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## Meeting of Synod — 1989

The Church Synod held its annual meeting in the Free Presbyterian Church, Inverness, on Tuesday, 23rd May at 6.30 p.m. when the retiring Moderator, the Rev. A. Ndebele from Zimbabwe, preached from the words "That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." 1 Corinthians 1: 29 - 31.

The larger than usual congregation indicated the interest that had been roused by the fact that the Synod had before it cases of a most serious nature, the issues of which were likely to determine whether or not the Church would be faithful to her trust. This unusual interest was also reflected in the fact that there was a very high attendance of members of synod.

These were:—

**NORTHERN PRESBYTERY:** Revs. D. B. MacLeod, S. F. Tallach, John Tallach, John Ross and D. B. Boyd. Elders — I. MacLeod, R. MacKenzie, E. Fraser, E. Sutherland, W. Taylor, R. MacLeod, D. MacPherson, K. Robertson and John D. MacLeod.

**SOUTHERN PRESBYTERY:** Revs. Donald MacLean, L. MacLeod, A MacPherson, D. J. MacDonald, Angus Morrison, G. I. MacAskill, D. C. MacAskill, H. I. MacKinnon and G. Hutton. Elders — D. MacNicoll, D. R. MacSween, A. Gillies, D. W. MacLean, M. Gunn, D. Biggerstaff, A. N. MacRae, M. I. Matheson, T. Jackson, K. Gillies, R. Middleton and J. Thompson.

**WESTERN PRESBYTERY:** Revs. Angus MacKay, A. E. W. MacDonald, J. W. Ross, D. A. Ross, N. M. Ross, A. N. MacPhail, and P. L.



Roberts. Elders — I. Matheson, A. MacKenzie, J. van Woerden, T. Maton, D. MacCuish, W. G. MacLeod, E. Ross and D. Stewart.

SKYE PRESBYTERY: Revs. F. MacDonald, D. Nicolson, James R. Tallach and A. Cattanach. Elders — W. Byers, J. Gillies, D. MacKay, D. MacPherson, M. MacKay and R. MacBeath.

OUTER ISLES PRESBYTERY: Revs. Alex Morrison, J. MacDonald, K. D. MacLeod and John MacLeod. Elders — J. Buchanan, A. J. Morrison, R. MacCuish, F. Thomson, J. MacKay, K. R. Morrison and R. Dickie.

AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND PRESBYTERY: Revs. E. A. Rayner and J. van Dorp. Elders — J. Campbell and J. MacPherson.

CANADIAN PRESBYTERY: Revs. M. MacInnes and D. Beattie. Elders — J. C. Fraser, G. Schuit and N. Fowler.

ZIMBABWE PRESBYTERY: Revs. P. Mzamo and A. Ndebele. Elders — C. Sobantu.

The Moderator intimated that his term of office had come to an end, and in so doing he thanked the members of Synod and all the people of the Church whose prayers, he felt, had sustained him during his term of office. He expressed his hope that the Lord who had upheld the Church hitherto would continue His favour to her now in the present trouble.

The nomination of the new moderator, the Rev. Lachlan MacLeod, was made by the Rev. Donald MacLean who observed that the Rev. Lachlan MacLeod was an experienced minister of the church and one whose life and conversation had adorned the gospel and who was to be valued for what the grace of God had made him. The Rev. Fraser MacDonald supported the nomination and said that he expected from Mr MacLeod that firmness and fairness together with exhibitions of that love and mercy and grace only to be found in the courts of Christ's Church.

Rev. L. MacLeod accepted the office thanking the Synod for the honour thus conferred upon him and expressing his felt sense of need of the prayers of the Lord's people that he and all concerned would have the help of heaven. He alluded to that case in the Scripture when the church of God did not know what to do and so fixed her eyes upon the Lord and so Mr MacLeod directed the Synod to the likewise fixing their eyes upon the exalted Redeemer who is the great Head of the Church and who has promised to be with us in the words "Lo I am with you always even unto the end of the world."

After attending to the usual opening formalities this meeting was brought to an end by praise and prayer.



