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Prayer for all that are in Authority

The Word of God exhorts us to pray for kings and for all in authority so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty, 1 Tim. 2: 12. This is a duty which may not be neglected without sin and without the loss of the blessings held out — that is, the leading of a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. Failure to remember at a Throne of grace those who rule over us in the nation is fraught with many dangers, including those of civil wars and insurrections.

Christ is not only King over His Church but also King over the nations. Whether men recognise this or not does not affect the truth of the matter in any way. The more men would come to recognise it the more would it be of profit to them. Christ is King of kings and Lord of lords. He rules in heaven above and in the earth beneath. He does according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the world. None can stay His hand or say to Him, what doest Thou? All His purposes are being carried out in the affairs of the nations of the world. This is reason for rejoicing. "The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof". Men have reason to magnify the Lord's great name that it is not man that reigns but God. What a fearful place the world would be if man was always permitted to have His way. But God has so ordered it in His providence that men are held within certain bounds. One of the principal means that God has ordained for the order and peace of society is the Civil Magistrate. It is for such that we are commanded to pray.

The Civil Magistrate is a divine institution and is a blessing from God to men. The jurisdiction which they possess is not an arbitrary one, but one they are to exercise under God who requires that they act righteously

and justly. Such have to give in their account to God in the day of judgment as to how they fulfilled their commission given to them by God. It is by the law of God they are to be guided, not by the views or opinions of men. It is the Lord who raises men to such positions of eminence in any land. "For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is judge; He putteth down one, and setteth up another." Psalm 75: 6,7. Sometimes because of a nation's sin God permits evil men to be raised to high office. At other times God is pleased to raise up righteous men over a nation. Blessed is that nation which has righteous rulers. It is a blessing from the Most High and men ought to be unspeakably thankful for it wherever it exists.

How forgetful we are ready to be of the heavy responsibilities of those in high office in the nation. It ought not to be so. They are exercising their authority and rule for our good, and yet are we to forget them to the extent that we forget to pray for them? The Word of God forbids such dereliction of duty on our part. The burdens they carry are national burdens, burdens not necessarily of their own making, and shall we not help them to bear these heavy burdens by bearing them and their burdens on our hearts at a Throne of grace? Are they to be deprived of rest and sleep through the weight of responsibility lying upon them, and are we to lie down to sleep in the quietness and peace which they have secured for us and yet not remember them at the throne of grace? If it has been so in the past — if we have woefully neglected this duty — let it not be so in the future. They must of necessity seek counsel from God if the affairs of the nation are to be ordered aright and will we not plead with the Lord that He would lead, guide and direct them? Clearly it is our duty. Let us then fulfil it. Do we wish to lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty? Then let us pray for our rulers and for all that are in authority. To them the Lord says:

"Now therefore, kings, be wise; be taught,
ye judges of the earth:
Serve God in fear, and see that ye
join trembling with your mirth.

Kiss ye the Son, lest in His ire
ye perish from the way,
If once His wrath begin to burn:
bless'd all that on Him stay."

Ps. 2: 10-12

Notes of a Prayer Meeting Address

by Rev. S. Fraser Tallach M.A.

"Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness." Judges 14: 14.

Samson was one of the mighty men of old, men of renown, who commonly gained the upper hand of his enemies, the Philistines, by sheer physical strength. The putting forth of the above riddle was one occasion when he resorted to more subtle means. He had slain a lion. When he returned, he found that right in that very place, a swarm of bees had been busy producing honey. As he "took thereof in his hands and went on eating," a plan formed in his mind. The curiosity of finding honey in the carcase of a lion would be formed into a riddle to confound the Philistines.

Wherein did the puzzle of this riddle lie? It plainly lay in the seeming contradiction between the nature of the eater and the production of meat. There are certain creatures whose very nature makes them like the daughter of the horse-leach of Proverbs 30 who know only to cry, "Give, Give". Even if the young men guessed rightly that the eater was a lion, whatever line of logical thought would lead them to guess further that such a rapacious animal could be a producer of food. When a lion, particularly a man-eating lion, which this lion apparently was, terrorises a neighbourhood, then it acts like the seven lean ears of corn in Pharoah's dream; it takes but gives nothing in return. It would be dangerous to surmise that Samson thought of any deeper application his riddle might have. Scripture is silent on this matter. Nevertheless, the riddle may be used as an illustration of the ravages which sin makes. Think of the first entrance of sin. It destroyed our original righteousness. It consumed our peace of mind. It made ravages on our innocence. The harmony between God and man, and between man and man, fell pray to its venom. And what benefits were gained by yielding to its enticements? Sorrow and misery were its lasting fruits. Of the fuller satisfaction which Satan said man would gain he experienced nothing.

Since the time of the fall, sin continues, as Scripture reminds us, to act in the same way. A sinful tongue is set on fire of hell and burns all within reach. Its words are like a canker which consumes. It can be tamed of no man.

The second part of the riddle is of a piece with the first. The word "strong" means, clearly, strong to dominate. As each succeeding account of the depredations carried out by a man-eating lion passed from

mouth to mouth, one can imagine the fear which would grip the hearts of all who heard. Whence, then, could sweetness arise? What, in turn, can equal the bitterness caused by sin — remorse or the memory of lost opportunities, a conscience laden with guilt, and in the future, the expectation of judgment. The strength of sin, as Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 15 derives from the law of God Himself. How can one expect that from the very place where God condemns there will arise the sweetness of love and consolation.

The hidden solution to the riddle, of course, lies in what Samson concealed. He did not tell the Philistines that the eater had been slain and the oppressor subdued. He did not say that on the death of the old vindictive power, a new power, the power of the industrious bees, began to work. They produced, they did not rob. They gave sweetness not bitterness. It is these two actions, the death of the old and the introduction of the new which Samson is sure the Philistines will never understand and will therefore render his riddle insoluble. For us, too, the riddle of sin would have forever been insoluble had not Christ done to sin what Samson did to the lion. Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Who can bring blessing out of cursing? Christ first made an end of sin. He not only bore the curse of sin's condemnation. He took the active principle of sin, what Paul calls "the old man", and robbed it of its power. All the blessing that now flows out to us from the cross, flows out because of how Christ saved us from sin's guilt and power. Do those chosen in Christ have atonement? It is because satisfaction has been made for sin. Do they have reconciliation? It is because Christ has the keys of hell and of death and He opens to all for whom He was made a curse. Do they have victory over Satan? It is because clothed in the robe of salvation and the garments of Christ's righteousness, Satan has no ground of accusation. A new principle now operates. Where sin reigned to death, grace reigns to eternal life. At this place where death was swallowed up in victory, the Lord of Hosts now prepares a feast of fat things, of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow. Where a sinner had been consigned to death, God now fills his mouth with good things, and crowns him with loving-kindness and tender mercies.

We must always remember the place of this perpetual victory. It is the cross of Christ. Because it is the sad experience of believers that iniquities prevail against them, various expedients have been devised to continue the power of the victory of Christ's death on earth. The Mass is one such expedient in which, it is claimed, the sacrifice of Christ is re-enacted for the benefit of those labouring under a sense of guilt. Others stress the

power of some subjective experience, like a second blessing, which elevates the believer above the power of temptation. The Mass exalts the power of the Church. The emphasis on the second blessing pretends to exalt the Holy Spirit. Both forget that the function of the Church and of the Holy Spirit is to take of the things of Christ and show them to sinners. We must always return to the site of this victory and say with Paul, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ". "In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory."

