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Meeting of Synod 1987

The annual meeting of the Synod of the Church took place on Tuesday 19th May, 1987 when the retiring Moderator, the Rev. Donald Beaton MacLeod, M.A., preached to a large congregation from the words in Acts of the Apostles, chapter four and verse 12 — “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”

The various Presbyteries of the Church were represented as follows —
NORTHERN PRESBYTERY: Ministers — R. R. Sinclair, A. F. MacKay, A. Murray, D. B. MacLeod, S. F. Tallach, John Tallach, John Ross and D. M. Boyd. Elders — W. Taylor, R. W. M. MacKenzie, R. MacLeod, E. M. Sutherland, H. MacKenzie, D. S. Kelly, I. MacLean, E. Fraser and D. MacPherson.

SOUTHERN PRESBYTERY: Ministers — J. A. MacDonald, Donald MacLean, L. MacLeod, A. McPherson, D. J. MacDonald, Angus Morrison, G. I. MacAskill and D. C. MacAskill. Elders — D. MacNicol, W. D. Fraser, J. MacDonald, R. K. MacCuish, A. MacLean, K. Gillies, A. N. MacRae, M. I. Matheson, T. Jackson, D. R. MacSween, R. Middleton and I. McKenzie.

WESTERN PRESBYTERY: Ministers — Angus MacKay, A. E. W. MacDonald, J. W. Ross, D. A. Ross, N. M. Ross and A. N. MacPhail. Elders — R. MacLean, J. van Woerden, T. Maton, D. MacCuish, W. G. MacLeod and E. Ross.

SKYE PRESBYTERY: Ministers — F. MacDonald, D. Nicolson and H. I. MacKinnon. Elders — N. Beaton, R. Annand, J. Campbell, R. MacBeath, D. MacKay and M. MacKay.

OUTER ISLES PRESBYTERY: Ministers — John MacDonald and John MacLeod. Elders — J. Buchanan, A. J. Morrison, F. Thomson, J. MacAskill, D. MacDonald and D. MacKinnon.

CANADIAN PRESBYTERY: Ministers — Rev. M. MacInnes. Elders — J. C. Fraser and G. Schuit.

A letter from the Rev. James Tallach was read explaining his absence due to his being engaged in Church business overseas. Revs. D. J. MacAskill and Alex. Morrison both sent in letters of apology for absence on account of sickness. Mr Ian Matheson explained his absence in a letter to the synod.

Appointment of New Moderator. The Rev. D. B. MacLeod intimated that his term of office had come to an end, and in doing so thanked the fathers and brethren for their forbearance. He asked the members of Synod to nominate his successor in this office.

Rev. R. R. Sinclair said: "Fathers and Brethren, the Church Interests' Committee did unanimously agree to nominate Rev. S. F. Tallach, M.A., minister of our Kinlochbervie and Scourie congregation, as Moderator of Synod. Rev. S. F. Tallach is a son of the late Rev. James Tallach who was minister of our congregation at Kames for a long number of years and then latterly at Stornoway. Rev. S. F. Tallach was brought up in Kames. After his earlier education he completed his degree at Edinburgh University in 1961 and after following the course of Divinity in the Church he was licensed to preach the gospel in 1964. He was ordained to preach the gospel by the Northern Presbytery and sent out to the Winnipeg congregation of the Church where he had some success. In 1969 Mr Tallach had to return to this country as he required medical attention. In 1971 he was set over the Broadford Congregation and in 1980 was translated to the Kinlochbervie Congregation. He is an earnest preacher of the gospel and indeed a diligent expositor of the Word of the truth of the gospel. He is a most diligent pastor and a minister who has the care for his congregation which one would expect and not only so but shows the same care for the congregations over which he is interim Moderator. The Dominions and Overseas Committee has appointed him as clerk of that committee."

Rev. Donald MacLean seconded the appointment of Rev. S. F. Tallach.

Rev. S. F. Tallach intimated that he was willing to accept the office and so took over the chair. He thanked the Synod for the honour thus given him and introduced himself to the Synod by reading a quotation from the late Dr. Thomas Chalmers: "Some people are extremely fond of deliberative meetings. They have a greater taste and are more qualified for the field of deliberation than the field of action, in which former field they act as penmen, as spokesmen, as framers and movers of resolutions, and have withal a marvellous faculty of threading their way through a

cumbrous and elaborate mechanism of committees and sub-committees, so interwoven with each other that the whole becomes a complicated affair. And they go on consulting and deliberating and treading upon each other and no one going forward: and all the while there are thousands of hearts burning with desire to support the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, if they only knew what they had to do.”

Mr Tallach observed that these words were uttered over 140 years ago and were spoken about the Free Church. Dr Chalmers was stating that a church would be formed free from State Control. “What Dr. Chalmers said,” added Mr Tallach “has relevance for us today. In all our meetings let us remember the work of the ministry that it is very much wider than all the deliberations that make up the business side of the Church. Our aim must be to glorify God by showing love to Jesus Christ and by showing desire for the saving of souls. It is something wider than a host of committees. Even in the Synod itself let us not be swallowed up by business. There is another side and let us remember it throughout the coming days. We are to carry that spirit right into the midst of our deliberations. We are to measure issues and we are to sit in judgment of these issues using this yard-stick. Let us seek to take our inspiration from Dr. T. Chalmers and our labour will not be in vain in the Lord.”

Synod Sermon. Rev. A. Murray, in suggesting that the Synod sermon be sent to the Church’s Magazine, said, “It is not ordinary to comment on sermons but the Synod sermon is obviously quite different and it is public property, and you have all heard the retiring Moderator speak to us tonight and bring to our notice that essential theme concerning this great salvation of the Saviour; concerning the Divine glory and the Eternity of the Person of Christ and I would commend to you members of Synod this sermon. Thus ended the first public meeting of the Synod and the Synod met again on WEDNESDAY 20th May, 1987 at 3 p.m.

Rev. Donald MacLean, Clerk of Synod, read the acknowledgment of the **Loyal Address** for 1986; and Rev. F. MacDonald read the Loyal Address for 1987.

LOYAL ADDRESS

TO THE QUEEN’S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY
THE LOYAL AND DUTIFUL ADDRESS OF THE SYNOD OF THE
FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

“May it please Your Majesty,

We, the Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, convened

at Inverness, this 19th day of May, 1987, desire to convey to Your Majesty our unfeigned interest in, and allegiance to Your Majesty's Person and Throne.

We would felicitate Your Majesty, and Your Majesty's Consort, on the marriage of H.R.H. the Prince Andrew to Miss Sarah Ferguson, and pray that their Highnesses may follow your upright and ennobling example in exhibiting the purity and sanctity of the marriage bond. The present decadent moral climate only increases our appreciation of that dignity, modesty, and devotion which characterises your Majesty's conduct.

Amidst the difficulties and pressure created by a multi-racial society, we trust that the Protestant oath by which Your Majesty's Person and Throne is safeguarded, may continue to claim biblical and historical supremacy.

We, Your Majesty's most loyal subjects feel saddened at the readiness of members of the Royal Family, to breach the sanctity of the Lord's Day by refusing to give one whole day in seven to Divine worship and service.

The heartfelt prayer of this Synod is that Your Majesty and all the members of the Royal Family may be blessed with saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God as the only Mediator between God and man, and the only Head of His body the Church."

On behalf of the Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland.
Signed: Moderator.

Rev. F. MacDonald commented upon the acknowledgment that it appeared as if we were not getting all the response we would expect.

Rev. A. McPherson presented the **Welfare of Youth Report** and informed the Synod that as far as the Conference for the Young was concerned the number attending was 50, and that at some of the meetings this number was supplemented. As far as he could judge there was a keen interest in all the papers read at the Conference. He intimated that the Committee were setting another Essay Competition this year.

Rev. A. E. W. MacDonald stated that he had never been a great advocate for the Youth Conference but he observed that if the reason behind the Conference (or one of the reasons) was to ensure loyalty among the youth of the Church he was of the opinion that this was not being achieved to the degree he would like, as the fact was that some of our young were ready to attend Conferences elsewhere.

Rev. N. M. Ross expressed his special thanks to Mr A. Gillies for his

great help in connection with the historical Tour.

Rev. John MacLeod pointed out the extra cost involved by persons who live in the islands and requested that some consideration be given to this.

Rev. R. R. Sinclair seemed to be of the opinion that the Youth Conference was in line with what David King of Israel was engaged in when he was instructing his son Solomon to take heed to the things of God and to come to the knowledge of the God of his father "And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing hand . . . if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever." 1 Chronicles 28: 9.

Rev. N. M. Ross spoke again and called upon the young of the church to give attention to the Exercises set in the Young People's Magazine.

Theological Classes 1986/7. Rev. John MacLeod, Church Tutor, gave in his report of the classes he had taken during the Session past. Rev. A. E. W. MacDonald commented on the difficulty the tutors had in ensuring constancy when so many calls were made on the ministers concerned for help. Rev. D. B. MacLeod noted that it was not the custom for tutors to attend communions while they had students. Rev. Donald MacLean thanked Rev. John MacLeod for his labour adding "I am very well acquainted with all the labour that that means. I would say from my knowledge of the circumstances that there was every endeavour to keep the classes in good order. There are circumstances in which there are calls on ministers which cannot be avoided."

The Training of the Ministry Report was given in by Rev. D. J. MacDonald who said: "I would like if all members of Synod would kindly take note of the dates for the Conference and disseminate them in their congregations.

"There is no mention in this report of the Library for which the committee is responsible. This is because the committee decided to appoint a part-time library assistant to get the library going as a going concern. Unfortunately our request for finance to pay that assistance was turned down and therefore we have been unable to do anything. In connection with the Young People's Conference, Mr McPherson said there is no part but requires effort. I would like as Convener of this committee to express our appreciation of the work done in the past year by Mr MacLeod, Stornoway. We are very satisfied with the performance of the student who was under his care during the year."

Mr W. D. Fraser, the General Treasurer said "Regarding the Finance

Committee not being able to help in connection with the financing of a Librarian part-time assistant, the College and Library Fund is not able to bear such a cost. That is the reason and it is not the case of thinking lightly of the matter."

Rev. D. J. MacDonald replied: "Yes, but I wonder if the Synod has given authority to appoint such an assistant can the Finance Committee say, 'I am sorry we cannot do it.' "

Rev. R. R. Sinclair thought that the Training of the Ministry Committee should make provision in the Course of Instruction for our students to have instruction in the manner of their presentation of the Truth.

The Home of Rest Committee Report was presented by Rev. A. Murray. Dr. R. K. MacCuish observed that the Report made no mention of the ladies who visit the residents from time to time. He further observed that there was a danger of the Home becoming part of the Social work Care Scheme and this would affect persons who needed medical attention and not social work care. Rev. A. Murray replied that our Home is under the general supervision of the Social Work Rule.

The view held by Dr. R. K. MacCuish was that our Home is a Church Home and that our dependence on the Local Authority is extending only to the question of Licence. In further reference to the Ladies' Committee, Dr. MacCuish gave it as his opinion that a great deal of good will had been lost.

Mr W. Taylor mentioned that he as a member of the Home of Rest Committee agreed with Dr. R. K. MacCuish that all business should be discussed at the Committee level. Mr Taylor thought that the Ladies' Committee was appointed when the Home did not have a fully qualified Matron but that had changed now. Rev. A. Murray pointed out that it was not the Synod that had appointed the Ladies' Committee in the first instance, but the Home of Rest Committee. It was his opinion that the Ladies' Committee had fulfilled their functions. Rev. A. F. MacKay stated that he was a member of the Home of Rest Committee when the Ladies' Committee was set up and that he was influential in the appointment of it.

Rev. D. B. MacLeod said, "In connection with this Ladies' Committee there is no question of what it was meant for. They were appointed as an advisory body to the Home of Rest Committee and were required to make suggestions as to improvements for the Home. They did not discuss suggestions and then send them up to the Home but they met with the Matron and discussed them with her before they came to the Home of Rest Committee and I would say that all the improvements came to

the Home through them and in no other way. Many of these women were highly qualified to give advice to a 'man's Committee'."