**WEDNESDAY, 24th MAY**

The first business before the Synod consisted of two petitions from members of the Northern Presbytery, one signed by Rev. D. B. MacLeod and the other signed by the Rev. D. Boyd. The Synod after discussion agreed that as the two petitions dealt basically with the same matter — the action of the Northern Presbytery in their dealing with the complaint by the Rev. D. Boyd against their decision in connection with a pro re nata meeting held on 16/8/88 when the matter of reinstating the Rev. A. Murray after his three month period of suspension was raised — the two petitions should be joined together.

The Synod then heard arguments from Revs. D. B. MacLeod and D. M. Boyd as to why their petitions should be received. Rev. D. Boyd spoke of the frustration that he had met with at the Presbytery in his attempt to get extracts of meetings of Presbytery.

Rev. D. B. MacLeod complained that he too experienced frustration inasmuch as that the Northern Presbytery had rejected his reasons for complaint ruling that reasons submitted by a complainer who had joined with another person in his Dissent and Complaint, were not documents in the case.

After some discussion it was decided on a majority vote that the Petitions should be received by the Synod. Certain members of the Synod dissented from this decision.

After further discussion and another division of Synod it was decided to deal with the petitions as Dissents and Complaints against the Northern Presbytery.

When the parties appeared at the bar of the Presbytery the Rev. D. M. Boyd referred to the meeting of the Presbytery of 7th June where the matter was raised re certain statements made to the Press by Rev. A. Murray while he was under suspension. At that meeting the Presbytery refused to call Mr Murray to answer for this matter. Rev. D. Boyd further pointed out that at the pro re nata meeting of Presbytery on 16th August it accepted that Mr Murray had grounds for speaking with the Press because the Synod had not issued a statement. Rev. D. Boyd maintained that no minister under suspension can be reinstated without the Presbytery actually lifting sentence.

Rev. D. B. MacLeod said that private information of Synod had been disclosed by Mr Murray. As to whether or not it was necessary for the Presbytery to lift the sentence on a minister, Mr MacLeod gave as his view that the Bible stated that if the Church did bind it was the Church also that should loosen.



In answer to these allegations the Presbytery replied through Mr Dugald McPherson, who said that as far as the action of Rev. D. B. MacLeod is concerned he ought not to have joined with the Rev. D. Boyd but he should have himself complained.

The Rev. John Tallach also spoke for the Presbytery and he found fault with Rev. D. B. MacLeod for saying to the Presbytery that Mr Murray had "gone to the Press" whereas the fact was that the Press had gone to Mr Murray. This, in the view of Mr Tallach, was bearing false witness. The Presbytery were aware that no formal statement had been given by the Synod for the congregation of Mr Murray and it was open for the congregation to think all kinds of things as to why Mr Murray was not in his pulpit as normal. As far as the pro re nata meeting of Presbytery was concerned the real issue was as to whether it was necessary. The Presbytery took the view that there was no need for any formal reinstatement of a minister suspended for a few months.

In reply to these arguments Rev. D. Boyd stated that he did not accept the argument that it was open to him to join with another member of Presbytery who may ask leave to complain for such a person is only asking leave to do a thing he may never do. This was an illogical approach. As to the accusation made by Rev. John Tallach that Rev. D. B. MacLeod was bearing false witness Rev. D. Boyd thought it strange that no such suggestion was made at the Presbytery by Mr Tallach.

The Synod then discussed the matter. Several members expressed themselves. Mr W. Byers said that he was very surprised to hear that it was necessary to have the Presbytery actually lift the Synod sentence of Mr Murray. He referred to a case which had been before the Skye Presbytery.

The Clerk of Synod stated that he held the view that there is little point in exercising discipline with regard to anybody, unless it has in view the repentance of the person upon whom the discipline is being exercised. Rev. James Tallach shared with the feelings expressed by Mr W. Byers. Rev. Alex McPherson thought that the word "punishment" used in connection with the sentence of suspension upon Rev. A. Murray was an inappropriate word. He thought it was proper to speak of recovering one who had gone astray.

Rev. Fraser MacDonald did not think that this was the case before us. His view was that if we made a mistake at last Synod we have to suffer for it but he asked, "Why should Mr Murray suffer for it?"

Rev. John MacLeod expressed his amazement that his brother minister Rev. D. B. MacLeod could be accused of bearing false witness.