Having given the foregoing solution to the riddle, all now becomes clear. There was, in fact, no direct connection between the eater and the honey found in the carcase. Likewise, there is no direct connection between the ruinous power of sin and the gracious power of the gospel. Yet, to say that there was no connection at all would rob the riddle of any point. The fact remains that there is a very strong conjunction here, a strong conjunction that would be lost if one merely said, "Out of the hive came forth meat and sweetness". That is just where one would expect honey to come from whereas one does not expect it to come from a lion. Hence the honey that comes from the lion is set apart from the honey that comes from the forest or the hive or the hedgerow. Likewise, God reveals His goodness in a great variety of ways in nature and in His providential dealings. Nevertheless, the revelation of His goodness in Christ is unique, just because of the fact that sin is the occasion for this revelation. Had there been no carcase of the lion, there would have been no comb of honey there. Had there been no sin, we would have never known the meaning of the word "mercy". How wonderful it is that God should take that which is the author of confusion and every evil work and make it the means to display these tender mercies that are over all His other works.

There is another connection. Not only is the carcase of the lion the occasion for the honey been there at all. That honey is found in exactly the same place where the power of the lion formerly was displayed. That is also true of the display of God's grace in Christ. It is a wonderful truth that Christ goes to prepare a place for His people. It is an equal truth that the angels sang, that there is peace on earth itself. Never was this revealed more clearly than on the day of Pentecost. The very streets that rang with the cries, "Crucify Him, Crucify Him", are the streets that now witness a total transformation. The Spirit of grace and supplication is poured out. Christ as Prince and Saviour is seen, not on a throne of judgment but on a throne of grace. Where sin abounded grace now much more

abounds. Where sin reigned unto death, grace now reigns through righteousness unto eternal life. Instead of hate, the love wherewith the Father loved Christ is found in them.

If there is one scene rather than another that should draw out the spirit of worship it is this. We wonder at the power of God in springtime when the decayed face of the earth is renewed. We know that sap lay within the bark of the trees and given favourable conditions the sap will rise and feed the branches, fill out the leaves and cover the foliage with blossom. Even so, we cannot but wonder at the creative and providential wisdom and power of God. But, in the work of redemption, God comes to thorns and briars where nature at its fullest expression is productive of evil, not good. These He turns into fir trees and myrtle trees. In these very imaginations that thought evil continually He creates a new heart and a right spirit. This can only be the doing of the Lord and wondrous in our eyes.

Perpetual Faithfulness

By Rev. John A. MacDonald, Fort William

Loyalty and faithfulness to God were enjoined upon our first parents and their posterity in the garden of Eden. The comprehensive account of that dreadful fall is recorded in the Bible in Genesis chapter 3. The Shorter Catechism too, is most explicit on the matter: "All mankind by the fall lost communion with God are under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to all miseries in this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell for ever."

Indeed, the Mod (or Vanity Fair) held at Stirling recently, is a further indication of man's unfaithfulness to God. O, what a dreadful waste of God given talents in the service of a cruel master, the devil. I cannot but record the solemn reply of the priests and the elders gave to Judas when he betrayed the Lord Jesus Christ, for thirty pieces of silver. Judas, suddenly realising the gravity of his sin, confessed it to the priests and elders, saying "I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood"; and they said, What is that to us? See thou to that. The application is easy. Ah! dear friends, let me remind you that our lives are compared in God's Word, to "a vapour that appeareth for a short time, and then vanisheth away". Again, a faithful God-fearing Minister is a God-given gift to any people. Among the first times I listened to the faithful Rev. James MacLeod, Minister of Greenock, was when a new dance hall was opened

at Tarbert, Harris. In love and faithfulness to our immortal souls, he lovingly counselled, especially the young, never to frequent a dance hall, or a public bar, nor mods, or ceilidhs; all which are calculated to quench any strivings the Holy Spirit may have with us. "The Godliness which will not keep you from the frivolities and the vanity fairs of this world, will not keep you for one moment, from the flames of hell and eternal woe," he solemnly declared. O, how we miss him from our pulpits and from the courts of the Church, especially the Supreme Court. From himself and the late Rev., Malcolm Gillies, we often received good and wise counsel. Yes, perpetual faithfulness.

We should be thankful how obvious it is from God's Word that such faithfulness is on both sides. On God's part, it shall never, never wax cold. "He is the same, yesterday, today and forever;" which is most precious and sweet to His beloved Church. On our part, we daily come short. However, God knows that this is our heart's desire, and prayer to God that we be kept faithful unto death. The Apostle Paul was so. Oh, how refreshing to read of him, as he was about to take his leave of the visible church here below, with the God honouring, proclamation: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me, a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge shall give me at that day." 2 Timothy 4: 6,7.

Abel was a faithful servant especially when it came to offering a sacrifice to God; he offered the "firstlings of the flock", which was well pleasing to the Lord, whereas Cain brought that which cost him nothing. Solomon reminded Israel of old of God's perpetual kindness and faithfulness to them at all times; — there hath not failed one word of all his good promises, which he promised, by the hand of Moses his servant.

The Holy Spirit perpetuates the memory of the zeal and faithfulness of the Prophets and Apostles in their own way. So, too, the memory of the just is blessed. The writer was well acquainted with some of the men and women who upheld the witness raised in honour of God's Word in the dark day of 1893. The more we think of them, we also think of others, of whom it is written: "Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided". 2 Samuel. 1: 23.

As we see the day darkening, and the inclination of other churches toward the harlot of Rome, and their spontaneous countenancing of the man of sin (the pope), we fear for our beloved church, lest cruel modernism, sophistry and counterfeit piety creep in upon us unawares, instead of true godliness and perpetual faithfulness to which we were used in the

past. May the Lord deliver us from being plagued with women ministers and women elders and others who are bold enough to speak in the house of God, in the face of God's Word: "Let your women keep silence in the churches; for it is not permitted unto them to speak;" 1 Cor. 14: 34.

I suppose we all agree that the Rev. Neil Cameron, late minister of Glasgow, was one of the most faithful ministers in his generation. This very touching story is recorded of him. One Sabbath evening while preaching to his own flock; he paused in complete silence for a moment, and as it were, a wave of awe passed over the congregation as he continued to preach; saying "I am seeing hundreds of immortal souls going down to a lost eternity". The following Monday morning the news came of the colossal tragedy of the sinking of the *Titanic*, with hundreds of those on board. This indicates how much of the mind of the Lord Mr Cameron had.

The perpetual faithfulness of Enoch emerges more and more clearly as we read of him walking with God for three hundred and sixty five years. He then entered into glory with Him without going down to the valley of the shadow of death. With all of the incalculable number of saints in Heaven, Enoch is still enjoying intimate fellowship with God, whom He loved and served so well in time.

Be you, dear friends, likewise faithful unto death, and you shall yet join them, and walk with them in the city of which we read: "And the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass". Rev. 22: 21.