The Religion and Morals Committee

Under the business of this committee first of all was considered an address to Her Majesty the Queen in connection with His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales attending a Romish Mass.

"May it please Your Majesty,

We, the Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland convened at Inverness this 20th day of May, 1987, wish to draw the attention of Your Majesty to our profound concern respecting the countenancing of the papish mass by the Church of England and by the Heir-apparent to the Protestant Throne of Britain, H.R.H. The Prince of Wales.

We are perturbed by the conduct of H.R.H. The Prince of Wales in attending a Roman Catholic mass at Kirkby Stephen in Cumbria on 21st September, 1986. We understand that as the Heir-apparent to the Protestant Throne of Britain, such reconciliation to the see of Rome could jeopardise His Royal Highness' right to succession and would be inconsistent with the Oath, upon His anticipated succession, to preserve the Protestant and Presbyterian Religion of the Church of Scotland, as an integral part of the Treaty of Union 1707. Although we have conveyed such sentiments to His Royal Highness, we have received, in our opinion, a very unsatisfactory reply from the Equerry to His Royal Highness.

We are also conscious that by Your Majesty's Coronation Oath Your Majesty has vowed to uphold the Protestant nature of the Throne of Britain. We understand this to include ensuring that the Heir-apparent to that Throne also seeks to uphold these same principles.

We are further concerned that the proposed law GS MISC. 225: The Draft Ecumenical Relations measure & Canons, that members of other Churches may hold one of their own services in a Church of England church, which at present is illegal although increasingly practised, will conflict with the 39 Articles of the Church of England in the case of the papish mass. We understand that one of the primary aims of this piece of legislation is to legitimise the papish mass in Church of England churches.

We plead with your Majesty to bring Your influence and authority to bear on this grave situation.

We assure Your Majesty of our prayers for Your Majesty and the

Royal Family in all Congregations of our Church.”
On behalf of the Synod.

Signed: Moderator.

Extract from Reply by Equerry to His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales:

“Many Anglicans have attended a Roman Catholic Service in similar circumstances or on ecumenical occasions, likewise many Roman Catholics, clergy as well as laity, now attend an Anglican Eucharist on similar occasions. It is clear that the formal rules of both Churches have been respected and His Royal Highness hopes that no one objects to Christians praying together at the Lord’s own service.”

Dr. Boyd said, “The extract from the reply by the Prince of Wales to this Synod who sent a letter to him two years ago about his attendance upon a mass shows that we do not get much further by addressing His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales. He has been for some time in the hands of the Romanists. He is heir to the throne and the Romanists are seeking him. We thought that we should go directly to Her Majesty the Queen as she has taken the Coronation Oath and the Succession Oath to uphold the Protestant Religion of this country. She should ensure that the heir apparent to the Throne will be able to take the Protestant Oath. It is not sufficient for her to turn a blind eye to what he is doing and say that it is his affair or the nation’s affair. It is Her Majesty’s affair. And that is the thrust of this letter to draw her attention to our concern. In the General Synod of the Church of England there is an attempt to make it legal to have the mass (Roman) in Church of England buildings. At present it is not legal.

Rev. Donald MacLean said: “I value it as a very necessary letter and communication to the Queen because I agree very much with Dr Boyd that the answer to the letter we sent to the Prince of Wales last year was not satisfactory and I expected the Synod to get a better answer when his private secretary was changed but I got no answer at all and I think this is the best way to high-light this matter.”

Resolution re The Ordination of Women to Office in the Church

The Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, met at Inverness on Wednesday 20th May, 1987, affirms that the Word of God clearly teaches:

1. That women are not to be in authority in the church. The ordination

- of women would inevitably violate this principle (1 Cor. 11: 3).
2. That women are not to teach in the church but are to learn with all subjection and to keep silence. The ordination of women would violate this principle. (1 Tim 2: 11, 12; 1 Cor 14: 34, 35).
 3. That, by example as well as precept, only men are to be ordained to office in the church. (Lk 6: 13-16; Acts 6: 3, 5, 6; 1 Tim 3: 2).
 4. That the positive role of Christian women is in terms of help and encouragement to the church and not as office-bearers in it. (Rom. 16: 1-3; Phil. 4: 3).

The Synod affirms that approval of the ordination of women to office in the church is inseparable from a rejection of the final authority of the Holy Scriptures; is motivated by the spirit of the age and not by the Spirit of Truth; encourages mere subjectivism in the matter of Christian guidance; and is subversive of the historic Christian faith as held by the visible church in general and by the churches of the Protestant Reformation in particular.

Rev. H. I. MacKinnon read this Resolution.

Rev. R. R. Sinclair said, "We will get nowhere with these churches. We should be informing our own people from the pulpit as we go along with the ministry. Let us inform our young people getting this into their minds in time as they rise up."

Rev. D. B. MacLeod said, "I think that the statement is very much to the point and very timely and we thank the Committee for bringing it before us."

Rev. A. Murray observed that strangely enough the Church of Rome share with us in our objection to women being ordained.

Rev. D. B. MacLeod agreed but was quick to observe that it was from a different motive, even from the view that they hold with respect to the mass.

Rev. D. J. MacDonald suggested that we sent the Resolution to Evangelical and Independent Churches.

Resolution re AIDS

The Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland met at Inverness on Wednesday 20th May, 1987, strongly affirms that it is the duty of H. M. Government to commend clearly to the country, which is on the verge of an epidemic of AIDS because of the general promiscuity in the land, that the only divinely permitted sexual relationship is between husband and wife. This would involve educating the nation in the time-honoured principle of the Christian ethic, revealed in Holy Scrip-

ture, of chastity outwith and fidelity within marriage. It would also involve repealing the Sexual Offences Act 1967 in order to make homosexual acts criminal offences.

Dr. Boyd introduced this Resolution.

Rev. Donald MacLean said, "This is a very important matter. The Government has failed to stress the moral issue. They have spent all their time on the educational level. Their argument is that there are many different moral standards in the House of Commons. This resolution crystallises the fact that it is the duty of the Government not merely to be giving education but to stress the moral issue. It is very important that this message gets over to them."

Resolution re ARCIC II

The Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland met at Inverness on Wednesday 20th May, 1987, find, among other things, that the statement by ARCIC II on Justification is unscriptural, undermines the Reformation position on Justification by faith and is thoroughly Romanist, in that it makes room for the erroneous doctrine of salvation by works.

We therefore call upon the Church of England not to accept the findings of ARCIC II.

Rev. D. Ross explained that the Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission was set up by the Church of England and the Church of Rome to discuss doctrinal differences with a view to bring them together.

At this point the meeting of Synod was brought to a close.

WEDNESDAY EVENING 20th MAY, 1987

The synod met again in the evening.

Rev. Donald MacLean read out the acknowledgements he had received with respect to the Resolutions sent out by last year's Synod.

An acknowledgment from the Rev. Ian Paisley for the Resolution on the Anglo-Irish Accord contained in it a request for the prayers of the people of the Church.

The Northern Ireland Office in connection with the same resolution were at pains to point out that the Anglo/Irish Accord was not the first step to a United Ireland. Further the fact was stressed that the UK government were wholly responsible for the Government of Northern Ireland. It was indicated that the consultation with the Government of Southern Ireland was necessary because of the "border situation".

Report of the Moral and Religious Committee. This Report was submitted by Rev. D. A. Ross, Convener of the Committee.

Rev. A. E. W. MacDonald observed that the Report began with reference being made to the many versions of the Bible. Mr MacDonald asked if the Committee had taken any steps to protest to the Gideonites at their having in many cases deserted the Authorised Version in favour of the N.I.V.

Rev. D. A. Ross said that the matter had not been brought before his notice and he promised that his Committee would do something on the matter.

Mr T. Maton vouched for the truth that the Gideonites were distributing the N.I.V.

Mr W. Taylor said that he agreed with Mr MacDonald that the trend was towards the N.I.V.. In a bookshop in which he is manager, in Thurso, there were stocked versions other than the A.V.

Dr. D. R. McSween said, "I always thought that we adhered to the Authorised Version not because we liked but because it is based upon a sound text. It is important that we collectively take this view."

Rev. A. McPherson said, "It is a great pity with all the information available that we should have a feeble reason for preferring the A.V. It is not a traditional matter at all — it is because of the worthiness of the translation. It is the best available still. Until the Lord will revive religion and raise up scholars filled with the Holy Spirit we should hold fast as a Church which has occupied this position for a long time. I think it strange that it should be said 'we stock these Bibles' (of other versions) and I think that the proper answer to anyone seeking one of these versions is — 'we do not stock these because we do not think that they are good but here is an Authorised Version which we heartily recommend.' "

Rev. J. W. Ross said, "I am perturbed about the attitude to the N.I.V. It seems against the instruction given over the years. The inference in the Religion and Morals Report is that the N.I.V. is not the Word of God. We are in danger of bringing dishonour to God and His Word by expressing ourselves in this way. I personally rejoice in the fact that a school would distribute the N.I.V. In correspondence courses conducted by me I have gathered that some find the A.V. difficult to understand."

Mr T. Maton: "I am of opinion that the N.I.V. is not the Word of God. I do not believe that God will bless the N.I.V."

Mr W. Taylor thought that he could give instances of where the N.I.V. had been blessed.

Mr John MacDonald thought that there was a danger of becoming humanistic. The discussion closed.

Sabbath Observance Committee's Report

Rev. N. M. Ross presented this Report. In doing so he stressed that it was his opinion that the Home Secretary encouraged Sabbath activities.

Rev. R. R. Sinclair said: "What are we doing as individuals to protect the Lord's Day? Are you putting your pen to the press?"

Rev A. F. MacKay said: "Local papers are not circulated throughout the whole country. The *Inverness Courier* has limited circulation. I have written to the press in connection with the opening of the Inverness Post Office on the Lord's Day."

Present at the Synod this time were Mr G. Schuit from Canada and Mr J. C. Fraser from Canada, and as persons interested in the defence of the Lord's day in their own country they stated how much they were indebted to the help they received from the L.D.O.S. of England.

Mr John MacAskill asked re. our connection with the L.D.O.S. Scotland. He knew that in years past we could not wholeheartedly join with this association. Rev. D. A. Ross answered that if we associate with any organisation which is lax we ourselves will soon become lax.

Rev. A. E. W. MacDonald referred to the decline in Sabbath keeping in our own homes and congregations. What about our Sabbath conversations within our houses.

Mr Ian MacLean observed that the issue of "Sunday Trading" will reappear. His opinion was that the Trade and Industry Secretary was an enemy of the Sabbath.

At this juncture Rev. N. M. Ross read the **Shop's Act Resolution.**

The Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, met at Inverness, on Wednesday 20th May, 1987, calls upon the Government to make the provisions of the Shops Act, 1950, 'Part IV — Sunday Trading' extend to Scotland.

While it was deemed unnecessary in the past to include Scotland in this part of the Act because of the restraints, legal and traditional, which already existed in Scotland, it is clear that the removal of most of these restraints has led to greatly increased trading on the Lord's Day. It is therefore necessary that the Act be made to cover Scotland by removing the clause which specifically excludes Scotland.

Furthermore, it is an anomaly, recognised and cited by those who wish to trade on the Lord's Day in England and Wales, that the Act does not extend to Scotland. We believe that the defeat of the Sunday Trading Bill

last year indicates the desire of many Members of Parliament, some of them Scottish, and of many of their constituents, that this anomaly be removed and the Act be amended to include Scotland.

Finally, we respectfully remind the Government of its binding obligation to Almighty God to do all in its power to uphold the Moral Law, and therefore, in this day of gross and accelerating Sabbath desecration, to improve legislation which provides for the continuance and protection of the Christian Sabbath.

The **Finance Committee's Report** was read by Mr W. D. Fraser the Church's General Treasurer and the Convener of the Finance Committee.