Discipline is not punishment it is intended for reformation. Rev. A. Murray has never accepted the judgment for he says that he did nothing wrong. After a division the Synod passed the following motion —

That the Synod sustain the Dissent and appeal of Rev. D. B. MacLeod and Rev. D. M. Boyd and that it instruct the Presbytery to hold a pro re nata meeting at the earliest possible date to consider the matter of the restoration of Rev. A. Murray.

Several members of Synod dissented.

The next business with which the Synod dealt was the case of Lord MacKay of Clashfern.

In connection with this case a Petition was before the Synod signed by over one thousand persons belonging to the Church, the crave of which was that the sentence passed on Lord MacKay of Clashfern for his attendance at a requiem mass be cancelled.

The Petitioners were represented at the Synod by Mr W. D. Fraser and Mr R. MacDonald and after they were heard the Synod discussed the question as to whether the Petition be received or not.

Rev. D. B. MacLeod compared the action of the Petitioners to persons telling a Sheriff how to decide a case. Rev. D. Boyd gave as his opinion that the Petition was not so much an expression of concern as that of prejudice. Rev. Alex Morrison regarded the circulation of such a Petition as reprehensible. The Rev. Donald MacLean observed that as this is a case of discipline the parties who will make the decision are members of the Church Court. Further he pointed out that the law of the Church is that it is only when a matter cannot be brought in through the normal working of the Courts that a Petition is necessary hence this particular Petition is incompetent. He did not think it was a good thing to encourage this type of behaviour.

After a division the Synod decided not to receive the Petition.

Several members of Synod dissented.

Before entering into the case of Lord MacKay of Clashfern, the Clerk of Synod read to the Synod a letter he had just received from him. It read:

Please read this letter to the Synod before the case affecting me is decided.

The letter reads thus —

As you know no intimation has been sent to me that the Dissent and Complaint and Appeal against the decision of the Southern Presbytery affecting me is to be heard on Wednesday next. But I understand from the Press that it is so. I understand further that it



is to be heard in public as I had wished it to be in the Presbytery in view of the fact that you had spoken about the subject matter to the *Daily Telegraph* before the Presbytery, and in view of the public interest in the office I hold.

My position has been made plain before the Kirk Session and before the Presbytery and, as you know, no member of the majority of the Presbytery who voted for your motion asked me any questions whatsoever.

I write to assure you that I consider that I was correct as a Christian judge to attend a memorial service for my deceased colleague in order publicly to show my respect for his memory and my sympathy with his relatives. Neither by thought or by word or by action did I give any assent to the doctrine of the requiem mass as I believe this would be perfectly understood by all who knew the circumstances.

In this I stand in the position taken by John Calvin and the mainstream reformers, I firmly believe.

Mr Middleton and Rev. D. J. MacDonald M.A. never communicated with me about this matter in any way until almost two years after the event when I was in a different office other than that which I held at the time and they did so by a petition because apparently they were not content to leave this matter to the judgment of the Kirk Session of Edinburgh to whose rule I am subject.

The Clerk of Synod pointed out that no papers were sent to Lord MacKay of Clashfern as he did not appeal.

The substance of the case is well known to our readers and so we proceed to give an account of how the case was argued at the Synod.

Rev. Angus Morrison was the first speaker and he stressed that the real issue to be decided is as to whether it is involving guilt to be present at a service where the Romish mass is celebrated. The Southern Presbytery (the majority) were saying that it did. Mr Morrison tried to make a distinction between bodily presence and heart approbation and argued that Lord MacKay of Clashfern never agreed in heart. It was Mr Morrison's view that proximity to sin was not guilt. He referred (as many subsequent speakers did to Calvin's Tracts on the issue). Rev. H. I. MacKinnon was of the same opinion as Mr Morrison. He raised an objection reiterated by many speakers that no office bearer of the Church had ever been disciplined for attendance at such a service. Mr MacKinnon noted that Lord MacKay had stated that he would have to give up his post as Lord Chancellor if he were to fall in line with the judg-



ment of the Southern Presbytery.