On Dancing

by Rev. Wm. Parks

A dancing Christian! What an anomaly! At a ball last night and at church this morning? In the giddy waltz and at the Lord's Supper within the space of a few hours! What! Is this Christianity? Does Christian liberty allow this sudden transition from the gay to the grave? Does it allow it at all? Does it justify indulgence in the pleasure of the world under any circumstances? As a minister of the Christian religion, I distinctly and unhesitatingly say No. Ah! dancing Christians, either give up your profession or your practice; for be assured, as it is, you are a laughing stock to infidels and to devils; the one detect your glaring inconsistency, the other chuckle over your delusion. Haply you think *my* views are melancholy; but, let me ask, who that knows anything of the terrors of sin — or of the blessings of a Saviour God as taught by the Holy

Ghost — could for a moment feel happy in a ballroom, or in frivolous, worldly “dancing” company? Those, and those alone, who know what “plucking out of the burning” is, and what “the balm of Gilead” is — will answer this question.

Perhaps some of you fancy you have Scripture to refute me at once, and to warrant your proceedings. Already the saying of Solomon occurs to you, “There is a time to mourn and a time to dance” (Eccles. 3: 4); but let me tell you that such dancing as Solomon alludes to is not the dancing of the ballroom — is not the movement taught by an artist — is not the figuring in a waltz, or a quadrille, or a polka, or a scottische, learnt with care and exhibited with pride; but the exuberant thankfulness of the heart, for blessings bestowed and grace made manifest. But more of this just now.

I assert that dancing, as it is practised, is sinful. One Scripture alone proves it to be so viz., “Do all the glory of God,” for who in a dance ever thinks of giving glory to God? Who in a dance ever thinks of God at all? Will it be said, “Oh, this is stretching the cord too tight; would you have us always to be thinking about God? Shall we have no relaxation from serious employments?” Ah! my objecting friend, your very objection plainly manifests the state of your heart. You want pastime, do you? And you confess it is a pastime to be relieved from thoughts of God? I read this character of the wicked in the tenth Psalm — God is not in “all his thoughts”. But, again: Perhaps you will say that it does not necessarily follow that because you dance, you cannot do it to God’s glory. In refutation of this objection, I would ask and answer the four following questions, viz.:-

1. What sort of company do you meet at dances?
2. For what purpose do you dance?
3. What preparations do you make for the dance?
4. What are your thoughts and feelings after the dance?

In reply to the first question, I say (and I know it) — the gay, the frivolous, the empty-headed, the vain, the silly, the dissipated, and the dissolute of both man and woman kind; those, in short, whose hearts, souls, and affections are wrapped up in the world and its amusements, its vanities and joys. And I read in my Bible an awful and terrific assertion with regard to connection or association with such parties: “The friendship of the world is the enmity against God; whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God!” (James 4: 4). Oh! my young friends, pause over this tremendous declaration — you who have been led away by worldly companions and induced to rank yourselves, even for

a single night, amongst the antagonists of God! Think upon your terrific step! In your association with your worldly partners in the dance you have avowed yourselves the friends of the enemies of the living God! Oh! may you be taken — torn from “the world” and constrained to see that there is no possibility of keeping friends with Him and it! Does God get glory in the dance, think you? But I proceed to answer the second question, viz., “For what purpose do you dance?” Is it for health? No; for if you required exercise for health you would take it in the open air, and not in a close hot room. Is it to exhibit your joy for God’s blessings? No! for if this were your motive you would choose other company to manifest your joy in than that of a ball or dancing room. Is it for the purpose of exhilarating your spirits. No! for those in low spirits cannot dance. But I will tell you what you dance for. You dance for the purpose of exhibiting your skill, or of letting people observe your fine figure, your graceful movements, or your handsome dress. you dance for SENSE — for mere sensual enjoyment. The real motive may be concealed beneath a very modest appearance; to some it may be altogether unknown, but that it is not for the glory of God you dance is abundantly evident. We come to our third question, “What preparation do you make for the dance?” There are divers articles of dress got together — there are the handsome robe, the flaunting ribbon, the pretty frill, the becoming wreath, the satin shoe, the silk stocking, the nice gloves, and that scandal and disgrace to a virtuous woman, the low-bodied dress, all arrayed and gazed upon long before the time of assembling arrives. And then there is staring in the mirror — there are such smiles and sometimes courtesies made before the glass, in order to see how you will look or what you will be thought of in the ballroom — a sort of rehearsal of the vanity show that is to take place by-and-by. And at last there are such questions asked of fond mothers and foolish fathers, and elderly brothers and antiquated sisters, as — Does my hair become me; do I look nice? Each and all betokening the condition of the heart within, that it is impossible to mistake how matters are in that quarter.

Those of the opposite sex are quite as bad, quite as vain-glorious. Young men call to their aid the fashions of the day to clothe them. They spend considerable sums on gay apparel; they bidizen themselves with jewellery to make them more attractive, and often run into the most reckless expenses in gratifying their passions for the dance. In short, the preparations made for the dance tends to anything but “the glory of God” but everything to the glory of self, the vanity of the world, “the lust of the eye”, and the “pride of life”!

One other question remains to be answered, viz., "What are your thoughts and feelings after the dance?" Are they such as you might fancy those of a Christian to be who was about to retire for the night? Are they placid, calm, unruffled, holy? Are they fixed upon God and occupied in communion with God? Has the veil of night shut out all objects from view but God and Christ and the Holy Ghost? Ah, no. I know it well. The feelings are excited, the pulse beats quick, the brain throbs; the world has just had its revel in the heart, and all is crazed, confused, and revolutionised! There is the remembrance of the glaring lights, the many figures, the various groups, the complicated motions, the winning smile, the agreeable small talk, the flattering compliment all floating in the head, all glorifying SELF; but not a thought, not a feeling enlisted on the side of God! No! No relish for prayer, no prostration of spirit before the throne, not a knee bent (except in formalism or mockery or delusion), not a sincere breath wafted on high by any soul engaged in the dance.

And, oh! tell me, how can such amusements be innocent? How can any practice tending to such omission and commission be countenanced, much less encouraged, by any converted child of God or minister of God? Surely the whole proceeding, from first to last, has the stamp of Satan upon it, the arch-antagonist of God and of Christ! Yes, I unhesitatingly declare that the ball and the dance, their consequences and concomitants, are devices and amusements of the devil, by which he effects his purposes against many thousands of his incredulous victims! I should like to ask the fashionable young devotee of the ballroom such a question as the following:- "When your presence graces the gay circle, when one of earth's fair daughters hangs upon your arm, or you whirl through the maze of worldly loungers, or sink exhausted on the voluptuous couch, or wander forth in the cool passages to calm your excited mind, how could you then give an account of your stewardship? Were Christ to speak to you there, could you answer Him? Were death to summon you, could you calmly follow him from the ballroom to the grave — from the worldling's gaze to the presence of your Maker?" Awful, terrible thought! Yet, believe me, such things have been. Many is the victim who has been launched into eternity whilst his heart has been throbbing with delight in worship of what God has cursed!

I shall now proceed to notice a few commonplace attempts at argument in justification of the practice of dancing.