He referred to the loving kindness and goodness of the Lord in providing for His Cause and that this had been so ever since the Church came into existence, and, that as the fathers had said, so long as the Church is faithful to the Lord the Lord will support His Cause among us.

Mr Fraser commented that **14** congregations had actually lessened their contributions to the Sustentation Fund during the year!

Rev. F. MacDonald commended Mr Fraser for his report and in particular observed that the Report had an element of devotion in it. He expressed the hope that Mr Fraser would be spared for many years to come to continue in this work.

Rev. J. A. MacDonald said: "We should be thankful to the Lord for such a person in charge of the Finances. We remember how the Church was so very poor when as a young lad I went out collecting for the Sustentation fund. We hope that the Lord will follow us with goodness and mercy and that we will dwell in the house of the Lord with those that went before us."

Mr Dugald McPherson made mention of the usefulness of Deeds of Covenant. Rev. D. B. MacLeod observed that many congregations had paid nothing back of the loans which they had received. He thought that the Finance Committee should fix a minimum annual payment.

Mr W. D. Fraser, General Treasurer, observed that some congregations did make conscience of repayment of loans and in fact that one congregation (Gairloch) had this year repaid the sum of £16,000.

The Moderator reminded the Synod that it was Dr T. Chalmers who had introduced the idea of the Sustentation Fund and that when he did so he emphasised the importance of small things when added together.

Rev. John MacLeod then gave a **Report on the Harris Home of Rest** which was about to be completed. It was hoped that the Church would be opened in August.

In asking the Synod to appoint a day of prayer, Rev F MacDonald said: "We are at the morals again and the one and only hope for us all is the blessed power of the Holy Spirit. I am disturbed by some things I heard this evening. Our last and final resort is prayer. I beg to move that the Synod appoint a day of humiliation and prayer to be held throughout the church, on Wednesday 9th day of December 1987 (D.V.), to cry for the Blessed Holy Spirit to empower us to confess and to bewail our own sins as a church and as individuals; to deplore the frightening and accelerating pace of spiritual, religious and moral deterioration in church and state, and to plead with the Lord to give us, for His own Name's sake, repentance, even on a national scale. The Lord has made great promises, but generally in the context of prayer. 'I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them.' (Ezekiel 36/37)."

Rev. Donald Nicolson endorsed what Mr MacDonald had said, adding "There are signs in church and State that the Lord is displeased with us as a generation. As we have heard from the Committee's Report it is only the tip of the iceberg. We need repentance — not superficial repentance — but true repentance that is from the Lord. Repentance is a saving grace and so this is from the Lord. There are signs that we are grieving the Holy Spirit. It is not by might nor by power but by my Spirit saith the Lord of hosts."

This brought the days business to an end.

The Synod met again on Thursday at 3 p.m.

Rev. Robert R. Sinclair presented the **Magazines' Committee Report**. He observed that there are many religious magazines abroad today. The people of the Church should take every opportunity of spreading the Free Presbyterian Magazines. Mr Sinclair thought that the space given to Notes and Comments should be increased.

Mr W. Taylor said that it was gratifying to note that the circulation of the Young People's Magazine was increasing.

Rev. John MacLeod asked what demand was there for the Gaelic Supplement. Rev. Donald MacLean said: "I was keen to start it. The Gaelic Supplement of the 'Life and Work' comes to me and it is clear that the instruction and Theology of the Supplement issued by Rev John MacLeod is far superior." The work done by the Editors of the **Free Presbyterian and Young People's Magazines** was much appreciated.

Rev. A. McPherson presented the **Publications' Committee Report**. Mr McPherson admitted that the stocks of books were high. He thought that a certain inertia prevented persons from sending in orders for books.

The suggestion that some congregations might carry stocks of books for sale was one way of reducing the pile.

Rev. D. J. MacDonald made the suggestion that the Publications' Committee take into consideration the publication of the Memoirs of the late Rev. Neil Cameron.

Rev. A. E. W. MacDonald thought that the reason or a reason for the high number of unsold books was that it was not always the right books that were printed. He thought that there was no need for printing books simply because money was available but that the money could be set aside for the time when there would be a real demand for a specific publication. He referred in particular to MacCrie's Story of the Scottish Church.

Rev. John MacLeod asked whether the publication of the Story of the Scottish Church was to take the same form as the previous publication of that book or would it be blown up somewhat. He thought that the print should be enlarged.

Rev. A. McPherson answered that it was a replica that was intended but that could be altered.

The Bookroom Committee's Report was presented by Rev. D. J. MacDonald. Mr MacDonald emphasised that the main issue was not to make a profit but to spread the Word of God.

Dr D. R. MacSween stated that there had been a marked increase of sales during the first few months of this year but Mr R. MacKenzie replied that this increase was related to publications other than Church publications. The latter had actually been the lowest he had seen for years.

The Church Centenary Celebrations Committee's Report was presented by Rev. D. B. MacLeod. Mr MacLeod stated that the time scale for the publication of the volume envisaged was now minimal. Rev. F. MacDonald said that he would like to hear from members of Synod any suggestions re this matter.

Rev. N. M. Ross thought that the suggested list contained in the Committee's Report could form subjects for papers for the Theological Conference and thus matter would be obtained suitable for the Volume proposed.

Rev. Donald MacLean said: "Re the Financial side of the matter I do think that in view of the world-wide Church interest in the matter, a Fund should be opened and the people of the Church invited to contribute, and that the Finance Committee make the first contribution from the Legacy Reserve Fund." Rev. F. MacDonald read a statement

which he had prepared.

“We trust that our objective in celebrating the Centenary of our church, as a separate body, is to glorify God for bestowing such a measure of grace, discernment and courage upon our worthy fathers. They stood firm and suffered gladly to conserve intact, the true doctrine of the Divine and Plenary Inspiration of the Scriptures. When Reformation principles were at risk, and a subtle, but carefully planned attack made on the Church’s Subordinate Standards, they, in their weakness resisted manfully and vigorously the rising tide of liberalism and rationalism within the Free Church.

Now, while we abhor the very idea of canonising the faithful of the past to whom we owe such a profound debt of gratitude, we deem it proper and biblical to venerate their ~~memory~~^{memory}, by seeking to preserve it from undeserved odium, oblivion or caricature. It is our desire that any activity duly approved of, and implemented, will lead to a clearer understanding, and a deeper appreciation of the heritage transmitted to us. It is our conviction that history has already vindicated the absolute necessity and timeliness of their action in separating from the old Free Church of Scotland, when the infamous Declaratory Act was passed into law at the Free Church Assembly of 1982. The least that could be expected of us, their successors, is a determination to articulate our increasing sense of gratitude and satisfaction for what our fathers did and suffered in the preservation of the faith once delivered to the saints. We regard it then as worthwhile to attempt to explain what they did, why and how they did it; to evaluate afresh their valiant stand for the Truth against all error, and to note their genuine concern for the honour of God and the good of posterity. Surely any endeavour to generate and stimulate wider and greater interest in the historic stand made by Rev. Donald MacFarlane, and Rev. Donald Macdonald in 1983 should be encouraged.

Let us therefore seek to perpetuate their memory, and pray that the God who crowned their feeble but fearless efforts with no little degree of success, would enable us to follow humbly and faithfully in their footsteps, contending earnestly for the continuing necessity for a consistent, undeviating and uncompromising witness to the truth as it is in Jesus.”

Rev. R. R. Sinclair stated that controversy should not be avoided but people should know what the Church has come through.

The Clerk of Synod now read **Correspondence** he had received during the year. There were letters read acknowledging donations given to

various Societies. The Synod agreed to repeat donations to the following Societies as shown: Ockenden Venture (£500) specifying that the money be used for food and clothing; Reformation Translation Society (£600); Aid to the Persecuted (£500); Care Campaign (£600); National Viewers and Listeners' Association (£250); LDOS (England) (£500); Blythwood Tract Society — concerning which Society there were some few members of Synod who thought that there should be no donation given (£500); Christian Witness to Israel (£300).

Regarding the last mentioned society Rev. R. R. Sinclair pointed out that we had no official Jewish Mission as a Church and this was an opening for us. Mr Sinclair was acquainted with the organiser — a Mr MacCabe — and he had attended a meeting of the Society held in Wick.

This being all the business for this meeting of Synod the meeting was closed.

The Synod met again on Thursday evening at 6.30 p.m.

The Report of the Jewish and Foreign Mission's Committee was presented by the Rev. R. R. Sinclair who intimated his intention of resigning from the position he held as Convener of this Committee. Mr Sinclair referred to the deaths of Rev. Alexander Mpofu of Bulawayo and of Mr James Taylor of Edinburgh. Mr Taylor had done a great amount of work for the mission. Rev. A. E. W. MacDonald referred to his acquaintance with the late Rev. A. Mpofu when Mr MacDonald took over the work of the Mission in 1959. He noted that this death was the first among the ministerial ranks of the Presbytery of Zimbabwe and he recalled that the Presbytery (then of Rhodesia) was formed in 1962 when he and Rev. P. Mzamo were the only two ordained ministers on the Mission Field.

Dutch Deputies — Mr Rijers and Mr Scholten.

These Dutch deputies were welcomed by the Moderator in the following words: "We have already heard this night of the tremendous generosity of the Dutch over the years and the tremendous consistency of that generosity. There has been no fluctuations. Each year we are receiving a great amount of money from you. And also you have shown us much in the way of publicising the work of the Mission. On behalf of the Synod I welcome you."

Mr Scholten addressed the Synod as follows:

"Mr Moderator, Members of Synod, Dear Friends,

Thanks for the invitation to attend your Synod and for the friendly

words of the Convener of the Committee. The Dutch committee Mbuma-zending assigned Mr Rijers and me to convey our cordial greetings to you. Our society supports the missionary work of the Free Presbyterian Church in Zimbabwe since 1964 and up to now the interest and love for this work in Holland continues steadily.

Two recent examples. Our committee received at our last missionary meeting in April in Utrecht where 7500 people were assembled, £60,000 for the Free Presbyterian missionary work, and in the same month a legacy to the value of about £30,000.

It is encouraging to see in these sad days of materialism, that there is willingness in the mind of not a few to bear the burdens of the progress of the mission work. Blessed by the Most High, for he inclines the hearts to this generosity.

If the Lord gives us the grace, we can help the mission in two ways. **Secondly** by our offerings. Firstly by prayer.

The effectual fervent prayer of the righteous availeth much. Christ said: 'Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He would send forth labourers into His harvest.'

And there is our need. We cannot pray. We know what we should pray for as we ought.

Therefore it is necessary to get to learn with the disciples: Lord, teach Thou us to pray.

That is our daily need, that we are obliged to ever be concerned about. We are entirely unable of ourselves. We cannot pray as we ought.

O Lord, open your eyes, break our hearts, bring us in the valley of deep and true humiliation, lead us to the right confession of our sins and iniquities, fill our hearts with the fear of Thy Name, which is the beginning of knowledge, and teach us to pray, send us the Spirit of grace and supplications. In us is no reason, but only for Thy holy Name's sake.

The times are dark and the days are evil. Sin is spreading more and more over the world, maybe most of all in Holland. But where is the sorrow and concern about that? Who lays it to heart? The time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God. Where is with us knowledge of sins, sorrow over our sins and a fleeing from sins?

So we are seized by a spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear. Therefore, O Lord, teach us to pray. Open our eyes turn us from darkness into Thy light. Only in thy light shall we see light. What we need, is the powerful, irresistible, regenerating work of the Holy Spirit.

Teach us to pray, not only for ourselves, but also for our nations, and

for people far away, above all for the hallowing of Thy Name and the coming of Thy Kingdom.

The word of the Lord shall not return unto Him void, but it shall accomplish that which He pleases, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto He sent it.

The Father has chosen his people before the foundation of the world.

The Son has redeemed them at the expense of His own blood.

The Holy Spirit calls them out of darkness into His marvellous light.

The work of the triune God will continue, generally not thanks to us, but in spite of us.

Is any thing too hard for the Most High?