Rev. Donald MacLean stated that the question before the Synod is not the question with regard to the Lord Chancellorship of Lord MacKay. What the Presbytery were concerned about was about the position of Lord MacKay as an elder of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. Mr MacLean questioned whether it was the case that the high office held by Lord MacKay did stand in the balance. He said "I find it very difficult to believe that the Lord Chancellor of a Protestant country, with a Protestant Queen on the throne, has any obligation by reason of his office of state to go to a Popish mass. It is the highest form of worship in the Roman Catholic church and it is idolatrous and blasphemous." With regard to the reference made to Calvin, Mr MacLean showed that Calvin was answering a question addressed to him by a group who were professing attachment to the Reformed faith and yet who wanted to attend mass to escape persecution. Calvin addressed himself to that particular situation but we are not living in the age of Calvin — a time when people were coming out of the Roman Church — threatened with being burned — we are living in an entirely different situation in an ecumenical situation where people are going back to Rome. The Church of England are well on the way and the Church of Scotland are moving in the same direction and therefore it is absolutely essential that a witness should be maintained by this Church against any weakening of the witness of the Church. Calvin, Mr MacLean pointed out, says that a believer holds the mass in such horror that he would not in any way come in contact with it.

As to the matter raised that other elders have been to mass and have not been censured Mr MacLean stated that he knew of no such case. I say to any such elders that now is the time for them to repent and to show their repentance by standing on the side of the judgment of the Presbytery.

Mr A. Gillies spoke of the witness that the Church had been making all these past years against persons in high places attending mass and he asked, was the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland going to change course now? In his view there was sin involved in countenancing mass. He noted that in all the years that the church has been sending out protests against the mass no one has ever raised an objection on the floor of the Synod. The protests were unanimous.

Rev. Angus Morrison replied to the arguments of Mr MacLean and Mr Gillies by saying that he understood Calvin's concern to be over the matter of dissimulation involved by those who would identify themselves with worshippers to the extent of bowing down and thereby giving out-



ward visible respect for that wafer. He referred too to the presence of the late Dr John Kennedy at a mass in Rome out of curiosity. Mr Morrison saw nothing inconsistent with our making protests against the Church of Rome and his saying what he now said.

Rev. H. I. MacKinnon stressed that the Clerk of Synod had said that he never heard of any office bearers of this Church attending Roman Catholic funerals. In the view of Mr MacKinnon it was an act of sympathy.

Questions were put to parties by members of Synod.

**Rev. N. Ross:** Would we not be hypocritical in protesting against attendance at requiem masses by others and not at the Lord Chancellor's attendance there?

**Rev. Angus Morrison:** No. We have to take account of circumstances.

**Rev. J. Tallach:** Does "Flee from idolatry" mean physically to distance ourselves from it, as Mr A. Gillies said?

**Mr A. Gillies:** I referred to Hodge who said that the only safe way is to flee from idolatry. He says: Avoid what is questionable and avoid occasions and temptations.

**Rev. A. MacDonald:** Are appellants putting sympathy beyond conscience?

**Rev. H. MacKinnon:** We do not say that.

**Mr Wm. Taylor:** In not approaching Lord MacKay, do you not consider you have violated Matth. 18: 15-17.

**Rev. D. J. MacDonald:** Lord MacKay has not sinned against me. It was something done publicly, so there is no parallel between it and the instance you cited.

**Rev. R. R. Sinclair:** How many witnesses did you bring before Edinburgh Kirk Session?

**Mr R. Middleton:** We asked only for an investigation and did not bring any charges.

**Rev. D. Boyd:** Are you aware that John Calvin described hearing of mass as sin?

**Rev. Angus Morrison:** This means full participation in the mass.

**Rev. D. Boyd:** What do you make of Calvin's statement that he alone keeps himself free who is absent either by look, access or vicinity?

**Rev. Angus Morrison:** I believe that John Calvin's view is that that is when one is giving place to the mass.

The Synod went on to discussion of the case after parties were removed from the bar.



