, in his own inimitable way, a graphic and interesting account when speaking at fellowship meetings. He found himself a sinner in an estate of sin and misery, lost and ruined, under the omniscient eye of Him whose voice was heard in Eden enquiring after Adam — "Where art thou?." By the teaching of the Holy Spirit this was to lead in Murdo's case to a recognition of Christ as the Redeemer who bruised the head of the serpent and Who loved him and gave Himself for him. In believing, he rejoiced "with joy unspeakable and full of glory". Throughout his life he adorned the doctrine of God his Saviour ever conscious of his own natural depravity and that salvation was truly of grace.

Domiciled for the most part of his life at Achmore, he zealously did what he could to maintain the Lord's cause there and over many years, in the absence of regular supply, he single-handedly conducted the services in the church on Sabbath and week-day. This he did with great acceptance. As a Christian man he was highly respected by all in the community, young and old. His home was ever open to the Lord's people and at communion seasons in particular it was wont to be filled to capacity.

In 1956 his only son, dearly beloved, lost his life in a gallant but unsuccessful attempt to save a shipmate on board a whaler in the South Atlantic. This was hard on flesh and blood but the grief-stricken father accepted it with true Christian submission. His wife, who also belonged to Achmore, predeceased him by many years. He is survived by his daughter Christina and grandson Donald Murdo living at Galson and to them we anew express our sympathy.

The sight of his hoary head in the Elders' pew, whether in Stornoway or Achmore, was ever an encouragement to his minister and his passing is lamented. In prayer he spoke as if "seeing Him who is invisible". He was laid to rest in Crossbost cemetery until the dead in Christ shall arise to be — in words often quoted by himself — "openly acknowledged, and acquitted in the day of Judgment, and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God to all eternity".

J.M.

## Purity of Worship

(The following letter against uninspired hymns and organs in worship appeared in *The Christian Sentinel*, a Canadian magazine. The author we take to be Mr George Forrest, Brucefield. For loyalty to the Lord Jesus, he had been compelled to separate himself from the fellowship of the Presbyterian Church. A Methodist neighbour, learning of this action, kindly invited him to worship in the Methodist Church. The following letter gives the Presbyterian's reasons for declining the Methodist invitation. We publish the letter for its argument by a layman on behalf of purity in the worship of God.) — F.P. Mag Vol. 7, page 252.

My Dear Friend — In writing these lines I have no intention or expectation of making you withdraw your allegiance from the Methodist Church. That is not my object at all, but rather to state, in as plain language as I can, my reasons for not accepting the invitation which you so kindly extended to me the other night, to come and worship with you in the Methodist Church. I stated at that time that because they use hymns of human composition, to the exclusion of the Psalms of the Bible, and also use an organ in the service of praise, and as I find no authority in the Word of God for using any of these things, therefore I cannot conscientiously join in that part of the service. For I still hold by the Reformation principle — “that what is not commanded in worship is forbidden,” for “God may not be worshipped in any other way than is prescribed in His Word.”

But we are again and again commanded to sing Psalms. In proof thereof see the following Scriptures: “Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him,” I Chron. 16:9. “Take a psalm, and bring hither the timbrel,” Ps. 81:2. “Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him,” Ps. 105:2. “Sing unto the Lord with a harp; with the harp and the voice of a psalm,” Ps. 98:5. We have all these in the Old Testament and if we turn to the New Testament we find that it teaches the same thing. “But be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,” Eph. 5:18,19. “Teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord,” Col. 3:16. “Is any merry? let him sing psalms,” James 5:13. Then in Matthew 26:30 and in Mark 14:26 we have Christ's own example; for when He was closing the Old Dispensation by observing the last Passover, and instituting the New Dispensation by observing the first Supper, He, with His disciples, “sung an hymn” (rendered in the margin of the Bible, “or psalm”), or what is known as the “Great Hallel” which was always sung at

the Passover. It began at the beginning of the 113th Psalm, and portions were sung at different intervals during the ceremony, until they concluded both the ceremony and the Hallel with the closing verses of the 118th Psalm.