He causes a sinner to believe that he is a sinner, a condemnable sinner, who had deserved temporal and eternal punishments. He causes him to bow under the convicting and condemning teaching of His Word.

He makes him at His time desirous for the forgiveness and acquittal of all his sins, only in Him Who is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

The Lord has chosen them. He has given them to Christ for His possession. So the elect shall come and go down to the dust and bow before Him and shall serve Him. Blessed be His Name.

The eternal election is the ground for the missionary work.

All power of the earth put together is not able to convert one single sinner to God. But only in the power of Him Who has said: All power is given unto Me, in heaven and in earth, in Holland, in Scotland and in Africa and everywhere. He opens hearts where the missionary workers never would expect that.

May His guiding hand be over the mission in Zimbabwe.

May the Most High give wisdom and understanding and living in continuing dependence on Him to the mission workers and all the office-bearers in the Church there with all the work they have to do.

May the Lord visit them personally, teaching and comforting them amidst all the trials of life and the disappointments. His way is in the sea, and His path in the great waters, and His footsteps are not known.

May the Word they preach bear fruit to the glory of God. That they may go on to see that people are pricked in their heart, saying: Men and brethren, what shall we do? and see the true godly sorrow, which works repentance to salvation not to be repented of, for therein a triune God will be glorified.

Mr Moderator, Members of Synod, dear friends, may the Most High bless you and protect you and grant you far more than we can wish you

in a poor way. May He enable the Free Presbyterian Church to continue strong and vigilant in the great struggle to maintain His testimony in Scotland and other lands and that your work will be richly blessed.

It is a great thing to be a member of the Church. But the most important thing is to become in our life a member of the Church which shall remain to all eternity.

May the Lord visit us all with an outpouring of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of grace and supplications.

Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that Thou bearest unto Thy people:
O visit me with Thy Salvation;
That I may see the good of Thy chosen,
That I may rejoice in the gladness of Thy nation,
That I may glory with Thine inheritance.

May the Lord teach us this prayer and give us the desire of the psalmist to magnify His Name together with that blessed nation, blessed through the eternal love of the eternal God, from the east and from the west and from the north and from the south, and to stammer: Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give glory, for Thy mercy and for Thy truth's sake, for ever and ever.

Thank you for your listening."

L. M. P. Scholten.

The various Reports from the Mission were now presented — **Ingwenya-Zenka — Mbuma — New Canaan — Mbuma Mission Hospital, John Tallach Secondary School — Building and Transport.**

Rev. D. B. Macleod had been sent out by the Jewish and Foreign Mission Committee to visit Zimbabwe, Malawi and Kenya. In giving his Report to the Synod he said: "The memories of that visit will remain with me. It was a privilege to be where many worthy labourers have laboured, and it is evident that their labours were not in vain in the Lord. Although some of the dangers confronting earlier missionaries have passed, it is evident that there are some new dangers in the form of dissidents. Those that came from the other countries (Malawi and Kenya) to join in the instruction given by me at Ingwenya expressed their gratitude."

Report on Visit to Malawi and Kenya by Rev. D. B. Macleod.

Malawi

Having completed my work in Zimbabwe, I proceeded on 31 March to Blantyre in Malawi via Harare and Lilongue. I was met by Mr and Mrs

MacDougall and was warmly welcomed by them. They took me to their comfortable home and showed great kindness to me during my stay in Blantyre. Several Malawian men were also meeting me at the airport, all of whom I was to meet later. Before I arrived Mr MacDougall had kindly made arrangements for a two day Conference in a Conference Centre in the city. He also gave every assistance possible in connection with my visit.

While in Malawi I was able to visit a number of places, some a considerable distance away, and conduct services there. Some places which I had hoped to visit had to be abandoned owing to the state of the roads and for other reasons also. Most of the services were held in the open air to small gatherings of people. The Conference in Blantyre was attended by about 30 men, and during the two days on which it was held, I was able to give eight papers on a variety of topics. Questions and discussion followed each paper. Two men from Mozambique attended the Conference and also two men from outwith the group with which the church was in contact. With these men I was particularly impressed. The interpreting at the services and Conference was undertaken by Mr Gonokomoto, though on one occasion when the Mozambique men were speaking it was necessary to have two interpreters, one to translate from the language used by the Mozambique men into Chichewa and the other to translate what was said from Chichewa into English. At the end of the Conference those who attended it expressed their grateful thanks to the Church for having made it possible for them to meet in this way. They also expressed a strong desire to have an ordained missionary sent to them to instruct them further in the doctrines of God's Word. The need for schools was also stressed by them as many of the poor are unable to pay for the continued education of their children. Support for pastors was also emphasised. The Mozambique men presented a harrowing account of the situation in their land, which is one of poverty, nakedness and hunger. People have resorted to using the bark of trees in order to make clothes for themselves. Consequently there is great need for relief for the destitute in that land. The need for Bibles in Portugese was also expressed by them.

Assessment of the Situation in Malawi

There appears to be no lack of Christian missions in Malawi, but much of the teaching, where it is not positively erroneous, is of a very superficial nature. There is a great need, therefore, that the people be grounded in the doctrines of the Christian Faith. The translation of the

Shorter Catechism into the Chichewa language would go some way to meet this need. It would be good, too, if the Psalms could be provided in metre in that language, as only a few such Psalms exist at present. The provision of a suitable Missionary to conduct a teaching ministry in the land is most desirable, failing which occasional visits by deputies from Zimbabwe or Scotland might help in some way to alleviate the situation. As an organisation of Church groups already exists among those with whom the Church has already had contact, the circumstances are very different from beginning missionary work from the start, and the Church would require to exercise great caution before embarking on a project of this nature. Full consideration would have to be given to all the factors involved. It appears that there may be other Church groups in Malawi who would also welcome whatever help our Church could give them in this way. Registering of any of these groups as the Free Presbyterian Church of Malawi, as some of the people would desire, would be, to my mind, wholly out of the question at the present state. The registration of a Free Presbyterian Church Mission in Malawi, on the other hand, might be a very different thing.

Kenya

Having completed my work in Malawi, I left Blantyre and proceeded to Nairobi in Kenya via Lilongue and via Lusaka in Zambia. Mr Richard Magaru and other friends met me at Nairobi and warmly welcomed me to their country. The next day I procured a car for my visit to Kisii which is situated in the south west of Kenya and about 250 miles from Nairobi. We reached Kisii town on Friday afternoon. From that time till I left 11 days later I was kept busy with services and giving conference papers. The district of Kisii is highly populated, containing about two million people. The countryside is hilly and somewhat resembles the Highlands of Scotland. It is a very fertile part of the country and has two harvests in the year. I stayed some kilometres out of Kisii town at the home of Mr Richard Magaru, where his wife and himself showed me no little kindness. Indeed Mr Magaru had taken a fortnight's leave from his government employment in order that he might be free during my visit. I was able to visit a good number of places, most if not all of them, visited by previous deputies. Most of the services were conducted in the open air for small, and sometimes larger groups of people. I was able to hold a Conference for four days. We met each morning during that time. Practically the same papers were read as at Malawi and considerable discussion followed. At the end of the Conference the men expressed themselves as

very grateful for the help given to them and expressed a very strong desire that our Church would send an ordained missionary to them to teach them further in the doctrines of God's Word. They also expressed the wish that our Church would engage in educational and medical work in Kenya.

Assessment of the Situation in Kenya

There is great need in the Kisii district of Kenya, as well as elsewhere throughout Kenya for instruction in the doctrines of the truth. The area of Kisii in particular has been a greatly neglected field so far as evangelical teaching is concerned, and has fallen largely into the hands of the Seventh Day Adventists and the Roman Catholics, though a few other Missions also operate in the area. The translation of the Shorter Catechism into Swahili, the national language, or into Kisii which is the local language, would go some way to meeting the needs of this people. A metrical translation of the Psalms is also required, as only a few Psalms in metre are available at present and those are in Swahili. In the Kisii area land is offered to any church that will undertake education and medical, and well as religious work in the area. One chief in an eloquent speech pressed upon me the need for such work and wanted me to convey to the Synod how welcome we would be in his area. Though he happens to be S.D.A. himself yet he has a care for the people of his district. He said that 20 acres of land would be allocated free to the Church if they would undertake this work. The need for a suitable resident missionary and medical and teaching staff is very great. Failing this, or until such a provision can be made, occasional visits by Church deputies, whether from Zimbabwe or Scotland, would go a little way to meet the need. In Kenya, as in Malawi, we are faced with the same situation where an organisation of Church groups already exists. Great caution would have to be exercised by our church if we considered giving a positive response to their plea. This is so particularly in the light of warnings received that this field might present special difficulties to any church that would begin work in this area and among this people, warnings that cannot be lightly ignored. Only in March of this year other Missionaries working among this people were given two weeks to leave the country. Immediate registration of these groups as the Free Presbyterian Church of Kenya, as many of them desire, is, to my mind, wholly out of the question at this stage. If the autonomy of the Church's work in that area could be secured with government approval, and if the local difficulties were over-

come, then the Church might find it possible to establish a Free Presbyterian Mission in Kenya.

Acknowledgements

I would wish to record my grateful thanks to the Foreign Missions Committee for asking me to undertake this task which brought me into so close touch with our Mission in Zimbabwe and with the groups in Malawi and Kenya which are seeking closer relations with our Church. I have to acknowledge, too, the great kindnesses I received from so many throughout my four months' visit to Africa. The memory of that visit will remain with me as long as I live. But above all, I have to acknowledge the Lord's great goodness to me in sustaining me throughout the whole period of my stay overseas, and in putting His protecting care over me during the many journeys which my visit entailed.

Final Conclusions

There is a great field of opportunity both in Malawi and Kenya for the work of the Lord, particularly for instructing young men in those nations in the doctrines of the truth, and also for ancilliary educational and medical work. Both situations present special difficulties which would have to be overcome if work was to proceed under the auspices of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. Any failure to secure the position of the church at the outset could lead to serious difficulty later. Our church has also to consider whether, in the light of the Mission work which it already undertakes in Zimbabwe, it is able to undertake and support Mission work in these additional countries in Africa. No doubt, for our Church, the answer ultimately lies in whether the Lord is calling us to undertake this work. We pray that our Church may be directed aright.

Rev A. E. W. MacDonald thanked Rev. D. B. MacLeod for undertaking and performing this onerous and honourable work. In his opinion there was none other to whom the Church could have looked to engage in such work and the Reports before the Synod made it clear that he had achieved much with the help of the Lord.

Rev. J. A. MacDonald associated himself with the sentiments expressed by Rev. A. E. W. MacDonald and Mr J. A. MacDonald thought that a Fund should set up on behalf of the places mentioned in the Report. His prayer was that the Lord would bless the labours of Rev. D. B. MacLeod.

Rev. F. MacDonald said: "I have never been there in body but I am frequently there in soul and by way of prayer. Over the years I am more

and more impressed with the modesty of the Reports. We should be humbly thankful to the Lord and all the glory is His and shall be His. Our language ought to be 'Let God be glorified'. The Lord will have His people in all ends of the earth."

Rev. A. Murray spoke: "The Jewish and Foreign Mission Committee have expressed gratitude to Mr MacLeod. You will have heard the appeal he has made for Mozambique and for the refugees from there. If the people of the Church donate to the Foreign Mission Fund and label their donations for any specific purpose they will be gratefully received."

In presenting the Mission Accounts, Mr Angus MacKenzie, C.A., the Church's Auditor, explained that while the Mission may appear to be overfunded that that is not the case.

There was one sad note to be considered, added Mr MacKenzie, and that was the fact that the whole of the Sustentation Fund collected in Zimbabwe would amount to only 75 per cent of the salary of ONE minister! Mr W. Taylor answered that this was indeed alarming after the many years our Mission had been there.

The attention of the Synod was now turned to the **Dominions and Overseas Committee's Reports**. Rev. L. MacLeod gave a Report on his visit there as Church Deputy and referred to the fact that since his departure from that part of the world the congregation of Grafton had suffered a loss in the death of Mrs Kidd. Mr MacLeod stressed the fact that the ministers in these parts were not in good health and he commended these congregations to the prayers of the Lord's people.