It has been asserted that "we have Scripture examples to warrant our engaging in the dance." The devil (as somebody has quaintly said) never goes out without his Bible under his arm! Satan has Scripture at his

fingers' ends, but he sometimes mutilates and mangles it. Ah, my dear young friends, let me warn you against the sophisticated practice of falling back upon Scripture for examples to justify ungodly and worldly actions! It is by such a practice that the gay and frivolous clergyman justifies himself in his association with "the world". It is the constant plea of such a one, in defence of his inconsistent conduct, that Jesus Christ never shrank from dining and supping and feasting with the Pharisees and unbelieving Jews; but he thinks proper to forget the purpose and design which Jesus had in view under such circumstances, and that He never failed to teach, to exhort, to rebuke, and to argue with His host and fellow-guests, whoever they were. Jesus Christ never forgot His mission, and, although meek and unobtrusive, He never suffered the rank, the hospitality, or peculiar views or crotchets of any man to interfere with or deter Him from His grand purpose of "doing good" and maintaining truth inviolate. If those who quote Scripture in support of their adopted errors and sinful courses would but bring submission of mind to the Word of God as a whole, they would soon cease to make such uses of the inspired volume.

But I digress; let me examine the alleged Scripture arguments in favour or justification of dancing. It is said that David danced, and that Miriam danced, and that the daughter of Jephtha danced, and that, consequently, you may dance. It is true — quite true — that David and Miriam and Jephtha's daughter danced; but let us see why they danced and how they danced. I read in 2 Sam., second chapter, twelfth verse to the end, that David employed himself in bringing the ark into Zion, and that David was so overjoyed at the successful issue of the work that he actually flung aside his dignity for a time — forgot himself, in a manner — despised appearances, and danced and leaped again before the Lord. It is very evident, from a closer view of the passage, that dancing (at least such movements and conduct as David's) was practised by "vain fellows" or "lewd fellows of the baser sort," for Michal alludes to the fact in sarcastic terms, and that, consequently, it was in no very good repute in those days; but the good David, overflowing with delight and thankfulness for the blessed privilege he was enjoying, cared not whom he resembled or how despicable he made himself in the eyes of even his regal mistress. He was overpowered by religious joy on this occasion, which broke out in boisterous, ungainly, and even ridiculous movements. But, mark you, all this was "before the Lord" (verse 21) and, further, he avows his intention of doing so again and again, of even being more ridiculous than ever (verse 22), of being more contemptible in

Michal's and more vile in his own sight. David's dancing, then, was a sinking of self — a lowering of the creature; he danced for the sheer purpose of giving glory to God. And, mark you, the Bible tells us that when David danced he took off his imperial robe and clothed himself in a plain linen ephod. What David put off young men put on; what David danced for, they never think of. And now, with this plain and unrestrained interpretation of this oft-quoted and oft-mutilated passage, will any young man or woman, any lady or gentleman, aver that there is a justification here for their dancing? Will any member of a ball or dance, in modern times, tell me that he or she has a warrant to dance because David danced? Is your motive religious joy? Is your design to make yourself vile and base and contemptible in your own sight, or in the sight of others, when you dance? I trow not; so there is an end to any hope or prospect of justification for your practice from the case of David. Let me now examine the case of Miriam; Miriam danced, and therefore you say you may dance. Just meditate a moment upon the passage in which the fact of Miriam's dancing is alluded to: "And Miriam, the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand: and all the women went out after her, with timbrels and with dances. And Miriam answered them, Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea" (Exod. 15: 20, 21). Look at it again and again. Do you read that Miriam led off the dance with a handsome young Jew or a naturalised Egyptian? Is there any mention of male partners, hand and glove with the damsels, who followed her? No. Here was a company of godly women praising Jehovah, in the best way they could, for His late wonderful deliverance of them from the power of Pharaoh. The men were otherwise engaged. The women only danced, and danced alone too.

Now, tell me, when you dance, is the name of the Lord upon your lips? Is He influencing your hearts? Is it for the purpose of glorifying Jesus that you dance? Ah! my friends, is it not a fact that if the word "Jesus" were to escape the lips of any of you, in praise or commendation of Him, in the ball or in the dance, you would be sneered upon? Would not the Name, "which is above every name" (Phil. 2: 9), be the signal for mockery? If, during the dance, you were to sing out unto the Lord, and say, "Praise Him in His name Jah" — "Praise Him in the dance" — would you not be laughed to scorn? If you object and say, "Oh, there is a time for all things," what have we to do with Jesus in the ball or in the dance? I reply in the words already quoted, "Whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God"; and, further, the individual who has nothing to do

with Jesus in the ball or in the dance has nothing to do with Him at all. But may the Lord have pity upon such, so that Jesus may be enthroned, and have His name magnified and glorified, in whatsoever company they may be!

There is no parallel, then, between you and Miriam — no warrant whatever for your sort of dancing from her mode. The two are as essentially different as a loose immoral song is from a hymn of praise to Jehovah. Will you consider the case of Jephtha's daughter? She danced, certainly, but, then, it was a dance of filial love — love which induced her to come and congratulate her father upon his victory over the enemies of God. There is no analogy whatever between this case and the dancing of a modern ballroom. I may express a wish in passing that daughters who are devoted to the sinful practice of modern dancing, and who are ever ready to seize upon the instance of Jephtha's beloved child's dancing as a warrant for theirs, were as amiable and dutiful and religious as she! Suffice to say, that the dancing noticed in Scripture, from which you profess to take your warrant for the modern practice, was invariably the ebullition of religious joy, and was totally different and distinct from modern dancing, and, consequently, can afford you no authority whatever for your present tastes and practices.

I am free to admit there is dancing of another sort than that I have just been noticing mentioned in Scripture; but, then, I take it for granted that you would not for a moment acknowledge you copied from it; I allude to the dancing which accompanied the horrible sin of idolatry (Exod. 32: 6, 19), and to the dancing in which "the world" and the profligate amongst the Jews indulged (Job. 20: 11; Matt. 14: 6, 8). You will not confess that you take your warrant for dancing from the voluptuous performances of Herodias's daughter, which evoked the sensual delight of the adulterous monarch of Judea? Nor are you willing to trace back your practice to the libidinous pastimes of the East? The Scriptures leave you totally unsupported and unequivocally condemned. Remember, it is written, "Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

I would now notice two or three commonplace objections in this connection, and reply to them.

Objection. — "People might do a deal worse than dance."

Answer. — True; people might be profligates; but does the possibility of deeper degradation warrant any degradation? If dancing is sinful, objectors do a great deal worse than dance, for they lessen the sin or extenuate it.

Objection. — But Solomon has said, "There is a time to dance."

Answer. — Dancing here and elsewhere in Scripture is put as a general expression for joy and gladness. "Thou hast turned my mourning into dancing" (Psa. 30: 18), exclaimed the Psalmist, evidently meaning joy of heart, not physical play of the limbs.

Objection. — "It is better to dance than to join a coterie in scandalising one's neighbours."

Answer. — This is begging the question. We have no right to do either. The gossip and the dancer are on a par. I am certain that much unprofitable and sinful conversation takes place amongst religious professors; but surely a man is not justified in sinning because he knows of the existence of hypocrites or of the abuse of privileges.