In these passages we have simply the command and the example to sing psalms, but if we turn to Psalm 95:1-3 we will find a reason given why we should sing psalms. "O come, let us sing unto the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms. For the Lord is a great God, and great King above all gods." Now these are the words that the Spirit of the Lord has put into the mouth of His people to sing to His praise. And mark, it is because He is a great King. Well, where there is a king there is authority, there is power, and the king is surely the best judge of what is most acceptable to himself. And would it not be a daring thing in me to set aside these God-given songs, and come before Him with others of mere human composition, no matter how good they may be or how much I might esteem them myself, or what others might think of them?

In this connection turn to Malachi 1:14. It might be well to read the whole passage, but mark this particularly — "But cursed be the deceiver that hath in his flock a male, and voweth and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing; for I am a great King, saith the Lord of hosts, and my name is dreadful among the heathen." Now, this language is adapted to the Old Testament Church, but it is also applicable to the New Testament Church. For observe that the male was the very thing that the Lord had appointed and commanded to be brought to Him in sacrifice, and see the doom on the deceiver who would keep that back and present a corrupt thing. Now, would I be any better than that deceiver if I should throw aside these songs which the Lord the King has given to me to sing to His praise, and bring before Him the productions of a corrupt creature like myself? For no matter how nice they may appear, they have always the marks of corrupt fingers upon them. And I would like to bear in mind that I have to deal with a great King in this matter, a King who has authority and likewise power.

But it is not only the thought of power and authority that should influence me in this matter; but the thought of His love and mercy, and grace, and His wonderful condescension should make me accept and use the gift which He has so graciously given me. And I am sure that it is for my profit to obey, for "in keeping his commandments there is great reward."

Again, a great many hymns are less or more erroneous in the subject-matter of them. Then the very fact that I have to sit in judgment on them before I begin to sing them is in itself a strong argument against their use. I may not be capable of judging in every case what is right or what is wrong. But I have no such difficulty with the Psalms of the Bible, for they are the production of the Spirit of the Lord. For the Psalmist says, "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his words were in my tongue." If then, the Lord hath given me these beautiful and comprehensive songs, and as a great King hath commanded me to sing them to His praise, can I set them aside and use anything else in their place and not be guilty of the crime of rebellion against that great King? I have been told by some that the hymns which they use are all scriptural and have no error in them, and therefore it is right to use them in the worship of God. But even if that statement be true (which I very much doubt, and I might use a stronger expression), that is not the point to which I would specially call your attention, but the authority of the King, who is not to be worshipped in any way not prescribed in His Word.

But one other thought before I leave this part of the subject. In singing Psalms we are often using Christ's own words. The Psalmist says, "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me and his words were in my tongue." Well, in the 34th Psalm we have these words, "Extol the Lord with me, let us exalt his name together." Now, think of that: the Lord Jesus Christ, by His Spirit, calling you and me to join with Him in exalting and extolling the name of the Lord of Glory condescending to ask us to help Him to praise his own glorious name? And yet we are asked to put aside these glorious songs, and for what? Well, for very little; for the hymns, in comparison with the Psalms, are very little indeed, although in their own place they, at least some of them — are very good. But their place ought never to be to displace an ordinance of the Lord.

So much for hymns, but what about the organ?

I have no doubt but some will be very ready to seize upon some of the texts that I have quoted in favour of the Psalms, to prove that it is right to use instruments in the worship of God. But let us examine the matter a little more closely. It is granted that instruments were allowed, or commanded, if you like, to be used in the Temple service. But there is nothing in the New Testament Church to correspond with the Temple of the Old. Both it and the ceremonies connected with it were typical of Christ and His work. But when Christ came and accomplished what was therein typified, then the types and ceremonies were done away with. There was no more need for them, for they were only "Carnal ordinances

imposed until the time of reformation." But Christ being come, He is our Temple, our altar, our sacrifice, and our High Priest. So all these instrumental accompaniments of the Psalms that came in under the ceremonial law were put aside with the rest of the ceremonies. Not so the Psalms themselves. They are moral, and are therefore adapted to both dispensations.