Rev. Neil Ross then gave in his report as Church Deputy.

Mr James Fraser from Toronto presented the Report from Canada and brought greetings from the Canadian Presbytery. He referred to the work done by the Canadian part of the Church for the Foreign Mission and noted the particular help the Mission had received in the provision of three special typewriters for the blind — in Braille. Mr Fraser explained how the Providence of God had worked in the manner in which he was able to obtain these typewriters and in the way that was opened for the conveyance of them to Zimbabwe.

Rev. M. MacInnes joined himself with the remarks of Mr Fraser and suggested (and moved) that the Revs. A. Murray and G. MacAskill be appointed assessor ministers of the Canadian Presbytery.

Italy Report. This was given in by Rev. John Tallach who referred to the harassment experienced by those who opposed the Roman Catholic Church.

Outreach. While the minds of persons present had been carried over these thousands of miles to the distant lands their minds were drawn back

when Rev. S. F. Tallach, the Moderator, left the Chair to speak of the need of the homeland. He had before the Synod a motion to the effect "That a Committee be formed which would concern itself with Gospel Outreach within the bounds of Great Britain." Rev. S. F. Tallach referred to the great decline in congregations which were once flourishing. He stressed the need for organisation.

Rev J. W. Ross said: "I know that we may feel that we have enough to do in our particular congregations but I have no doubt that if we were to look elsewhere the Lord would provide for us. We have a good example of that in the cases of Stirling, Dundee and Perth. It was said that we did not have the man power. Provision has been made."

Mr Malcolm MacKay said that while it was true that the Lord required us to preach the gospel that there was also great need for the gospel to be defended and he feared that the defence of the gospel was being lost sight of and that standards were falling inasmuch as that, for example, the fencing of the Lord's Table was not as might be expected.

Rev. D. Nicolson said: "I do not think that this is the time to set up such a Committee. The time we have today is a time of darkness. The Lord's displeasure is on the earth and in the Church and the call to us is a call for repentance. Our duty is to defend the Truth."

The Rev. A. Morrison did not think that there was a division between preaching the gospel and defending the gospel as if the pursuit of the one meant the necessary relaxing of the other. Rev. D. J. MacDonald added that there is no such conflict. Rev. A. Murray thought that the suggestion was good and a very healthy development.

Rev. A. E. W. MacDonald said that he was surprised to hear the Moderator come forth with this motion after the Moderator had given to the Synod, upon his taking the Chair, an address which seemed to go in the very opposite direction. It was the view of Mr MacDonald that when the Holy Spirit would be poured out then and then only would there be true desire for the salvation of sinners — as sinners would be seen rushing on to a lost eternity. The fact is he said "that we have abundant opportunities at our doors to reach many souls. These are left to perish in many instances without any outreach. We do not need a Committee to tell us nor to allow us to reach to them! We are not hampered by the lack of a Committee but what does hamper us is our lack of true spiritual zeal. The experiment of such a Committee had been tried before and what was the result? The congregations mentioned, in Perth, Dundee and Stirling were more or less made up of persons at one time belonging to the Free Presbyterian Church and not made up of those mentioned in

the motion.”

Rev John MacLeod said: “In my view we are already organised as a Presbyterian Church. The organisation of the Gospel Outreach should be left in the hands of the individual Presbytery to organise as they think fit.” Mr Roderick MacKenzie said that he felt recently that the Word of God shed light for him on the matter and that in Psalm 28: 5 it seemed to him that if we did not act we would be in danger.

Rev. J. A. MacDonald referred to the fact that an earlier Synod had left this matter in the hands of Presbyteries. He stated that he was not limited in his activities of spreading the Gospel and went to homes which were not connected with the Church.

Mr A. MacRae said that in Dundee they had one family attending which had no previous Church connection.

Rev. F. MacDonald thought that if the motion were of the Lord there would not be the division that there is. His view of outreach was actually to reach out and not simply bring in “lapsed Free Presbyterians”.

Rev. S. F. Tallach in replying to all this stressed the need for zeal. In referring to Mr MacDonald’s remarks Rev. S. F. Tallach pointed out that while Dr Chalmers had warned against multiplying Committees, at the same time Dr. Chalmers was one who knew the benefit of organisation.

The Synod was divided on the issue and the matter went to the vote with the result being — Those voting in favour of the motion: 36; Those voting against the motion: 28.

Rev. R. R. Sinclair added that if it will not be a success it will do no harm.

TRIBUTES TO DECEASED MEMBERS OF SYNOD

Tribute to the late Rev. Alfred Mpofu, Bulawayo.

The Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland met at Inverness, 21st May, 1987, and wishes to express its deep sorrow and profound sense of loss occasioned by the death of Rev. Alfred Mpofu, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe.

Alfred Mpofu was born in 1932 and was, in God’s providence, familiar with law and gospel. Although highly privileged to have the godly John Mpofu, Home Missionary, Zenka, as his grandfather, it was not until he came under the preaching of the late James Fraser that he became interested in the Word of God. The Holy Spirit has His time, place and means to bring in those appointed to salvation.

Zenka was the district where he was brought up and here he spent the

greater part of his life teaching in the Mission school. It was at Zenka Mission he first professed Christ, and some years later was elected to the office of elder. In this office he proved to be most useful to the cause of Christ, undertaking with much zeal and love the work of supplying outlying preaching stations. During this time he continued to teach in the school, but the added burden of supplying outlying stations was undertaken in a most cheerful manner. He was also an able interpreter, and while interpreting, his oneness with the preacher and his message was very much felt by the preacher.

In 1978 he was appointed Synod elder, and in December of the following year he indicated his desire for, and showed clearly that he had a call from God to the work of the ministry. This was not unexpected, because for many years previous he displayed qualities which indicated him to be a most suitable person for that work. Part of his training for the ministry was undertaken in his own Presbytery, and in 1980 he completed his studies in Scotland under the tutorship of Rev. D. MacLean, Glasgow. On the 6th February, 1982, he was ordained and inducted to the pastorate of the Bulawayo Congregation. Here he displayed gifts appropriate to his pastoral duties, and his pastoral activities took him to many parts of the city beyond the bounds of his own congregation. There were four preaching stations over and above the main congregation of Lobengula; all this entailed a vast amount of work for Mr Mpofu. He was particularly patient towards the unconverted, recalling what a rebellious sinner he was himself till the Lord had mercy upon him. He obviously loved the souls of his people and had a fatherly concern for them, which was most evident when he was greeting the people and moving among them. He was not slow to rebuke sin. It made no difference who the person was, whether a poor graceless sinner or a fellow believer; they were rebuked in a most loving and gracious manner for their wrongdoing. He was greatly loved by his people, and indeed by those throughout the Church who knew him well. Mr Mpofu showed a deep and spiritual attachment to the Reformed Faith, and loved the Free Presbyterian Church and all it stood for. He fully understood the stand of 1893, having no hesitation in propagating, supporting and defending it. Throughout his ministry he was noted for his consistent Christian conduct and his discernment in church affairs. Sadly his ministry was short but happily it was a fruitful one. A goodly number of souls professed Christ under his ministry and many others came to settle themselves under his ministry, who before were indifferent about regular attendance in the Bulawayo Congregation.

Due to chronic renal failure, he passed away on the 17th March this year, we believe to be with His Lord and Master whom he so dearly loved to serve. Prior to his entering the ministry he was seriously ill, in fact the same illness which was eventually the cause of his death. During this first illness it was feared he might die but the Lord's purpose was different. He gave Mr Mpofu another eight years. For five of these he engaged in the noble work of the ministry, and not without some good success. Rev. Mpofu's death comes as a great loss to the Bulawayo Congregation, to the Church in Africa and the Free Presbyterian Church as a whole. May the Lord graciously raise up others in his place, and the children in the place of the fathers.

We extend our heartfelt sympathy to the congregation and to the Church in Zimbabwe, to his widow and family and to his aged mother and relatives. "But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Philippians 4: 19.

Tribute to Mr Donald Macleod, Elder at Glendale

The Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland met at Inverness this 21st day of May, 1987, wish to place on record their sense of loss by the death of Mr Donald Macleod who was an elder in the Glendale Congregation and who also represented the congregation in the Presbytery and Synods.

He did not take a prominent part in the deliberations of the Presbytery and Synod but he was a lover of the truth and his whole heart's desire was to see the truth and the Cause of Christ prospering in the world.

Donald was a man of one talent, but he made use of what the Lord gave him, and would do what he could to help the Cause. We believe that his experience and consciousness often was as described in these words of Paul: "To will is present with me but how to perform that which is good I find not." The Lord often accepts the will for the deed as He said to David of old: "Thou didst well in that it was in thine heart."

One other feature of Donald's character must be mentioned and that is that he was predominantly a man of prayer. One day a friend was passing on a lonely stretch of the highway and who did he see in the distance in this lonely spot but Donald Macleod approaching the main road. When Donald was asked what this meant he replied that he had a hiding place over there where he often resorted to pray; a practice very prevalent in the Highlands and Islands when the Church had better days. Thus Donald was like the godly lady of old who left written in her diary: "I would not be lured out of my closet for a thousand worlds. I never enjoy

such hours of pleasure, and such free and entire communion with God as I have here; and I wonder that any can live prayerless and deprive themselves of the greatest privilege allowed them.”

We believe that our friend now is enjoying and partaking of the inheritance of the saints in light for which His people are made meet by the Lord.

The Synod extend their condolences to his sorrowing family, and hope they also may follow in the footsteps of their father.

In referring to the Tribute to the late Rev. A. Mpofu, Rev. Donald MacLean said: “I have very pleasant memories of him in 1965 when I was in Rhodesia and again while I was tutoring him. I always felt what an evidence it was of the effect of the gospel when Mr Mpofu and Mr Mazvabo were both together studying for the ministry. Mr Mpofu was of the Matabele tribe and Mr Mazvabo of the Shona tribe. These two tribes were at war with one another. These two men lived together here in Glasgow and exhibited much brotherly love. It shows that the only place for true reconciliation for mankind is at the foot of the Cross.”

The Moderator thanked the people of Inverness for their kindness shown during the Synod. The Synod was brought to a close.

FROM PRIVATE MEETINGS OF SYNOD

Rev. A. M. Cattnach, M.A., South Harris

Rev. A. M. Cattnach had petitioned the Outer Isles Presbytery for the removal of his Suspension Sine Die and the Outer Isles refused the crave of his petition whereupon Mr Cattnach appealed to the Synod.

The Synod upheld the appeal of Rev. A. Cattnach and reversed the judgment of the Outer Isles Presbytery, thereby completely removing the Suspension of Mr Cattnach.

Decision of Inverness Kirk Session re. application of Mr A. Fraser to be received as a member in full communion.

The Inverness Kirk Session had refused to give membership in full communion to Mr A. Fraser because he would not agree to giving up his membership of Inverness Golf Club — a club which permits Sabbath play on the Course.

Mr A. Fraser had appealed to the Northern Presbytery and the Northern Presbytery by a majority upheld his appeal and reversed the judgment of the Inverness Kirk Session. Rev. D. Boyd dissented and pro-

tested for leave to complain to the Synod.

The Synod gave it as their judgment that the Inverness Kirk Session had acted charitably and Scripturally and so reversed the decision of the Northern Presbytery and upheld the appeal of Rev. D. M. Boyd.

Church Standing Committees

Finance: Revs. A. E. W. MacDonald, J. MacLeod and D. Nicolson with Messrs R. Campbell, W. Taylor, R. Middleton, W. G. MacLeod, D. MacKenzie and W. Byers. Mr W. D. Fraser, Convener.

Church Interests (Moderator of Synod): Revs. R. R. Sinclair, Donald MacLean, F. MacDonald, A. Murray, J. MacLeod, A. E. W. MacDonald and N. M. Ross.