Objection. — Young people will dance, and to prevent their going to objectionable places to learn, it is better to countenance the thing and provide them with the means of learning in a quiet way."

Answer. — This is advocating the principle that we may "do evil that good may come," a maxim abhorrent to the Apostle Paul, and which ought to be repudiated by all moralists, though they never made a profession of the Christian religion.

By this time I fear I have quite tired my readers, but I must say two or three words more.

You who feel yourselves condemned will come to the conclusion that my religion extinguishes all amusements, but you wrong me. My religion teaches me to give up "the world" with its "poms and vanities, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh." My religion teaches me to avoid the ballroom, the concert-room, and the theatre. My religion teaches me that if I do ought over which I cannot ask God's blessing, it is SIN — it is forbidden! My religion teaches me that "the world's" practices and God's requirements are totally at variance — that it is impossible to "serve two masters" (Matt. 6: 24). I thank God for having enabled me to come out from "the world". I never do mix, and I hope I never shall associate, with any but decided Christians. My hopes, my desires, my longings, are all centred in Christ; and though I feel and know that I am a "miserable sinner," I have the happiness to possess Scriptural evidence of my call of God. Yea, I am convinced that no one can have sound and satisfactory reason to believe in his or her personal interest in Christ's atonement until such repudiation of "the world", its joys and its amusements, has been accomplished — not, mind you, by self-power, but by supernatural power. Yet, notwithstanding all, I feel that I am not debarred from innocent games and harmless amusements, and that I am compelled to be of a sorrowful countenance. Those games and amusements are, however,

few. Modern dancing is most indubitably not one of them; neither is any pastime which brings the opposite sexes into too close contact reckoned amongst the number.

Dancing by adults has been proved by experience and by Scripture to be injurious to the soul, and against the command of God. I shall never cease to warn both rich and poor against the folly of it. Let serious readers look out for and meditate upon the following texts of Scripture, viz:- Psa. 1: 1; 90: 12; 119: 37; Prov. 4: 14, 15; Matt. 6: 13, 24; 16: 24; Rom. 12: 1, 2; 1 Cor. 6: 19, 20; 5: 31; 15: 33; Eph. 5: 8, 16; 1 Thes. 5: 22; 1 John 2: 15.

The Presbyterian Church and Church Festivals

by Prof. Samuel Miller D.D.

The worship of the Presbyterian Church

A fundamental principle of the Presbyterian Church in forming her "Directory" for the Worship of God is, that here as in everything else, Holy Scripture is the only safe guide. One of the earliest practical errors which gained ground in the Christian community was the adoption of the principle that the ministers of religion might lawfully add at their pleasure to the rites and ceremonies of the Church. In consequence of the admission of this error, Augustine complained as early as the beginning of the 5th Century that for one appointment of God's, ten of man's had crept into the Church and formed a burden greater in some respects than was the ceremonial economy of the Jews. The fact is, for the sake of drawing both Jews and Pagans into the Church, many rites and ceremonies were adopted from both that they might feel more at home in the Christian assemblies. This evil increased until before the Reformation it had reached that revolting amount of superstition which now distinguishes the "Church of Rome".

It was in reference to this point that our fathers both in Scotland and England had many conflicts when their respective Churches in those countries were organised and settled in the 16th Century. On the one hand, the prelates and on the other, court clergy were in favour of a splendid ritual and were disposed to retain a large number of the ceremonies which had been in use in the "Church of Rome". On the other, the Puritans in England and the corresponding body in Scotland contended that the Scriptures being the only infallible rule of faith and

practice, no rite or ceremony ought to have a place in the public worship of God which is not warranted in Scripture either by direct precept or example or by good and sufficient inference. In Scotland the advocates of primitive simplicity prevailed and established in their national church the same mode of worship which we believe existed in the apostolic age and which now obtains in the Presbyterian Church in that country and in the United States.

In England our fathers, the Puritans, were not so happy as to succeed in establishing the same scriptural system. Under the influence of the monarch and the court clergy they were outvoted. Still it is undoubtedly certain that a large portion of the most pious and devoted of the clergy of the Church of England during the reign of Queen Elizabeth and some of her most worthy dignitaries, when the character of that church under its reformed regimen was finally fixed, did importunately plead for laying aside in public worship everything to which Presbyterians at the present day object as having no warrant in Scripture. And although they failed of securing their object in the national church, yet the descendants of the Puritans both in that country and our own have been permitted to realise their wishes as to most of the particulars. It is proposed now to dwell and to assign with regard to each our reasons for adhering to them in our system of worship. But before we proceed to this detail it may be useful to offer a general remark or two which will serve to show why we object to all human inventions and additions in the worship of God.

(1) Christ is the only King and Head of the Church. His word is the law of His house. Of course the Church ought not to consider herself as possessing any power which that Word does not warrant. If therefore she cannot find in Scripture authority direct or fairly implied in the amount contended for, she does not possess that authority.

(2) We believe that such inventions and additions are expressly forbidden in Scripture. The significant question asked by God of his ancient people when speaking on this very subject, Isaiah 1: 12, "Who hath required this at your hand?" seems to be decisive. "Teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" is spoken of in Matt. 15: 9 by our blessed Saviour as highly offensive to Him. It would seem tacitly to imply that we are wiser than God and understand the interests of the Church better than her Head and Lord.

(3) If we once open this door, how or when shall it be closed? The Church we are told has power to decree rites and ceremonies; that is a majority of the ruling powers of the Church have power at any time as

caprice or a love of show or superstition or any other motive may prompt, to add rite after rite and ceremony after ceremony at pleasure to the worship of God. Now if this power be really inherent in the Church, what limit shall we put to its exercise? If she has power to add 10 or 20 new ordinances to her ritual has she not equal power to add a 100, or 500, if a majority of her ministers should feel inclined to do so? And was it not precisely in this way and upon this very principle that the enormous mass of superstitions which characterises the Papacy gradually accumulated? Surely a power which carries with it no limit but human caprice and which has been so manifestly and shockingly abused in past ages ought by no means to be claimed or exercised in the Church of God. (At this point Dr. Miller descended into particulars and we quote him from pp. 73 to 78 on.)

Presbyterians do not observe Holy Days

We believe and teach in our public formularies that "there is no day under the Gospel dispensation commanded to be kept holy except the Lord's Day which is the Christian Sabbath. We believe indeed and declare in the same formula that it is both scriptural and rational to observe special days of fasting and thanksgiving, as the extra-ordinary dispensations of Divine Providence may direct. But we are persuaded that even the keeping of these days when they are made stated observances recurring of course at particular times, whatever the aspect of Providence may be, is calculated to promote formality and superstition rather than the edification of the body of Christ. Our reasons for entertaining this opinion are the following:—

(1) We are persuaded that there is no scriptural warrant for such observances either from precept or example. There is no hint in the New Testament that such days were either observed or recommended by the Apostles or by any of the Churches in their time. The mention of Easter in Acts 12: 4 has no application to this subject. Herod was a Jew (sic) not a Christian and of course had no desire to honour a Christian solemnity. The real meaning of the passage is as the slightest inspection of the original will satisfy every intelligent reader "intending after the passover to bring him forth to the people."