**Rev. R. R. Sinclair** reminded the Court that Lord MacKay belonged to a group of men — judges — who have great authority from God. Though Lords Russell and Wheatley were Roman Catholics yet Lord MacKay had contact with them in a civil way. He put in an appearance at these funerals to express respect and regard for his colleagues and sympathy with his relatives. Lord MacKay did what his moral conscience allowed him to do. Lord MacKay is a highly intelligent Christian and a strong Protestant. There is the case of Elisha and Naaman, the Syrian. Elisha said: Go in peace, though he was to go with his master to the house of Rimmon. We have arrived at a stage where we may be dividing the Church in two.

**Rev. John Ross:** We have protested against going to mass but have never disciplined anyone. No law of the Church forbids attendance. Don't be swayed by emotional statements that we are becoming soft towards Rome. You may do injustice to a most loyal friend of this Church.

**Mr Ian Matheson:** I am in the same position as Lord MacKay. I never heard that my conduct was censurable. My conscience is clear.

**Rev. P. Mzamo:** In Africa we are faced with the worship of the spirit of ancestors. This is no different from the mass except in name. I am pleased that all who spoke said that the mass was idolatrous. The question is one's presence where the mass is administered. Should you be there or not be there? The Word of God says: Flee Idolatry. Run for your life. There is danger there. The case of Elijah is different. He went to the prophets of Baal to denounce Baal worship. The three young men in Babylon were captives at gun point. We are under a Christian government in this country and cannot be forced. It would be wrong for any of us to be present where the mass is to be performed, as it would be to attend the ceremony of bringing back the spirits of the ancestors.

**Rev. A. MacPhail:** I regret the impression that we are going soft on Romanism. In the Church it is Rev. John Tallach and Rev. Angus Morrison who support work among Romanists in Italy. Good results should follow if the spirit and judgment is good. Instead the Church has been made a laughing stock, congregations have been disrupted and the Gospel misrepresented. A propaganda victory has been given to the news media. We need mutual forbearance. The Saviour said: If ye had known what



this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless.

**Mr R. W. M. MacKenzie:** I am quite amazed with the majority in the Southern Presbytery stating on the floor of the Synod that it was difficult for them to believe that Lord MacKay could lose his office. Rev. D. MacLean did not want to find out the true position and had prejudged the issue. They were afraid to ask Lord MacKay any questions. I do believe that in this issue their minds were clouded.

**Rev. D. Ross:** In answer to charges of hypocrisy in this matter, the Church has been objecting to people going to the mass. No individual in the Synod has ever objected to these protests which were made. The members of the Southern Presbytery have tried to do their duty. You can imagine the rejoicing of the Church of Rome when they saw Lord MacKay in their midst from a Protestant Church. To me, as Convener of the Religion and Morals Committee it would be totally inconsistent of us to approve of this conduct after protesting against others. Who are the hypocrites then? To show sympathy — must you go to a mass or even to a funeral to show this? Would you sit in company where the name of Christ was being blasphemed by the world? This is what takes place in the mass.

**Rev. J. MacLeod:** I was glad to hear the speakers refer to Lord Mackay. There is no animosity to Lord MacKay. No member present has borne illwill to him. Yet in this instance the Southern Presbytery has made out a case. Discipline is for the glory of God, the purity of the Church and for the good of the individual. It is to be administered in love. It is to the glory of God that our witness be maintained. The Westminster Confession of Faith speaks of the mass as most abominably injurious to Christ's one only sacrifice and the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England speak of it as a blasphemous fable and dangerous deceit. So it is inconsistent to attend a requiem mass for any purpose. The Lord has placed His testimony in our hands. We have the same principles as the martyrs and Covenanters. Where is the Protestant witness in Scotland to go if we fail as a Church. We are the true heirs of the Reformed Church of Scotland.

**Rev. D. Nicolson:** Many things said are not to the point. It is not true that he attended a mass but a funeral. If Lord MacKay is to be found guilty three things are essential; (1) A law; (2) Evidence,



and (3) Evidence that leads to proof; otherwise there is no righteous judgment. We should show where the law is broken. Only the wickedness of the mass has been stressed. This is true also of articles in the Magazine on Romanism. Who is more qualified to judge than Lord MacKay who is an experienced judge and also a godly man? Godliness gives understanding, not only in civil things but also in spiritual things.