Religions and Morals: Revs. D. A. Ross (Convener), D. M. Boyd, A. McPhail and H. I. MacKinnon with Messrs D. R. MacSween, J. MacAskill and W. Byers.

Dominions and Overseas: Rev. D. B. MacLeod (Convener), L. MacLeod, A. MacKay, J. MacLeod, A. Murray, S. F. Tallach with Messrs D. MacCuish and W. D. Fraser.

Jewish and Foreign Missions: Revs. A. McPherson (Convener), Dr James Tallach, J. MacLeod, D. A. Ross with Messrs I. MacLeod, W. Taylor and J. van Woerden.

Training of Ministry: Revs. D. J. MacDonald (Convener), F. MacDonald, D. B. MacLeod, J. MacLeod and A. E. W. MacDonald with Messrs D. R. MacSween, J. MacAskill, A. McPherson and A. Gillies.

Sabbath Observance: Rev. N. M. Ross (Convener), Revs. D. A. Ross and G. MacAskill with Messrs E. I. Fraser, A. Gillies and D. MacRae.

Magazines: Revs. R. R. Sinclair (Convener), A. Murray, D. B. MacLeod, D. J. MacDonald, Donald MacLean, N. M. Ross, F. MacDonald, J. MacLeod and A. E. W. MacDonald.

Publications: Revs. A. McPherson (Convener), D. B. MacLeod, Angus Morrison, D. MacAskill, N. M. Ross, J. W. Ross with Mr W. Taylor.

Welfare of Youth: Revs. A. McPherson (Convener), D. A. Ross, N. M. Ross, D. M. Boyd with Mr D. MacRae.

Home of Rest: Revs. A. Murray (Convener), D. B. MacLeod, D. M. Boyd, John Ross, Angus Morrison, James Tallach with Messrs W. Taylor, E. Sutherland, R. K. MacCuish and D. MacRae.

Bookroom: Revs. D. J. MacDonald (Convener), and L. MacLeod with Messrs D. R. MacSween, A. Gillies and K. Gillies.

Outreach Committee: Revs. S. F. Tallach, D. J. MacDonald, J. W. Ross, D. Ross, D. M. Boyd and D. MacAskill with Messrs W. MacKenzie and A. MacRae. Convener — Rev. D. J. MacDonald.

Harris Home of Rest: Rev. John MacLeod (Convener), Rev. Alex. Morrison and Mr D. MacKenzie.

Finance Management/Executive: Messrs W. D. Fraser, D. McPherson, R. MacKenzie and A. MacLean.

Church Collections

Jewish and Foreign Mission	March and August
General Building	April
Home Mission	May and October
Organisation	June
Dominions and Overseas	September
Publications	November
College and Library	December

Church Centenary Committee (revised)

Revs. D. B. MacLeod, R. R. Sinclair, F. MacDonald and Angus Morrison. Messrs A. Gillies, R. Middleton, J. MacAskill and D. R. MacSween.

The Lord's Cause

It is clear from the Word of God that the Lord is to have a Cause in the world so long as sun and moon endure. At times because of the power of the enemy the people of God can become very despondent and fear that the Lord's Cause is to perish. Certainly that has been the appearance of things on many occasions in the church's history and it is how things appear at the present time. The forces of evil are very strong and are exerting all their power to overthrow Christ's Cause in the world. We may expect that the battle will be the fiercest where the opposing forces are strongest, so where there is the clearest witness on the side of truth there we may expect the forces of darkness to congregate to destroy that witness. The enemy of souls has been known to make frontal assaults on occasions when the situation seemed to warrant it through the weakness of the opposing forces but ordinarily it is through cunning stratagems that the enemy seeks to grasp the initiative and bring confusion to the ranks of the Church of God. In view of this how is the Church of God to

prepare herself for the battle for, as in battle, unless the army is well equipped for the fray, victory will be with the enemy?

One thing that is needful if a General is to make war with an enemy is that he knows his own strength. The Scripture makes this plain. "What king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with 10,000 to meet him that cometh against him with 20,000." It is necessary then to know our own strength but also we need to know the strength of the enemy. To overestimate our own strength or to underestimate the strength of the enemy is a sure recipe for disaster. Let it be so then in connection with the war which the Cause of Christ is waging against the forces of darkness. Let there be no vain confidence, as though the battle were won already. "Let not him that putteth on his armour boast as him that putteth it off." The battle is still to be fought and the issue not yet known except in the ultimate. The General must know the enemy and not allow himself to be deceived as to the strength of the enemy in any particular part of the line which is to be defended. Where the strongest forces of the enemy are there he must dispose a counteracting force capable of holding the line against the assault of the enemy. Knowing the enemy includes making himself acquainted with the tactics of the enemy. To know the mind of the opposing General, to be able to read that mind is half way to victory. The enemy General has his own particular thoughts and ideas as to how the battle is to be fought most successfully. Knowing this, and laying his plans accordingly the other General can gain the advantage.

How then are we to estimate our own strength? If we consider what inherent strength the Church of God has to withstand the forces of evil and darkness, we have to come to the conclusion that she has none. In herself she is weak and helpless, ever exposed to the ravages of the enemy. Surely then to consider her own strength will only lead to despondency and to surrender to the enemy. This would be true if all the strength she had was in herself. But it is not so. Her strength is not in herself but in the One who is her Deliverer. She is to remember what is written in her battle orders: "The Lord, thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; He will save, He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with singing." No wonder then that the Psalmist was saying: "The Lord is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do to me?" So can the Church say. So, too, do we find the Psalmist saying again: "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life of whom shall I be afraid?" And the Apostle had to say: "When I am weak, then am I

strong.” Dependence, total dependence on the Lord is requisite to victory over the enemy. In the light of the strength of the Mighty One of Israel, the strength of the enemy is as weakness. It is when the Leader and Commander of Israel goes before His armies that victory is assured. He is the One who has never lost a battle. Even in that greatest battle of all when He conflicted on the Cross of Calvary with all the powers of darkness and when the enemy had thought that the hour of its victory had come, the dying Lamb of God gave a shout, not that of one expiring under the assault of the enemy, but a shout of victory — the shout of a King — “It is finished”, and yielded up His spirit unto God. That shout shook the kingdom of darkness to its very depths and rent the veil of the temple in twain, showing that the way into the holiest of all was now open, and that victory was assured for all who trust in Him who had given His life a ransom for many.

As King of Zion Christ reigns over His Church and He is to subdue all His and her enemies. Not that the forces of darkness will ever give up the struggle. The enmity of these forces to Christ and His Cause is such that they cannot cease from opposing it and seeking its overthrow. When at times the enemy appears to have a little success, it takes encouragement from this to redouble its efforts, hopeful that the issue is not in doubt. But this is far from being the case, so far as the expectation of the enemy is concerned. The issue certainly is not in doubt for Christ has already gained the victory in His death, but this is of no comfort to the enemy. What remains of the battle is but little skirmishes in comparison with the great conflict that took place on Calvary. That victory left the forces of the enemy a scattered host and they are ever trying to regroup and wage guerilla warfare against the people of God, ever harrying them, giving them no rest, seeking to weary them and get them to surrender. And well they might if their strength was in themselves but they look out of themselves and beyond themselves to the One who is their Deliverer. As they go out to battle they say: “I will go in the strength of the Lord God: I will make mention of Thy righteousness, even of Thine only.” Accordingly they are assured of victory.

“I will perish by the hand of Saul one day,” was David’s complaint. Such was the pressure that Saul the enemy of David was able to exert in pursuing David and trying to cut off his life that David came to the conclusion that one day he must fall by Saul’s hand. That is how it appeared to him then, but that is not how it fell out. When Saul was lying in the grave, David was sitting on the throne. The victory of the people of God, the victory of the Church of God is to be complete, as Deborah

acknowledged in the overthrow of Sisera at Endor. She could say: "They fought from heaven; the stars in their courses fought against Sisera. The river Kishon swept them away, that ancient river, the river Kishon. O my soul, thou hast trodden down strength." And Deborah concludes her song with this epitaph to be written over the graves of all the enemies of the Church of God: "So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord," while on the other hand she had to say, "but let them that love him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his night."

Let the Church of God remember that however dark the night is, a glorious morning is coming when the Church of God shall "look forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners." For that glorious day the Church waits, when the Spirit will be poured forth from above. In this she will not be disappointed for the Scripture must be fulfilled: "Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come."

Sermon

by Rev. Lachlan MacLeod

Bethel — The House of God

The substance of a sermon preached at the opening of the new church of the Laide Congregation, on Friday evening, 27th March 1987.

"And he called the name of that place Bethel: but the name of that city was called Luz at the first." Genesis 28: 19.

As the Lord may be pleased to enable us, we shall consider this verse, but especially the beginning of it: "And he called the name of that place Bethel." I take it that you all know the background to this chapter and to this verse; so I would like to draw your attention first and briefly to **Jacob's condition coming to Luz**, and secondly, at more length, to **what was revealed to Jacob at Luz** — just these two things at present.

Now, **Jacob's condition coming to Luz** was that he was *burdened*. He must have been cast down. Here was a man who had just left home; he had left his parents, and left the place where he had been brought up. Very likely he had never been much away from home before; and I think we can say also, that he was his mother's favourite. Then there was this: that he was going to where he had never been before. He did not know his relatives; he did not know what kind of reception he would get.

Furthermore, Jacob was *afraid*. Jacob knew very well that Esau hated him; and Esau's hatred was not without a cause. After all, Jacob had

defrauded his brother; and when Jacob would think of that, he had good reason to be afraid.

In addition to all that, *his conscience must have been troubling him* because of his falsehood and deceit in taking the blessing from Esau. He had deceived his godly father. I take for granted that you know the incident from Scripture; and it was, as you remember, a most evil case of deception. As he would be thinking over this, would he not be likely to be saying to himself, "Have I really got the blessing? My father blessed me, but only because I deceived him. Has the *Lord* blessed me?" That would be in his mind, I believe. When we think of all these things, we believe that he must have had an accusing conscience; and an accusing conscience is a very disagreeable companion.

There was also this: that Jacob, arriving in Luz, must have been *tired*. He had travelled a great distance that day (some put it at about 50 miles that he had travelled that day on foot) and he would have been weary in body, as well as cast down in mind. In Luz he had no comfortable home to rest in, for Luz was a place of few luxuries. It was a place where he had to stop because he could not go further, and he was there not out of choice but out of necessity. It was a place where Jacob expected nothing; certainly not a blessing. He had nothing better there than a stone for a pillow.

Yet, on that pillow at Luz, Jacob had the most wonderful *dream* of his long life. He lived to be 147 years of age, but we have every reason to believe that he never had a dream like this before or after. How little he thought, as he lay down there, that before he left it, he would describe it as "Bethel, the house of God, and the gate of heaven." But that is what it proved to be to Jacob — a place where the Lord revealed Himself to him.

Let us notice this now, in the second place: **that there at Bethel, certain wonderful things were revealed to Jacob.** First, there was the *ladder*, as we see in verse 12, "And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it." This ladder was a wonderful illustration of *Christ the Mediator*, and of the truth that all communication between heaven and earth is through the Mediator.

That there is a Mediator, appointed and ordained by God from all eternity, is a most important doctrine of the Word of God. That the doctrine of the Mediatorship of Christ is brought before us very clearly in Scripture, is something that we must remember, and that the Church of God must remember. A mediator is one who interposes between two

parties at variance to procure a reconcillation between them. The parties at variance, according to the Scriptures, are God on the one hand and the sons of men, the children of Adam, on the other. The variance — the difference between God and men came about because of man's sin.

Now, God, in His infinite mercy and compassion, and in His eternal purpose, was pleased to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, to be the Mediator between God and men; and, as Mediator, to be the Prophet, Priest, and King of the Church — “to be Head and Saviour of His Church,” the Confession of Faith says. To Christ, as Mediator, God gave a people, His elect. He gave them to Christ to be in time redeemed, and to be in time called and justified and sanctified, and to be made “meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light,” and to be glorified.