But instruments were never used in Christian worship until they were brought in after the Roman apostacy, and are therefore anti-Christian. Or to use the words of Dr Owen, "When spiritual life decayed in the Church, they brought in the fine arts to make up with outward show what they wanted in spiritual life." I have often heard the 150th Psalm quoted as giving authority for the use of the organ. But if that be granted, it proves altogether too much, for it is in the form of a command to use not only the organ but also trumpet, psaltery, harp, timbrel, dance, stringed instruments, and cymbals. Now if that be so, then the Churches which are not using all these things, are, to say the least of it, guilty of the sin of omission, and the Churches that are using the organ only are guilty of separating or putting asunder what God in His Word hath joined together. Nay more, once admit this, and we are bound to adopt the whole Jewish ritual, sacrifices and all. But, as mentioned before, these all came under the ceremonial law and came to an end with the rest of the ceremonies. They are only the weak and beggarly elements, to which Paul said the Galatians again desired to be in bondage.

But to come back to the two things, the organ and the hymns, they were never used in the Christian Church until brought in by the Papacy. They were put out at the Reformation, and if I am not misinformed, they were not brought in again until about the year 1745, when Mr Wesley introduced them again, and I think it was the same year that the Church of Scotland smuggled in the Paraphrases which are just on the same level with the other hymns. Now, see how in less than 150 years they have succeeded in driving the Lord's songs out of His Church altogether, at least out of some branches of it. But the whole secret lies in this, The Psalms are spiritual, and before they can be appreciated, there must be a spiritual taste.

I have never yet heard a good solid reason for preferring the hymns to the Psalms. I have heard some say that they liked them better than the Psalms, and that they enjoyed them better than they did the Psalms. But the mere fact that I like a thing is no proof that that thing would be good for me. I might like something that would be very injurious to my health. And if that be so in temporal things, how much more in spiritual things?

For we read that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned," and that "the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." This being the case, what need have I for serious self-examination, to see where I stand, if I am preferring any thing of man's invention in the worship of God instead of what He Himself has appointed in His Word.

But I need not enlarge. You will understand by this why I cannot join the Methodist Church, and why I did not accept your kind invitation to worship with you. But the Methodists are not by any means alone in this matter. The Presbyterians are also in the transgression. May the Spirit of Truth guide us unto all truth.

## Book Reviews

**A Basket of Fragments** by R. M. McCheyne. Christian Focus Publications — Paperback £2.45.

This particular Basket in the form of a book, contains fragments of some of McCheyne's sermons taken down by a hearer. They could be grouped more or less as follows: There are 5 on the work of the ministry, and 1 on "the office of ruling elder". These were preached by one who was, he says, "deeply persuaded that that church will flourish best that is ruled best". (p119) There are 8 sermons on the Person and work of Christ, and 5 on experimental Christianity. Jesus is the Saviour of those who are His people but He is also offered to the lost, outside the fold. To the latter there are at least 6 awesome sermons addressed, ranging from Noah's Ark to the "Mental Agonies of Hell". There are 10 others on various doctrines and subjects making 37 in all, well worth reading. Rev. Alexander Moody-Stuart said of them that they are "powerful when read", and with this we agree fully. It is this power we need in our day.

D.M.C.

**Concordance of the Metrical Psalms.** Free Presbyterian Publications. Price £4.

This limited reprint of the Concordance of the Metrical Psalms, which had become so rare as to be practically unobtainable, is to be welcomed. It is appropriate that our Publications Committee should bring out this reference book in view of our Church's contendings for purity of worship

and for the exclusive use of the Psalms for praise in the public worship of the sanctuary.