(2) We believe that the Scriptures not only do not warrant the observance of such days but that they positively discountenance it. Let anyone impartially weigh Colossians 2: 16 and also Galatians 4: 6, 10, 11 and then say whether these passages do not evidently indicated that the inspired Apostle disapproved of the observance of such days.

(3) The observance of fasts and festivals by divine direction under the Old Testament economy makes nothing in favour of such observances under the New Testament dispensation. That economy was no longer binding or even lawful after the New Testament Church was set up. It were just as reasonable to plead for the present use of the Passover, the incense and the burnt offerings of the Old economy which were confessedly done away by the coming of Christ as to argue in favour of human inventions bearing some resemblance to them as binding in the Christian Church.

(4) The history of the introduction of stated fasts and festivals by the early Christians speaks much against both their obligation and their edifying character. Their origin was ignoble. They were chiefly brought in by carnal policy for the purpose of drawing into the Church Jews and Gentiles who had both been accustomed to festivals and holy days. And from the moment of their introduction they became the signal for strife or the monuments of wordly expedience and degrading superstition.

As there were no holy days, excepting the Lord's Day, observed in the Christian Church while the Apostles lived and no hint given that they thought any other expedient desirable, so we find no hint of any such observances having been adopted until towards the close of the 2nd Century. Then the celebration of Easter gave rise to a controversy; the Asiatic Christians pleading for the observance at the same time which was prescribed for the Jewish Passover and contending that they were supported in this by apostolic tradition; while the Western Church contended for the stated celebration on a certain Lord's Day and urged with equal confidence apostolic tradition in favour of their scheme. Concerning this fierce and unhallowed controversy, Socrates, the ecclesiastical historian who wrote soon after the time of Eusebius and begins his history where the latter closes his narrative; speaking on the controversy concerning Easter expresses himself thus: "Neither the ancients nor the fathers of later times, I mean such as favoured the Jewish custom, had sufficient cause to contend so eagerly about the feast of Easter; for they considered not within themselves that when the Jewish religion was changed into Christianity the literal observance of the Mosaic law and the types of things to come wholly ceased. And this carries with it its own evidence. For no one of Christ's laws permits Christians to observe the rites of the Jews. Nay, the Apostle hath in plain words forbidden it where he abrogates circumcision and exhorts us not to contend about feasts and holy days. For, writing to the Galatians he admonishes them not to observe days and months and times and years. And unto the Colossians

he is as plain as may be declaring that the observance of such things was but a shadow.

Neither the Apostles nor the Evangelists have enjoined on Christians the observance of Easter but have left the remembrance of it to the free choice and discretion of those who have been benefited by such days. Men keep holy days because thereon they enjoy rest from toil and labour. Therefore it comes to pass that in every place they do celebrate of their own accord the remembrance of the Lord's passion. But neither our Saviour nor his Apostles have anywhere commanded us to observe it." Socrates Lib. 5, cap. 21. Here then is an eminent Christian writer who flourished early in the 5th Century who had made the history of the Church his particular study, who explicitly declares that neither Christ nor his Apostles gave any command or even countenance to the observance of festival days; that it was brought into the Church by custom and that in different parts of the Church there was diversity of practice in regard to this matter. With respect to Easter in particular this diversity was striking. We no sooner hear of its observance at all than we begin to hear of contest and interruption of Christian fellowship on account of it; some quoting the authority of some of the Apostles for keeping this festival on one day and others with equal confidence quoting the authority of other Apostles for the selection of a different day thereby clearly demonstrating that there was error somewhere and rendering it highly probable that all parties were wrong and that no such observance at all were binding on Christians.

The festival of Easter no doubt was introduced in the 2nd Century in place of the Passover and in accommodation to the same Jewish prejudice which had said even during the apostolic age "except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses ye cannot be saved." Hence it was generally called pascha and pasch in conformity with the name of the Jewish festival whose place it took. It seems to have received the title of Easter in Great Britain from the circumstance that when Christianity was introduced into that country a great pagan festival celebrated at the same season of the year in honour of the Pagan goddess Eostre yielded its place to the Christian festival which received substantially the name of the Pagan deity. The title of Easter it is believed is seldom used but by Britons and their descendants.

Few festivals are celebrated in the Romish Church and in some Protestant Churches with more interest and zeal than Christmas. Yet when Origen about the middle of the 3rd Century professes to give a list of the fasts and festivals which were observed in his day, he makes no mention

of Christmas. From this fact Sir Peter King in his "Inquiry into the Constitution and Worship etc. of the Primitive church" etc. infers that no such festival was then observed and adds, "It seems improbable that they should celebrate Christ's nativity when they disagreed about the month and the day when Christ was born." Every month of the year has been assigned by different portions and writers of the Christian Church as the time of our Lord's nativity and the final location of this as well as other holy days in the ecclesiastical calendar was adjusted rather upon astronomical and mathematical principles than to any solid calculations of history."

But the motives and manner of introducing Christmas into the Christian Church speak more strongly against it. Its real origin was, like many other observances, borrowed from the heathen. The well known pagan festival among the Romans distinguished by the title of Saturnalia because instituted in honour of their fabled deity, Saturn, was celebrated by them with the greatest splendour, extravagance and debauchery. It was during its continuance a season of freedom and equality; the master ceased to rule and the slave to obey, the former waiting at his own table upon the latter and submitting to the suspension of all order and the reign of universal frolic. The ceremonial of this festival was opened on the 19th of December by lighting a profusion of waxen candles in the temple of Saturn and by suspending in their temple and in all their habitations boughs of laurel and various kinds of evergreen. The Christian Church, seeing the unhappy moral influence of this festival; perceiving her own members too often partaking in its licentiousness and desirous if possible of effecting its abolition, appointed a festival in honour of her Master's birth nearly about the same time for the purpose of superseding it. In doing this the policy was to retain as many of these habits which had prevailed in the Saturnalia as could in any way be reconciled with the purity of Christianity. They made their new festival therefore a season of relaxation and mirth, of cheerful visiting and mutual presents. They lighted candles in their places of worship and adorned them with a profusion of evergreen boughs. Thus did the Romish Church borrow from the pagans some of her most prominent observances and thus have some observances of this origin been adopted and continued by Protestants.

It being evident then that stated fasts and festivals have no divine warrant and that their use under the New Testament economy is a mere human invention; we may ask those who are friendly to their observance what limits ought to be set to their adoption and use in the Christian Church? If it be lawful to introduce five such days for stated observance

why not 10, 20 or five score? A small number were at an early period brought into use by serious men who thought they were thereby rendering God service and extending the reign of religion. But one after another was added as superstition increased until the calendar became burdened with between two and 300 fasts and festivals or saint's days in each year; thus materially interfering with the claims of industry and loading the worship of God with a mass of superstitious observances equally unfriendly to the temporal and the eternal interests of men. Let the principle once be admitted that stated days of religious observance which God has nowhere commanded may properly be introduced into the Christian ritual and by parity of reasoning every one who from good motives can effect the introduction of a new religious festival is at liberty to do so. Upon this principle was built up the enormous mass of superstition which now distinguishes and corrupts the Romish church.