To this very arduous task, Christ was called by the Father; and for it He was “set up from everlasting.” For this purpose He took the nature of His people. For this purpose he was “conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and born of her yet without sin.” In Christ, we have two perfect and complete natures, inseparably joined together in one person. In Him we have, as the Confession puts it, “very God and very man, yet one Christ.” And this person is the *only* Mediator between God and men.

I am stressing this because, as you know, there are talks for union going on between the Anglicans and the Roman Catholics. The Roman Catholic teaching about the Mediator is altogether different from what the Reformers had, and from what Protestants still have. The Roman Catholic Church teaches that Mary is a mediatrix, and that saints are mediators. They say, of course, that Christ is the Mediator of Redemption; but that the others are Mediators of Intercession who can be prayed to. This is completely contrary to Scripture. The doctrine of Christ as Mediator is absolutely fundamental; and because it is foundational to the Gospel, it has been, and still is attacked by the devil. The devil uses the Roman Catholic Church (and other churches too) to water down this doctrine. It is attacked by the devil, because it is this Person, the Mediator, who was sent into this world to destroy the works of the devil, and *has* destroyed the work of the devil. Satan hates this doctrine of the Mediatorship of Christ, as he hates the doctrine of the Incarnation, and the doctrine of the Intercession of Christ, and all the doctrines of the Gospel.

Now, in these talks between the Anglicans and the Roman Catholics these Scripture and Protestant doctrines are being watered down.

Ambiguous statements are taking the place of the Scripture definitions of the Reformation. These ambiguous statements can mean anything — one thing to Protestants, so-called, and another to Roman Catholics. As I said, there is great need that these doctrines be preached — especially this doctrine of Christ as the only Mediator. There is no other way whereby a poor sinner can draw near to God apart from Christ the Mediator. There is no salvation in any other. “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” The Word of God was saying this in the days of the apostles; and the Word of God is still saying it, no matter what people, who think they are very clever, may say. They may water down these statements but they cannot change the Word of God. So, every effort must be made to contend for these doctrines; especially this doctrine of the Mediatorship of Christ. Well, it was Christ as Mediator that Jacob saw in his dream, in seeing the ladder which had one end on the earth and the other in heaven.

Jacob saw also *the angels ascending and descending* on the ladder, and surely this indicates that all communication between heaven and earth is through Christ as Mediator. The angels are ministering spirits sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation; but even the ministry of angels is through the mediation of Christ. Angels in themselves are not mediators; they are the servants of the one Mediator. There is no hope of approaching God by any way but by Christ, who is the way, as well as the truth and the life.

Jacob not only saw wonderful things at Luz — he also heard wonderful things. There, at Luz, *the Lord spoke to Jacob, and revealed Himself to him* as the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac. But more wonderful still, God revealed Himself as Jacob’s own God. Whatever fears Jacob had before, they were now dispelled. “And, behold, the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.” These were the wonderful words spoken by God to Jacob, and the wonderful promises given to him in this place. Whatever fears he had about the blessing, they were all dispelled now, for he now had the blessing indeed.

He had it from the Lord Himself.

People may say, "Jacob was a deceiver and he got the patriarchal blessing by fraud." Well, that is so, and that is his side of the matter; but we are dealing with God's side of it just now. What we must remember is that salvation is of grace, and all of grace; and that is very clearly seen in the case of Jacob being saved and Esau being passed by. Salvation is all of grace! The Lord revealed Himself to this man who was a sinner and a deceiver. The Lord called him and the Lord blessed him; and we dare not find fault with that. God is sovereign.

Jacob, we see, *was blessed* — blessed by the Lord Himself and blessed with the blessing of Abraham. Part of the blessing of Abraham was: "And I will make thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing." Jacob was now having the blessing of Abraham conferred on him. It is unspeakably precious to have the blessing of the Lord. There is nothing in this world like having the blessing of the Lord. "The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it." It makes a poor, vile sinner rich for time and for eternity. That is what Jacob had, and that is what a countless number down through the centuries have had. God alone knows how many have been blessed down through the centuries to the present day. And we have no doubt but there are many even in this congregation tonight who have the blessing of the Lord, and whose hope is in the Lord. It is an unspeakably precious thing to have the blessing of the Lord — that the Lord should, in His mercy, and in love and compassion, look upon poor vile sinners in Christ, and that they should be accepted in the Beloved. "Not by works of righteousness that we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us." That is what Paul was saying. Yes, and that is what Abel was saying long before: that he was saved in mercy and by grace. And that is what the church will be saying to all eternity.

Another thing we have here is this: not only was Jacob blessed, but more wonderful still, *he was to be made a blessing to others*. There was the blessing of Abraham in every sense. To Abraham it was said, ". . . and thou shalt be a blessing." Oh! how remarkable that a poor vile sinner should be not only blessed but made a blessing to others. Well, that has again been the case down through the ages: men (yes, and women too) blessed by the Lord and then used by the Lord to be a blessing to others. Think of the apostles themselves — they were blessed and made blessings to others. Think of the ministers of God down through the centuries — blessed in themselves and made blessings to others; some of them poor vile creatures indeed when called by grace, yet the Lord

taking them, moulding them, making them His servants and using them to be a blessing to others.

I often think of Dr Bain who was in Kiltarlity. He was brought up in or near Dingwall. As a young man he was so wicked that the people called him Raghnaill Mallaichte — Cursed Ronald. And yet, the same Cursed Ronald — Raghnaill Mallaichte, was the one that God called effectually by His grace, and blessed him and made him a blessing to others. And, of course, you could spend all evening talking about ministers and missionaries and so on, who were sent forth with the Gospel of the grace of God, and were made a blessing to others.

Jacob and his seed were also promised the land of Caanan. The earth belongs unto the Lord and he gives it to whomsoever He will. But the Lord went on to speak to Jacob of all the families of the earth being blessed. "In thee and *in thy seed* shall all the families of the earth be blessed." That, of course, was the great promise of the Word of God: that Christ Himself, the seed of the woman, was to bruise the head of the serpent.

The Lord also promised that *He was to be with Jacob*. The Lord was to be his protector. The Lord promised to keep him. Here was Jacob leaving home, going out alone, going out afraid, and with Esau threatening him. But here, in Luz, was the Lord promising to be his keeper, to be his shield, and to be his constant companion. "And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." "I will not leave thee." What a promise to get from the Lord! Others might forsake him, but he had this promise from the Lord, the One who changeth not, "I will not leave thee." "Faithful is He that promised."

You may be saying, "Oh! what a wonderful promise that was, but that was Jacob's promise." Ah but, when the Lord commissioned the Apostles to go out and preach the Gospel, He said to them, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." That promise which He gave at that time goes on, and on, and on. It was not a promise that was exhausted with the Apostles. It is a promise that remains, and that belongs to the Church of God century after century. Paul, writing to the Hebrews, says, "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." That is essentially the promise that was given to Jacob; a promise that was passed on by Moses to Israel for their encouragement, "Be strong and of good courage, fear not, nor be afraid

of them: for the Lord thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; He will not fail thee, nor forsake thee." God, through Moses, was saying to Israel, "I will never leave thee nor forsake."

So this promise belongs to the Lord's people here tonight, just as that promise belonged to Jacob that night at Bethel. That promise belongs to you tonight if you are a believer in Christ, and if this is the language of your soul, as it were, "Lord, my hope and confidence is placed in thee alone." If you have been brought by the grace of God to this — that there is no salvation in any other, and that there is no hope for you but in Christ; and if this is your exercise of soul, going in your emptiness to Him and saying, "Lord, my hope and confidence is placed in thee alone," then you have grace in living exercise. To you belongs this promise: "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee," no matter how Satan may be tempting you and weakening you (and that is what may be true of you at this very juncture in your life: that Satan is tempting you that you are forsaken, and that he is weakening you). But no, friend, you have not been forsaken. To all those who have been closed into Christ in the everlasting Gospel belongs this promise, "I will *never* leave thee nor forsake thee." So then, to come back to Jacob again, whatever would happen, God was to be with Jacob, for, with all his faults, Jacob was beloved of his God. Even ungodly Laban had to acknowledge that the Lord had blessed him temporally for Jacob's sake.

We must now consider *how Jacob came to describe Luz as "Bethel, the house of God."* Luz was cold, dead, and comfortless to Jacob when he arrived in it. As we mentioned already, this place had no attractions for him before this. It was absolute necessity that made him pass a night there; but now these are his words, "Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not. . . . How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." There is no doubt there was a holy fear in Jacob; and that will be the case when a person gets an extraordinary measure of the presence of the Lord as Jacob got here — he will have a holy fear. The disciples had that on the mount. They feared on the mount of transfiguration; yet they had to say, "It is good for us to be here." We believe that that was true of Jacob as well. It was, as he said himself, "a dreadful place." "How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." He was afraid, but at the same time saying, as it were, "It is good for me to be here." He was brought, then, to that; and so was moved to call this place, "the house of God and the gate of heaven."

Well, where God reveals Himself savingly to a sinner, that place, to

that person, is Bethel, wherever it may be. It may be in a church building, like this new building we have here tonight; but it may be out in the open, as in the case of Jacob. You see, it was the presence of the Lord that made it the house of God. It was the presence of the Lord that made it the gate of heaven. There is no doubt that many people met with the Lord in very unusual places. Many of the Lord's people met with the Lord even on the field of battle. We met those to whom the Lord was made precious in the trenches. We met those to whom the Lord was made precious on battleships. Well, the trench, to that soul, was a Bethel. The battleship was to that soul, a Bethel.

Our late friend Donald MacKenzie, who was in North Tolsta, often spoke of the time when he got the liberty of the Gospel aboard a battleship. I cannot remember the name of the ship just now, but one thing was sure — Donald MacKenzie never forgot the name of that battleship. He very often spoke of it when "speaking to the question" at fellowship meetings, because that ship was his Bethel. And I have no doubt but there are those here tonight who can remember something like that. They can remember where, in maybe very trying and difficult circumstances, the Lord revealed Himself to them. However uncomfortable their circumstances were, that place was Bethel, the house of God; and they will be remembering it as Bethel. You see, to the thief on the cross, Calvary was Bethel, and his cross was Bethel. That is where he met with the Lord: that is where he met with Christ. That was "the house of God" to him.

Well, we sincerely hope and pray that this new church may be a Bethel to many, many souls. Our prayer is that the pure Gospel of the grace of God may be preached in this place not only now but for generations yet to come. May the rising generation come to know the Lord in this house and look upon it as a Bethel. Our desire is that the young people rising up in this congregation in Laide may come to know the Lord here; and when they do, they shall look upon this house as their Bethel. And what we also desire and pray for is that sons and daughters yet unborn, may find this house to be "the house of God, and the gate of heaven." May the Lord add his blessing.

Book Reviews

Sermons by Hugh Latimer

Focus Christian Ministries Trust, 6 Orchard Road, Lewes, E. Sussex BN7 2HB are considering printing a subscription edition of Latimer's

Sermons. It was Latimer who said to Ridley when they were both tied to the stake where they were both burned to death: "Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man: we shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out." In order to qualify for the special pre-publication price of £7.25, including postage, for this 566 page volume, orders must be received at the above address by July 31st, 1987.

D. B. M.

Calvinism: Pure and Mixed by W. G. T. Shedd, Banner of Truth Trust, 161pp, £4.95.

This excellent defence of the Westminster Standards first published in 1893 has now been republished by the Banner of Truth Trust. Though the chapters of the book were written in opposition to the proposal in the Northern Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. to revise the Westminster Confession of Faith, the defence of these Standards which it contains remains valid for our time also. Shedd saw in that movement an attempt to modify the Calvinism of the Confession. He objected to the revision because the Confession was a correct statement of the system of doctrine contained in the Scriptures, and because the principal amendments proposed would introduce error into it. He proves this in the chapters dealing with the different doctrines which were at that time under attack. In concluding he deals with denominational honesty and honour which requires "a clear unambiguous statement by a Church of its doctrinal belief and an unequivocal and sincere adoption of it by its members," and he shows the dishonesty of the person who pretends to be orthodox while subscribing a creed which he dislikes, and which he saps under pretence of improving it and adapting it to the times. This was what the Fathers of our own Church were faced with in 1892 and the same spirit was at work on the other side of the Atlantic.