The book is likely to be of considerable help to ministers in the selection of suitable psalms to be sung, appropriate to the subject discoursed on. It may also bring into more frequent use certain of the psalms which have been comparatively neglected hitherto. The concordance will also be of use to individual Christians to aid them in finding a verse or portion of a verse in the metrical psalms which comes to their mind.

As this is a limited edition we would warn readers that once it is sold out it is not likely to be reprinted for many years to come.

D.B.M.

## Notes and Comments

### Quebec's Status

The people of Quebec voted by a convincing majority against separation from the rest of Canada. While this is a very satisfactory result yet the separatist leader and Quebec Premier, Mr Rene Levesque has won the concession from the Federal Prime Minister, Mr Pierre Trudeau, of changes in the constitution. These proposals are likely to be discussed at a meeting of Premiers of the ten provinces called by Mr Trudeau. Roman Catholic and French-speaking Quebec has proved a thorn in the side of Canada for many years and has already won many concessions for her allegiance to the federal dominion. It is likely that she will demand many more for remaining part of Canada, the other provinces being forced to concede these special privileges for the sake of unity. Only a day of the Gospel in Quebec and throughout all the provinces of Canada will truly unite the hearts of the people into one nation.

### The Police

The Chairman of the Police Federation, Mr James Jardine, gave a warning about those who were attempting to blacken the police service and brand policemen as brutal bullies who terrorise innocent people. The picture that is painted, he said, is an absurd distortion of the truth.

It is clear that there are those in our country who are deliverately attempting to discredit the police. This has always been standard practice with Communists as loss of confidence by the public in the forces of law

and order will make a Communist takeover more likely. While it is true that there are sad lapses in some instances in the case of police officers who have let down the service, the great majority of policemen have remained steadfast and to them, in large measure, we owe the peace and liberty which we still enjoy. The police need our support and encouragement in the difficult and unenviable task they have to do on our behalf.

### **Death Penalty**

The Prison Officers' Association voted to press the Government to hold a referendum on re-introducing capital punishment. One delegate in supporting the move said: "When a person goes out with a loaded gun with criminal intent, then to me it is premeditated and that person should, I believe, be made to pay with his life."

At the same time news has come of moves to ban the death penalty as an inhuman punishment under the European Convention on Human Rights. The British representative argued against this claiming that retention or abolition should be left to individual member states.

For those who refuse to accept the biblical requirement of the death penalty for deliberate premeditated murder, the increase in the number of murders in this country since the abolition of the death penalty should be convincing. It is not capital punishment which is inhuman but its removal, which has caused the deaths of so many innocent lives.

### **Concern for the Kirk**

A group known as "Concern for the Kirk" has been formed on the initiative of six societies including the Scottish Reformation Society and the Lord's Day Observance Society of Scotland to protest against what they see as dangerous trends in the Church of Scotland. A Rally was held in the Usher Hall, Edinburgh in May. The issues to which the group are opposed are matters such as ecumenical parishes, the admission of children to communion, last year's appointment of a Roman Catholic, Professor James Mackey to the Thomas Chalmers Chair of Theology at Edinburgh University, and to young men being taken into the ministry mainly on academic grounds rather than on grounds of devotion.

The need for firm opposition to the trends within the Church of Scotland is only too evident. Whether this particular group will be able to promote a real concern for the Church of Scotland has yet to be seen but their choice as Chairman of Dr Andrew Herron, who as Moderator of

Assembly visited the Pope, was not a happy one. May the Lord be pleased graciously to raise up within the National Church faithful men who will resolutely oppose the evils which have permeated that body and rid the Church of them root and branch.

### Common Market

An attempt by a Labour Member of Parliament to introduce a Bill for another referendum on continued United Kingdom membership of the Common Market was defeated by 219 votes to 125. In speaking on the issue Mr Canavan said that the majority of people now realise that membership of the Common Market has been an unmitigated disaster. He also stated that while we cannot blame the Common Market for all our economic ills, yet membership has made things significantly worse.