**Rev. D. Boyd:** We are not debating about personalities but principles. Honour to whom honour is due but I am against attendance at mass. Discipline is for teaching our brethren. This is the Lord's form. The Scripture, Flee from idolatry, means remove yourselves from those engaged in the worship of idols. Calvin's view is expressed in this way — Dearly beloved flee all idolatrous worship.

**Rev. A. Ndebele:** Christ's one sacrifice is the end of all sacrifice. We are preaching in Africa against attendance at ceremonies for the raising of the spirits of ancestors. To argue that it is a funeral that was attended and not a requiem mass, we know that a requiem mass can be done at any time. Lord MacKay is my friend but if he goes to a place which is dangerous to his soul can I allow it? Would I allow my friend to go near fire? How near should we go to it? How can we go near to it without defiling our garments? The Bible says: Abstain from all appearance of evil.

**Rev. John Ross:** There is the difficulty of equating bodily presence and the heart. We can go to all kinds of places and not be affected. Our conduct is watched over by God and has an awful potential for grieving the Holy Spirit. We have to establish that the law has been broken. According to the letter from Lord MacKay he in no way gave worship to the mass.

**Mr Dugald MacPherson:** Christianity is judged by how I act. Kindliness, sympathy, spirit of love and peace — that is what practical Christianity is about. Ministers do not meet with people in the same way. Worship is a positive act of adoration.

**Rev. A. Morrison:** Malice and prejudice are words that should not be used in this context. I give Lord MacKay as high a place as any in this house. My prayers go up to heaven on his behalf. His father was one of the sweetest Christians I was privileged to meet. But great men may fall. This was true of Adam who had perfect knowledge. Our learned friend erred on this occasion.



Christ is the Head of the Church and has instituted two sacraments but the Church of Rome has robbed Christ of all His offices. I refer you to Chiniquy's reply to Hodge.

**Rev. M. MacInnes:** I do not condone the mass. There has been a general erosion of parts of the Westminster Confession of Faith in our Church. The Westminster Confession speaks of liberty of conscience. The Church is taking up the position of being the conscience of its people. This is a violation of the constitution. It is not for the Church to engage in the casuistry of the Jews. People have to work out their duty with their own conscience. There are double standards used as it is known that others were at mass. We can have no part with that.

**Rev. John Tallach** in moving a motion to reverse the decision of the Southern Presbytery said, All are committed to the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Section against the heresies of Rome. Lord MacKay is also committed to this. The spirit of love is essential to the exercise of discipline. There is a powerful call to the Synod to reverse the decision because of flagrant absence of the spirit of love. The case also was prejudiced by the book produced by the two members pursuing. The Southern Presbytery do not give us a basis in law on which to censure our brother. Binding and loosing in discipline is a solemn aspect of the Church of God. There is nothing in the Confession or ordination vows giving the power to censure in this case.

**Rev. D. B. Macleod** in moving a Counter-motion to uphold the decision of the Southern Presbytery said, In moving this counter motion I do so, not in any spirit of antagonism to our friend and brother elder but in the spirit of love desiring that Lord MacKay may yet in the Lord's kindness be brought to see his fault and repent of it. It is because of our regard for Lord MacKay as a Christian that we feel it our duty to move this counter motion. We all know how genuinely gladdened all in the Church were at Lord MacKay's exaltation to high office and we desire that he may be upheld in it. In this matter we believe that Lord MacKay has erred for the following reasons which the Southern Presbytery, in our view, has established: (1) His presence as a worshipper where idolatrous worship was carried on, even though he regarded that worship as idolatry; (2) By his example weaker brethren might be emboldened to follow his example and be ensnared by it; (3) His action would tend to confirm Roman



Catholics in their idolatry. We think that the Southern Presbytery has established this beyond all reasonable doubt.

**Rev. Alex Morrison** in seconding said, I refute the use of the words prejudice and malice in this case. Our prayers are that the Lord would hasten the destruction of the papal system.

**Rev. John Tallach** replying said, Obviously extreme statements have been made. The R.C. Church affirms the Creed, the Trinity and the Person of Christ so we cannot say that the R.C. Church is a lie from the beginning to the end. It was in the R.C. Church that Luther, Calvin and other Reformers were ordained. There is the danger of being extreme. The Reformers were deeply aware of the errors of the Church of Rome. Lord MacKay was expressing concern for the bereaved and so was free from any stain.