Shedd maintains that we have ground for believing that all of mankind who die in infancy will be regenerated by the Holy Spirit. With this we cannot agree, nor with his assertion that the Divine Mercy may save a part of the unevangelised millions of mankind. There does not appear to be warrant in Scripture for these assertions. In one reference also he seems to regard the separation of Church and State which we find in the U.S.A. as something desirable. We hold on the other hand, to the Scripturalness of the establishment principle. Apart from these blemishes this volume is worthy of high commendation.

D. B. M.

Notes and Comments

A New Government

Our nation has once more been called on to elect a new Government. A great responsibility always rests on the people of the nation when this occurs. The people of our nation have once more exercised this right and time will tell whether they have made a wise choice. One sad aspect of governments in recent times is the fact that so few Christian Members of Parliament have been elected. So often, too, the leaders in the government have shown that they have little place for the worship and the Word of the living God. The Lord's Day generally is desecrated by them. These things are causes for sorrow and bode ill for the future of the nation.

The Word of God makes very plain the duty which is laid on Christians everywhere in relation to those who rule over them. The apostle in writing to Timothy says: "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty." Our duty then is clear. We are duty-bound to pray for the Queen and the Royal Family who occupy the highest station in the land, but we are also required to remember at a Throne of grace the Prime Minister and the new government and all who bear rule in the land.

The nation having exercised its responsibility in electing a new government, a great responsibility now rests on that government as to how it discharges the trust the nation has placed in it. It would be well for the Prime Minister and the ministers in the government if they realised that they are answerable in the first instance, not to the people who elected them to power, but to God whose servants they are. To Him they will have to give in their account at last as to how they have fulfilled their task, and particularly whether they have discharged it in the fear of the Lord with a single eye to His glory.

The new government assumes power at a critical time in the history of our nation. One thing is certain and that is that the government will be sufficiently alive to the temporal needs of the nation and no doubt will do all in its power to meet these needs. It is another question whether the Government will be as alive to the spiritual and moral needs of the nation. Our present plight as a nation does not stem primarily from economic forces over which we may have little control but from a spiritual and moral malaise that has overtaken the nation and affected every department of its life. The nation has become to a large extent

spiritually and morally bankrupt and this is what needs remedying. We are in a backsliding state as a nation. We have backslidden from God and are backsliding from Him with a perpetual backsliding and are beginning to reap the wages of our sins. The spiritual and moral bankruptcy of the former Government was seen in connection with the awful judgment of God which has fallen upon the nation, and other nations as well, in the form of AIDS. Instead of tackling this horrifying disease at its root cause, how pathetic was the Government's response when all it could offer was means to alleviate the spreading of the disease. The moral question inherent in the whole matter was overlooked when there ought to have been moral outrage at the evil which had brought this judgment on the nations. A call for a return to Christian moral standards would have been the least one would have expected from the Government of a professedly Christian nation. But no such call came, and so the evil remains.

Another instance of the spiritual and moral bankruptcy of the previous Government was its refusal to call for a day of humiliation and prayer even when called on to do so by some of the Churches in the land. Divine deliverance from fearful calamities seems to be foreign to the minds of those in high places today. It would appear that God is not in all their thoughts. If they ever think of Him it is as One who can neither do good or evil, and as One who would certainly never interfere in the affairs of the men of this world which He has created. God is in effect, so far as their minds are concerned, banished from the Universe. Men may attempt this but God will not be banished from His Universe and men and rulers will have to learn by bitter experience what they will not learn by precept from God's Word — that there is a God who exercises judgment in the earth and in nations.

We would desire for the new Government that the Lord would be pleased graciously to give those that bear rule in it another mind — a mind to bow before the Lord and to seek counsel at His hand. In the African country of Kenya where a professing Christian, President Daniel Moi, exercises high office, he is not ashamed to declare that he seeks the Lord's guidance and help in governing that nation. Where is there a ruler among the advanced nations of the world who will make a similar acknowledgment? They are few indeed, very few. Queensland in Australia has one such Premier, but on the whole they are very few indeed. May the Lord be pleased to raise up many more. May the day speedily come in our beloved land when men who truly fear the Lord will be high in place. Only the Lord by the outpouring of His Spirit on our land can bring such a thing to pass. He has done it in the past and He is

able to do it again. But He is to be enquired of by His people to do it for them.

It is our duty then to be on our knees for our Government and for our nation — that the Lord would be pleased to turn our captivity as the streams in the south and recall our bondage. We have sold ourselves for nought. The Lord is speaking to us as He spoke to Israel when He said: "O Israel, thou has destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help." We are ripening for judgment and only the Lord Himself can deliver us from the destruction which our sins as a nation deserve. May He in wrath remember mercy.

Sabbath Desecration

Sabbath desecration continues unabated in all parts of our land and in almost every department of the nation's life. Those in high places set a bad example for others by trampling on God's holy day. Even in evangelical circles where the Sabbath was once honoured, a great deal of laxity has entered into the observance of the Sabbath. The Sabbath is a blessing which God has graciously given to men for their spiritual, moral and physical benefit. The loss of it is a serious matter for any country. Where it is duly observed according to the Lord's appointment it is of incalculable benefit to a nation or people. Britain once derived great benefit from it but through her backsliding has largely fallen from it.

A press report suggests that the Government has in view reform of the licensing and Sabbath trading laws. The Press report (*The Times* 20/5/87) says: "The last attempt by the Conservative Government to remove the restrictions on Sabbath trading failed when Tory MP's lost their nerve in the face of well co-ordinated opposition." The recent Tory manifesto points out that there are many anomalies in these laws and promises action to bring sense and consistency to the law on Sabbath trading. It needs no imagination to realise in which direction the laws will be changed. The Lord graciously intervened to prevent a further relaxation of these laws on the last occasion it was attempted in Parliament and the Lord is able to do the same again. For this we ought to plead.

Church Notes

African Relief Appeal

Owing to the serious situation prevailing in Mozambique and other African countries it was agreed by the Synod that an appeal be made to the people of the Church for clothing and also money to relieve the needs

of the destitute and starving in these countries. It is hoped that some of the ladies throughout the Church will arrange for the collection and packaging of clothes for African relief. Money for the African Relief Fund should be sent to the General Treasurer or put in the plate in an envelope marked African Relief Fund. Deacons courts may wish to appoint a collection for this purpose. It is hoped that there will be a good response to this appeal. The needs of Christians in many of these countries is very great and every effort will be made to put the relief in their hands. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these by brethren, ye have done it unto me." Matth. 25: 40.

Editorship of Magazine

The Editor of the F.P. Magazine wishes to acknowledge with grateful thanks the help given by Rev. J. MacLeod, Stornoway in editing the Magazine during the Editor's absence overseas. He would also acknowledge the Lord's goodness to him during his four month period in Africa. As he was conscious of the prayers of the Lord's people following him while abroad, so he would desire an interest in their prayers in connection with the work of editing the Church Magazine from month to month.

General Treasurer's Change of Address

Will all Ministers, Clerks of Deacon's Courts, and Congregational Treasurers please note that the General Treasurer's address is now: Room 7, Seafield House, Seafield Road, Longman, Inverness. Tel: Inverness (0463) 226419.

Dundee Students

Parents and students who are concerned about future studies, are reminded that we now have a church in Dundee and that there are five Colleges as well as a University in that city. The Colleges offer a wide range of education facilities, and accommodation is plentiful and inexpensive. The city itself is very pleasant and is central for travel to Perth, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen.

The names and addresses of the Colleges are as follows:- Dundee College of Further Education, Constitution Road, Dundee. Dundee College of Education, Gardyne Road, Dundee; College of Technology, 158 Marketgait, Dundee; Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art, Perth Road, Dundee; College of Nursing, Ninewells Hospital, Dundee.

Rev. D. C. MacAskill.

Correction. In June issue, page 164 line 17 "Feast of Weeks" should read "Feast of Tabernacles".

Acknowledgment of Donations

The General Treasurer, Mr Wm. D. Fraser, Room 7, Seafield House, Seafield Road, Inverness IV1 1SJ, acknowledges the following donations with sincere thanks:-

Organisation Fund: J. D., Urgha, Harris, £30 where most needed; Friend, Ness, £40.

China Mission Fund: Friend, Ness, £10.

Wellington Church Building Fund: Anon., £50.

Church Bookroom: Mr A. B. MacLean acknowledges with sincere thanks an anonymous donation of £20 (enclosed in box of magazines).

Correction — In March issue, Congregational Contributions, Glendale Sustentation Fund should have read £155 more and Bracadale Sustentation Fund £155 less.

The Publications Treasurer, Mr R. W. MacKenzie, Geanies House, Fearn, acknowledges with sincere thanks the following donations:-

Free Distribution Fund: Isaiah 54: 2, £2; North Tolsta donations, £27.80.

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

Barnoldswick: Anon., £25; Anon., Glasgow, £25; E. K. £20, all for Communion Expenses; Anon., Wick, £100; Anon., £25, towards Manse Purchase Fund; From a Well wisher, Matth. 25: 40, £20; In loving memory, £100, the last four for Manse Fund.

Edinburgh: Anon., Skye Friend, £10 for Church Heating per Mr M. Nicolson.

Flashadder: Anon., £400 for Flashadder Church Building Fund.

Fort William: Mrs B., £10; Mr M., £10, both for Church floor repairs; Friend, Caol, £20; A. MacG., £5 per D. MacN., E. MacR., £10, all for Sust. Fund; A. N., in memory of dear wife, £20 per D. MacN. for Church floor repairs, first three and fifth per Rev. J. A. MacDonald.

Glasgow: Anon. (2 donations), £2; Anon. (2 donations), £4; Mrs P. W. (2 donations), £8; Mr & Mrs M., £10; Anon., £20, all for Sust. Fund; D. M., £100 for various funds; M. M. A., £10, A. M. £10; Matth. 6: 3 (2 donations), £20; Anon., £5; Anon., £10; Anon., £20; A. N., £100 per Rev. D. M., all for Bus Fund; Anon., £10 for Sabbath School Coll. per R. A. C.; Anon., £1; Anon., £10, both for T. B. S.

Inverness: A Friend of the Cause, £25 for Ingwenya Blind Children's fund; a Dutch Friend, £20 for General Building Fund; Two Friends, £30 for Sust. Fund, all per Rev. A. F. M.; Inverness Ladies Mission Meeting Collection, £577 to be used for Blind Children.

Kames: Friend, Glasgow, £50 for Church Funds; Friends, Glasgow, £10 for Communion Expenses.

Laide: Friend, Stornoway, £100; "Shieldaig Farm", £25, Anon., £7; D. McL., Shieldaig £50; Friend, London, £10, all for Church Building Fund; Friend, Stornoway, £10 where most needed.

Portree: Two Friends, £20, for Sust. Fund; Two Friends for Tapes, £5, both per F. M.; Anon., £40 for Sust. Fund (envelope in plate).

Raasay: Friend, Portree, £10 where most needed; Friend, Raasay, £20 for Foreign Missions; R. & S., Inverarish, £16 for Communion Expenses; Anon., £400 for Raasay Congregational Fund.

Shieldaig: From the estate of the late Mrs Fleming, Vancouver, £1664.58; From the estate of the late Mrs Gillanders, Arrima, £1000; Anon., £100 for Sust. fund, in memory of a loving husband and father; Anon., Inverness, £25.

Staffin: Anon., £5 for door collection; Anon., £100 for Staffin Congregational Funds.

Stornoway: M. M., £20 for Sust. Fund; M. M., £10 where most needed, both per Rev. J. MacLeod.

Strath, Skye: T. K., £20 for Congr. Fund per Rev. H. I. MacKinnon.

Waternish: The late Mrs C. MacLeod, Geary, Waternish, £100 for Church repairs.