Britain has paid dearly for membership of the Common Market. How much better she would have been had she continued her close association with the nations of the Commonwealth and looked for Divine protection from her enemies instead of relying upon the strength of the nations of Western Europe.

## Letter from Zimbabwe

9 Robertson Street,  
Bulawayo,  
Zimbabwe.  
17th May, 1980

Dear Friends,

For Missionaries, one aspect of Mission life is that of considerable travel over land and sea.

Already this year, Miss Shiela Macleod our auditor has visited our Mission with the purpose of auditing the Mission Accounts; and has returned after completing work which in the past has often proved difficult to accomplish but now, with our own auditor on the spot, it makes things so much easier for us all. For this we are grateful.

In April Rev. A. Ndebele and Mr David Ndlovu left for Holland and the U.K., as representatives of the Church here, and to do the useful work of keeping a physical and spiritual connection with the Church in other parts. A few days after they left Miss J. Cox arrived from New Zealand. We are glad to have Miss Cox with us after a two year absence; however on this occasion, not as a Nursing Sister but to take over the post

of Miss J. Nicolson as Clerk/Treasurer. We are indeed grateful to Miss Cox for undertaking this responsible post and thereby relieving Miss Nicolson.

Miss Jean Nicolson, as you no doubt know, is long past the age of retirement, but nobly undertook to fill the post of Clerk/Treasurer when there were none to offer their services. On Monday, 19th May, Miss Nicolson flies home to Edinburgh. For us in a way it is a sad occasion, since we are losing a good and a wise friend. We wish the blessings of the Covenant-keeping God to follow her in time and into Eternity.

As regards myself and family, the time has come in the Providence of the Lord to move from Bulawayo to Laide Congregation, bringing to an end my work in Africa.

In connection with last year's work in Bulawayo, I have already written to the Synod about Mgusa, a new station about five miles from Bulawayo. In the kind governing of God this came about by my meeting a white farmer in the course of Mission business. Getting to know the farmer also brought about my getting to know his workmen and having worship in their homes. This in turn, developed into building a small church where we now have regular services every Sabbath morning. Numbers fluctuate both in the church and in the Sabbath School, but in all a reasonable number attend, especially in the light of the dark times in which we live. In this particular area there are a considerable number of squatters; these are families of no sure abode who live in very poor circumstances. In such a situation there is ever a call to attend to the needs of the poor, and clothing from Holland has proved invaluable in helping the people. Also, the cost of building our little church at Mgusa was met by funds from Holland, and we feel that we cannot over-emphasise their kindness when it is so constant and overflowing. May God raise up poor lost sinners from Mgusa, to shine as the stars in the firmament for ever and ever.

In connection with development in Bulawayo, a further church site has been located and given to us by the City Council of Bulawayo. This site lies separate from the mainstream of African townships, and in a most industrial part where there are many souls. We have been given two years grace to complete a Church building on this site, to cost no less than \$10,000.00. That however will fall on the shoulders of my successor, who I trust will be provided in the kind Providence of the Lord. Wonderfully the Lord has blessed us as a church with two African students for the Ministry; it may be that in the plan of God one of them may yet be in Bulawayo. It is hoped that they may be ready for licencing in April of next year. God surely has a purpose of mercy for lost souls when men are

raised up to preach Christ, since He Himself has said, "How shall they hear without a preacher?"; and, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptising them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you."

The services at Methuen Barracks go on as in the past, but attendance is very low. What the future holds for services in Army Barracks is hard to say. But one thing we can predict is that if Governments are faithful to Communistic ideology, the worship of Christ will be swept aside to make room for the atheistic teachings of Marxism.