After this discussion the Synod was divided and a vote taken, the result of which was that the action of the Southern Presbytery in passing sentence on Lord MacKay of Clashfern was declared to be the mind of the Synod.

There were several dissenters.

Following upon this result the Rev. Malcolm MacInnes tabled a protest and was joined in this by Rev. D. Beattie, Rev. John Tallach and Messrs N. Fowler, E. Biggerstaff and K. Robertson.

The Clerk stated that protests against the supreme court of the Church are incompetent and so gave an opportunity to the persons concerned to change it to a dissent but this was not accepted. The Synod then discussed whether or not this designated Protest be received and after a division it was the decision of the Synod not to receive it.

Thus ended a case which no doubt exercised the people of God within and without the Church and the Clerk of Synod gave it as his opinion that the decision was in answer to these prayers.

## THURSDAY

As much time of the Synod had been taken up with the business of discipline there was less time left for the discussion of the various Reports. At this meeting the following Reports were adopted by the Synod —

The Religion and Morals Report.

The Report by Rev. D. A. Ross on his mission to Eastern Europe.

The Sabbath Observance Report.

The Finance Report and the Church Accounts.

In connection with this report, the Assistant Clerk expressed the view,



often given in connection with the funds of the Church, that the Lord would uphold the Church so long as she continued faithful to her trust that it was to the Lord we are indebted for all we have.

Mr W. D. Fraser intimated his resignation from the office of Convenership of the Finance Committee and at a later meeting Rev. A. E. W. MacDonald was appointed the new Convener.

The Synod expressed its thanks to the Treasurer and to the Auditor for their work.

#### DAY OF HUMILIATION AND PRAYER.

Rev. Fraser MacDonald introduced this subject in the following words:

As you know this is an annual matter in connection with the terrible state in which we are morally and spiritually and I think we have only to read closely and prayerfully the Report (Religion and Morals) year by year. It seems to me that what is happening first of all is that sin is perpetrated, a second step, after it is perpetrated it is tolerated; a third step is that it is legalised and a fourth step is that it is glamorised.

Mr MacDonald moved and the Synod agreed.

In view of the frightening and revealing statistics relating to the increasing momentum of evil and the varieties of iniquities manifested in this our day, together with the continuing moral and religious decadence, overspreading the Church and Nation, I beg to move that Wednesday, 13th December 1989, be held as a Day of Prayer and Humiliation before the Lord against whom we have all sinned most grievously.

The undernoted Resolutions were passed by the Synod.

#### **A Resolution on Religious Studies — Standard Grade Examination**

The Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland met at Inverness on Wednesday, 24th May 1989 wishes to express its dissatisfaction with the SCE Standard Grade Religious Studies syllabus and examination and to advise parents to discourage their children from taking this course.

The Synod expresses its dissatisfaction with the following points in this course:

1. The Biblical content in the Unit on Christianity amounts to less than 16 chapters of Luke's Gospel and no Old Testament teaching.



2. In practice, under the Unit on Christianity, the course involves the compulsory study of Roman Catholic traditions and practices and answering questions thereon. If practice should be studied, we suggest it would be better to study Biblical practice than the multitudinous developments since Apostolic times in the different Christian traditions.
3. The course includes the compulsory study of a religion other than Christianity from among Judaism, Hinduism, Islam or Buddhism. We suggest that this should be optional, and pupils given the opportunity to opt for a further Unit in Christianity.
4. There is a lack of care and no safeguard that Reformed Biblical Christianity is taught under the Christianity Unit. Reformed Biblical Christianity is the subject of the statutory Religious Education requirement and could be provided by extra study Units in Christianity.
5. The Unit on Issues of Belief and Morality does not adopt a Christian and biblical framework as mandatory.
6. The Unit on Belief deals with belief in ideas, and omits the Christian teaching of belief in the Person of Christ.
7. The Unit on Morality omits the Decalogue.
8. The Version of the Bible used is the Good News Version rather than the Authorised Version.

This course follows the pioneering guidelines of the Religious Studies 'O' Grade which the Synod discredited in 1983. It has been suggested that the Unit on Christianity may eventually be used to fulfil the RE statutory requirements.