The observance of uncommanded holy days is ever found to interfere with the due sanctification of the Lord's Day. Adding to the appointments of God is superstition and superstition has ever been found unfriendly to genuine obedience. Its votaries like the Jews of old have ever been found more tenacious of their own inventions of traditionary dreams than of God's revealed code of duty. Accordingly, there is perhaps no fact more universal and unquestionable than that the zealous observers of stated fasts and festivals are characteristically lax in the observance of that one day which God has eminently set apart for Himself and on the sanctification of which all the vital interests of practical religion are suspended. So it was among the Israelites of old. As early as the 5th Century Augustine complains that the superstitious observance of uncommanded rites betrayed many in his time into a spirit of irreverence and neglect towards those which were divinely appointed. So it is notoriously among the Romanists at the present day. And so without breach of charity it may be said to be in very religious community in which zeal for the observance of uncommanded holy days prevails. It is true many in those communities tell us that the observance of holy days devoted to particular persons and events in the history of the Church has a manifest and strong tendency to increase the spirit of piety but if this is so, we might expect to find much more scriptural piety in the Romish church than in any other since holy days are 10 times more numerous in that community than in the system of any Protestant church. But is it so? Let those who have eyes to see and ears to hear decide.

If the foregoing allegations be in any measure well founded; if there be

no warrant in God's Word for any observances of this kind; if on the contrary the Scriptures positively discourage them; if the history of their introduction and increase mark an unhallowed origin; if when we once open the door to such human inventions, no one can say how or when it may be closed and if the observance of days not appointed of God has ever been found to exert an unfriendly influence on the sanctification of that holy day which God has appointed, surely we need no further proof that it is wise to discard them from our ecclesiastical system.

Notes and Comments

Fearful Storm in South of England

In October a fearful storm of wind struck the South of England causing a number of deaths and also great destruction of property. It came in the middle of the night wholly without warning as the weather men had not expected a storm of such intensity. It is a reminder to us of how quickly death and destruction may come on a people. The Lord in His providence permits and orders such solemn dispensations in order that men may hear His voice in them and take warning while the day of mercy lasts. Yet after all what are such visitations but a whisper of His power. Who can take in what His wrath shall be in the destruction of sinners. The Psalmist was saying:

"Who knows the power of Thy wrath?
according to Thy fear

So is Thy wrath: "Lord, teach Thou us
our end in mind to bear." Ps 90: 11,12.

What need there is to be afraid lest the wrath of Jehovah should break out upon us for our sins. Who will ever rise up again if that storm should overtake him — the storm of God's wrath.

"Snares, fire and brimstone, furious storms,
on sinners He shall rain:

This as the portion of their cup,
doth unto them pertain." Ps. 11: 6.

May we be delivered from those storms of divine wrath by being hid in a cleft of that rock which is Christ.

Archbishop at Tomb of Mary, Queen of Scots

On the 400th anniversary of the death of Mary, Queen of Scots, the Archbishop of Canterbury prayed at her tomb for unity between the Anglican, Reformed and Roman Catholic Churches. He said: "May the

memory of Mary, Queen of Scots, heal the divisions of the past and free us from the tyrannies of history." It is very strange what past events modern ecumenicals will use to try to further their own cause. The only thing that the memory of Mary, Queen of Scots, will do for those truly Reformed is to make them thankful to the Most High that Mary was not permitted to overthrow the Reformation in Scotland as she would have dearly loved to have done. Scotland owes much to John Knox whom the Lord raised up at that time and who refused to bow to her.

Church of England and Sodomy

Rev. Anthony Higton, rector of Hawkwell, Essex tabled a solution, declaring homosexual activity, adultery and fornication sinful, for debate at the General Synod of the Church of England. He also pressed for references to the Gay and Lesbian Christian Movement to be removed from the Church of England Year Book. The rector of St. Botolph's Church in London, where the headquarters of the Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement is found, tabled an amendment calling on the Church to encourage commitment and permanence in all sexual relationships, and warnings against promiscuity whether in heterosexual or homosexual relationships. The Bishop of Chester, termed a Conservative Evangelical, put forward a second amendment stating that homosexual acts fall short of the ideal of total commitment within the marriage relationship. A third amendment by Rev. David Holloway of Newcastle calls for disciplinary measures against clergy in cases of sexual immorality. It would be good if the resolution and the last amendment were carried but in the present sad state of the Church of England it is unlikely that this can obtain sufficient support. Even Mrs Thatcher, the Prime Minister, has had to step in and warn the leaders of the Church of England of the need to take a definite moral stance and oppose what is evil. Whether they will give heed to her call will be seen in the General Synod. How solemn it is that there is not unanimous agreement in opposition to all vile sins.

Abortion Reform Bill

David Alton MP, a Roman Catholic, has presented to Parliament an Abortion Reform Bill having in view reducing from 28 weeks to 18 weeks the time in which abortions can be legally carried out. A strong abortion lobby is working hard to see that this Bill will not reach the Statute Book. If passed it will make some small impact on the number of abortions carried out. About 6000 abortions in the 18 - 28 week range were carried

out in 1986 over against a total for the year of 172,288. A far more rigorous Reform Act would be required if any substantial impact is to be made on the yearly figures for abortion. Since the Abortion Act of 1967 was passed over 3 million fetuses have been aborted. What solemn consequences this will have for Britain when the Lord in His appointed time will make inquisition after blood. That time may not be far away as the nation ripens for judgment.

Sabbath Racing

Lord Wyatt's Bill to allow racing and other sporting activities on the Sabbath faces strong opposition from Lord Graham and Viscount Brentford in the House of Lords. Many amendments tabled to it if supported could greatly weaken it and eventually ensure its overthrow. The attack on the Sabbath continues on every hand in this sin-blinded generation. What need there is that the Lord would graciously maintain His own day in our midst and scatter His enemies who are seeking to destroy it. A nation that loses its Sabbath can no longer be called a Christian land.

Involvement with Sabbath Desecration

The Autumn 1987 issue of *Joy and Light*, the magazine of the Lord's Day Observance Society, comments on the Sabbath desecration that will take place at the Glasgow Garden Festival 1988 and calls upon churches not to give support to the Festival on this account. The principle enunciated is similar to the view which has been held by the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland for many years. The full quotation from *Joy and Light* is as follows:

"We live in sad times when the church can have men stand up in public and praise efforts like the Glasgow Garden Festival of 1988 where we understand the churches section will be designated under the theme 'The Year of the Bible'. Be it known by all readers that we in the L.D.O.S. would like very much to stand up and give this venture our blessing, but we cannot upon being told that this Festival will be open as a commercial venture upon the Lord's Day.

"How can the churches involved justify their open handed support of this Festival when it involves the commercial desecration of the Lord's Day? Is the excuse going to be (once again) that they 'Don't think God would object because of the theme 'The Year of the Bible'.' This type of excuse just will not do any more to excuse the slackness of Biblical standards. Is God one who changes His mind because of circumstances, or because it brings in money to the church coffers? We say He most cer-

tainly is not! God is interested in obedience to His commands, and it is to the shame of all denominations and organisations who are party to ventures such as the one here described."