We pass on from Bulawayo to other sectors of our Mission work. Last week I visited Mbumba Hospital for the first time for two years. Surprisingly, little damage has been done; however, due to the war situation a degree of minor damage is evident. But white ants, termites which have been particularly bad this year have caused much destruction; and damp in the foundations is affecting the walls. The fact that the buildings have been unoccupied for such a long period has led to rapid deterioration. On a rough estimate, to bring all this property to its former state would cost between \$7,000.00 and \$10,000.00. Another added cost will be the erection of a security fence; this will be in the region of \$13,000.00. This item is considered essential, since in the foreseeable future there will be an element of danger due to the possibility of armed bandits. At present we are proceeding with the suggested plan for the reopening of the Hospital at Mbumba.

As you know our Primary Schools under the Mission in the Nkai District were forced to close down due to the war situation. After much discussion and negotiation it has been decided to reopen those schools where the parents wish to comply with our supervision as in the past, and that emphasises the regular teaching of the Scriptures. Our Mission is not to be responsible for the financial running of these schools except as the Responsible Body through which the Government pays the teachers. Our great problem for hospital and schools is to know future government policy. True, the people have had the promise of free education and medical treatment in the Election Manifestoes, but at present they are not able to fulfil that; we at present are to continue as in the past, and this is in accordance with the advice given by the Medical and Educational Departments.

We need the continual guidance of God in these difficult problems, and look as in the past for the support of all our friends, by their prayers and tithing. This being my last letter as a member of staff on the Mission

Field, I wish to thank all concerned who so graciously helped us in the past, and I take the opportunity of reminding you that the Church in Africa will need your prayers and practical help for the future; and perhaps even more so than in the past — the future alone can tell!

Wishing you every blessing,

Yours sincerely,  
Donald A. Ross

## Church Notes

### **Perth Communion (D.V.)**

The Communion at Perth will be held as usual on Sabbath 24th August, — the fourth Sabbath of August (D.V.). As on previous occasions the services will be held at the Forteviot Hall, Pomarium, off St Leonard's Street. The times of the services will be as follows:- Thursday 7.30 p.m.; Friday 7.30 p.m.; Saturday 3 p.m.; Sabbath 11 a.m. and 6.30 p.m.; Monday 7.30 p.m.

It is expected that Rev. Donald A. MacLennan, Uig (Lewis) will assist on this occasion.

### **Induction at Kinlochbervie**

On the evening of Tuesday, 3rd June 1980 the Northern Presbytery met in the church at Kinlochbervie to induct Rev. Fraser Tallach to the joint charge of Kinlochbervie & Scourie at which was present a large representative gathering of about 200 people. The Moderator, Rev. D. B. MacLeod, presided and preached from the words contained in the message to the Church at Philadelphia: "Behold, I have set before thee an open door and no man can shut it" — Rev. 3, verse 8. In the course of his remarks, the Moderator pointed out that in the ministry which they receive from the Lord Jesus Christ, the ambassadors of Zion's King are directed to the field of labour which is appointed them, and that under the Lord's blessing doors of opportunity would open to them, entrance into the hearts of sinners gained and success assured in the face of many adversaries, opposed to their work. In the settlement of a minister over the congregation that evening the Lord was saying afresh; "I have set before thee an open door" and that, although the preaching of the Gospel was in itself a weak instrument in the Lord's work, yet the weakness of God was stronger than men. He wished the minister success in the new field of labour on which he was entering. Sermon over, the Narrative was read, the stated Questions were put to the minister and satisfactorily

answered, and the Formula signed. The Moderator then with solemn prayer inducted Mr Tallach to the pastorate of the congregation and the right hand of fellowship was given by members of the Presbytery.

Rev. R. R. Sinclair addressed the minister on the duties of the ministry, particularly taking notice of the need of maintaining a Christian character, attending to private study and secret prayer, expounding simply the great doctrines of the bible, and the regular visitation of his flock and in doing this, "Thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ" — 1 Tim. 4, verse 6. Rev. J. Ross then addressed the congregation, emphasising the people's duty of waiting upon their minister's public services with attention and prayerful desire to profit by his labours, for "They watch for your souls as they that must give account" — Heb. 8, verse 17. Ministers from other Presbyteries of the Church were associated with the Presbytery and were called upon to speak. Rev. J. W. Ross, Rev. N. Ross and the former minister of the congregation, Rev. J. Tallach, expressed their good wishes and prayed for Mr Tallach's success in his ministry. The Clerk read messages of good will from Rev. F. MacDonald, Clerk of Mr Tallach's former Presbytery of Skye, Rev. D. A. MacLean and Rev. A. Morrison, Oban. The meeting was then closed with the singing of a psalm and the benediction.

In a day in which the professing Church suffers from a declining ministry and congregations lie neglected for several years, it is remarkable that the Kinlochbervie and Scourie people had not to face a long vacancy. Rev. F. Tallach came from Broadford to continue the ministerial labours of his brother, Rev. J. Tallach, who was called to Aberdeen in June of last year. The people were therefore pastorless for less than a year. The Presbytery feel grateful for this fresh accession to their strength, so quickly obtained. May the ministry of Mr Tallach be richly blessed by the Great Head of the Church.

A.F.M.

### **Barnoldswick Congregation**

The communion was held in this Congregation on the 2nd Sabbath of June. Rev. D. J. MacDonald, Perth, assisted the interim-moderator with the services. Some friends from Glasgow and Edinburgh came for the occasion. The sacrament of baptism was administered on the Saturday.

On Friday, two elders and two deacons were ordained and admitted to office in the congregation. Messrs Roy Middleton and Terry Cooper are the new elders and Messrs Chris Metcalf and Tom De Lacy are the new deacons. This was a big step forward in the history of the congregation

and we hope that it will be accompanied with the blessing of the Lord, so that the new office-bearers may get grace to be faithful to their ordination vows and useful to the Cause of Christ in these parts.

Considerable progress has been made in the preparing of the new Church for public worship. While there still remains quite a few items to complete, it was agreed that the new Church should be opened for public worship on Saturday, 13th September, 1980, the service to begin at 2.30 p.m. (DV)

The debt on the Church building at the date of completion is expected to be in the region of £11,000.

It may be possible to arrange for a bus to travel from Glasgow to Barnoldswick for this occasion and it would certainly be a great encouragement for this small congregation to have such support from Scotland. If arrangements can be made, interested friends will be informed nearer the date. (DV).

(Rev.) Donald MacLean,  
Interim-moderator

## Acknowledgement of Donations

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

**Sustenance Fund:** Hebridean, Glasgow postmark, £5; Anon., Ontario, Canada, \$40.00.

**Organisation Fund:** Anon., £50 towards Synod expenses.

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

**Breasclete:** Friend of the Cause £20; In memory of a beloved son and brother, Alex. Dan Smith, from Smith Family £160, both for decorating of Church.

**Fort William:** MacLeans, Tyndrum £5 for Sust. Fund per Rev. J. A. MacDonald.

**Gairloch:** Two Lewis Friends £10 for Congr. Fund; Croft, Poolewe £5; A. P. £10, both for Car Fund, all per Rev. A. E. W. MacDonald; Four Lovers of the Truth (Gairloch Congr.) £100 for painting of Manse; Estate of the late Bella Mackenzie (Gairloch Home) £670.07 for Congr. Purposes.

**Greenock:** D.R.M., Glasgow £15 for Congr. Purposes per Rev. L. MacLeod; Anon., Glasgow postmark £5 for Communion Expenses per Gen. Treas.; Anon., (envelope in plate) £5 for Trinitarian Bible Society.

**Kyle:** Kyle Friends £340.30 for re-decorating Church; Staffin Friend £10; Envelope in plate £10; Friend £100, last three for Manse Building Fund.

**Ness:** In memory of a much loved brother £50; Mr & Mrs MacLeod, California £15, both for Congr. purposes.

**Stornoway:** Friend, Achmore, in memory of the late Rev. M. Gillies £20 for Sust. Fund; Friend, Glasgow £60 for Car Fund, both per Rev. J. MacLeod.

**Watnish:** In loving memory of one that is gone £8.57 for Congr. Purposes.