D. B.

Church Notes

Lord MacKay of Clashfern appointed Lord Chancellor

The Prime Minister, Mrs Margaret Thatcher, has appointed Lord MacKay, an elder in the Edinburgh Congregation, to be the new Lord Chancellor. We know that it is the prayerful desire of the Lord's people throughout the Church that Lord MacKay may be sustained by divine grace in this high office to which he has been called and in which he will exercise great responsibility. As it is often the prayer of the people of God that Christians would be raised to high office in our land, we have reason to hope that this appointment is in answer to these prayers. We would commend the new Lord Chancellor to the prayers of the Lord's people. Let them pray that he may be a witness for Christ in the high places of our land, as Daniel was in Babylon, and be an instrument for good in the hand of the Lord in promoting in the land that righteousness which alone exalts a nation.

Church Deputies

Rev. L. MacLeod's period of supply in Chesley ended in November. Rev. Fraser Tallach expects to leave Auckland on 14th December for this country via Hong Kong where he will spend a week with his brother, Dr Cameron Tallach. He expects to reach London on 23rd December (D.V.). Rev. Dr Donald Boyd expects to leave this country early in January as Church Deputy to Australia and New Zealand. This is subject to Presbytery approval. We trust that the labours of those ministers will be blessed in the overseas congregations visited by them.

Medical Missionary for Kenya

The Foreign Missions' Committee wishes to hear from any person who would be interested in engaging in Medical Missionary work on its behalf in the Kish District of Kenya. Enquiries to Clerk of the Committee, Rev. A. Murray, F.P. Manse, Lairg, Sutherland, IV27 4EH. Telephone 0549-2176.

Presbytery Meetings (D.V.)

Western: At Laide on 29th December at 11 a.m.

Skye: At Portree on 16th February, 1988 at 11 a.m.

Zimbabwe: At Bulawayo on 8th March, 1988.

Theological Conference — 1987

The Conference will be held in the Glasgow Church on Tuesday 1st and Wednesday 2nd December (D.V.). It is expected that the following papers will be read:—

Tuesday	2.30 p.m.	The place of the Westminster Confession of Faith in Scottish History <i>by Rev. D. M. Boyd, Farr.</i>
	7.00 p.m.	Covenant Theology <i>by Rev. J. MacLeod, Stornoway.</i>
Wednesday	10 a.m.	Faith (An Exposition of Hebrews 11: 1) <i>by Rev. D. Nicolson, Glendale.</i>
	2.30 p.m.	Contemporary Problems in the Ministry <i>by Rev. D. J. MacDonald, Perth.</i>
(Public)	7.00 p.m.	The Fundamentals of the Faith <i>by Rev. F. MacDonald, Portree.</i>

The Conference Chairman will be Rev. D. B. Macleod, Dingwall.

As usual all ministers, office-bearers and male members are eligible to attend.

(Rev.) D. J. MacDonald,
Convener,
Training of the Ministry Committee.

List of Communions

The list of Communions has been corrected for 1988. The Editor would be glad to know of any other corrections which may be necessary.

Acknowledgment of Donations

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

Sustentation Fund: Anon., £50; A Friend, £100 for Greenock Congregation Sustentation Fund.

Home Mission Fund: Portree Adherent, £50.

Foreign Mission Fund: Anon., £50.

African Appeal Fund: Anon., Canada, \$100.00; Anon., £6; Anon., £100; Anon., £23,

these three per St. Jude's Treasurer; Inverness Congregation, £962; Donations per Inverness Treasurer, £25; Grafton Congregation, £218.04.

Dominions and Overseas Fund: Anon., £10.

Aged and Infirm etc. Fund: Anon., £500 (envelope in Dumbarton plate).

Sydney Australia: The Treasurer acknowledges with sincere thanks the following donations:— Anon., £200; Anon., New Zealand, \$1707.00 per Rev. E. A. R.: Auckland Friend, \$725.00. Correction to acknowledgment in November issue which should have read "Miss J. MacKenzie \$200.00 per Mrs M. Shaw and several other donations in previous years."

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

Breasclete: Friend of the Cause, £40 for Congr. Purposes.

Dingwall: Friend, Skye, £5 for Church Funds; Mrs M., North Kessock, £10 for Church Funds.

Dumbarton: Anon., Glasgow, £20; Anon., Glasgow, £10, both for Congr. Fund; Anon. (10.10.87), £500 for the Aged and Infirm Ministers, Widows and Orphans Fund (envelope in plate).

Dundee: Anon., per Rev. D. C. M., £100.

Edinburgh: Mrs E. K., Blackpool, £20; Miss M. C., £5, both for African Relief Fund; Anon., £15 for Zimbabwe Mission Fund.

Flashadder: Friends, Glendale, £20, per D. M. MacKay; Friend of the Cause, Portree, £10, both for Church Building Fund.

Fort William: C. C., £20, per Rev. J. A. MacDonald; Two Glasgow Friends, £5; A. MacG., £5, both for Communion Expenses; Friend, Caol, £10; A. MacG., £5, both for Sust. Fund.

Gairloch: Friend, Stornoway, £10 for Communion Expenses and £10 for Congregational Purposes; Anon., £10 for Communion Expenses, all per Rev. A. MacDonald.

Glendale: Anon., £20, "Where most needed" (envelope in plate); Olive Young, Pittsford, U.S.A., £5; C. M., Glasgow, £5 (envelope in plate), last two for Sust. Fund, all per Rev. D. Nicolson.

Greenock: A Friend, Lewis (where most needed), £5 per Rev. L. MacLeod; Anon., £25 (where most needed); Anon., £30 for African Relief Fund; Anon. (in church plate) £10 (where most needed).

Kames: Gourrock Friends, £30 for Church Funds; Barnoldswick Congregation, £25; Dundee Congregation, £20; Dumbarton Congregation, £40, all for the Archibald Crawford Memorial Refurbishing Fund.

Laide: N. R., £10.70; Friend, £9.56; Anon. (in plate), £50; N. R., £9.15; N. R., £10.30; Anon., per Rev. D. A. R., £30; Anon., in Gairloch plate, £20; Friend, per Mrs D. A. R., £30, all for Church Building Fund; Anon., for Car Fund, £10, per Rev. D. A. Ross.

Perth: Friends, Chequers, £2 for Perth Congregation; Friend at Stornoway Communion, £5 for Sust. Fund, both per Rev. D. J. MacD.

Portree: Anon., £20; Anon., £30; Anon., £20, all for Foreign Mission Fund (all envelopes in plate).

Shieldaig: Anon., £20 for Sust. Fund, per D. M. C.; Anon., £10 for Communion Expenses; Anon., £20 for Car Fund; Anon., £20 for Car Fund, both per M. McL.; Mrs MacC., Inverness, £5 for Congr. Funds, per D. M. C.; Anon., £10 for Communion Expenses.

Stirling: Friend, South Harris, £20 for Property Fund, per J. N. M.

Strath, Skye: Envelope in plate, £100 (£50 for Foreign Mission; Kenya Mission £20 and Sydney Church Building Fund £30).

Stornoway: N. A., £15 for petrol; Anonymous Friend, £50 for Sust. Fund; Friend, £10 for Door Collection; Friend, Tarbet, £10 for Car Fund, all per Rev. J. MacLeod.