The Synod laments the inability of the Scottish Examinations Board to give more flexibility to this syllabus and examination especially in view of the greater choice in comparable Religious Studies examinations for certificates in Religious Studies by the GCSE groups in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. However, even these latter examinations have reduced the choice available in Religious Studies in that the earlier GCE 'O' level syllabuses are no longer available in England although almost every other subject retains them as an alternative syllabus.

The amount of scripture knowledge obtained in the S.E.B. course is minimal and Free Presbyterian children are advised that, if they wish to have a certificate in religion at school, they may consider and investigate the possibility of sitting the Welsh GCSE in Religious Studies or the Cambridge Local 'International' GCE Religious Studies 'O' level which seem to offer the least objectionable options. The latter examination has been taken by our pupils in Ingwenya, Zimbabwe, for many years.



Copies to S.E.D., S.E.B., Secretary of State for Education, Secretary of State for Scotland and the Press.

Rev. James Tallach commented on the proposed syllabus that it showed itself to be more man-centred than God-centred.

### **A Resolution re Divorce Recommendations**

The Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland met at Inverness on Wednesday, 24th May 1989 expresses its profound concern at the changes in the Law of Divorce proposed by the Law Commissions of England and Scotland. **We do not approve of the law under which the sole ground for divorce is a period of separation, nor do we approve of a law under which the sole ground for divorce is the expiry of a period of time after one party had given official notice of an intention to seek a divorce.**

The Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland is of the view that any reform of the Divorce Law should not be in the direction outlined in the discussion papers circulated by the Law Commissions. We are particularly concerned that the Law Commission should be encouraging the courts to abscond from their duty to establish fault. From the ecclesiastical viewpoint, we are concerned about the repercussions of this. Some churches, including our own, need to establish fault in order to ascertain whether or not to grant church privileges to church members. It is not in anyone's interests that there should be two trials, one civil and one ecclesiastical, even if the latter could be conducted with the consent of the parties. The English Law Commission discussion paper says, "There may also be some petitioners who feel so deeply wronged that they feel that the law should recognise this." The matter goes deeper and needs urgent clarification.

We suggest that it is not practical to try to find a single ground for divorce either in "irretrievable marriage breakdown" as in the present law, or in "separation" as in the suggested change to the law. The present law has no interest in whether the marriage is irretrievable. It includes the process of marriage breakdown in its definition of marriage breakdown, then unjustifiably prefixes the word "irretrievable" to give it moral respectability. Marriage breakdown is a process that has the possibility of remedy. The marriage has broken down when it is proven to be irretrievable. It is proven to be irretrievable by desertion that cannot be remedied or by the unwillingness of the innocent partner to live with an adulterer (which is itself often the end result of the process of



marriage breakdown). This is reflected in the scriptural position outlined as follows:

Marriage was instituted before the existence of civil society, and therefore cannot in its essential nature be a mere civil institution. It is founded on the nature of man as constituted by God. The mutual fidelity vow made at marriage is not made exclusively each to the other, but by each to God. Therefore the scripture says "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." (Matthew 19: 6).

In the light of this scripture teaching, it is unsatisfactory that our present divorce legislation should find its basis in a Church of England report ineptly named *Putting Asunder*, (SPCK, 1966). There are only two scriptural reasons for lawful divorce — **adultery and wilful desertion that cannot be remedied**. If our state legislators enact laws that warrant those to separate whom God has joined together (except for adultery and wilful desertion) their laws are absolute nullities at the bar of conscience and in the sight of God.

Copies to Home Secretary, Law Commissions (Scotland and England), Press.

#### **A Resolution against incitement to Violence**

The Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland met at Inverness on Wednesday, 24th May 1989, wishes to encourage Her Majesty's Government in its opposition to the incitement to violence of the citizens of this country as manifested in the changed laws for candidates in parliamentary elections to forswear violence and in the opposition to the recent incitement to murder by Ayatollah Khomeini.

Copies to Prime Minister, Home Secretary, Press.

#### **A Resolution re the Death Penalty**

The Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, met at Inverness on Wednesday, 24th of May 1989, wishes to put on record its disappointment at the Government's failure to restore the death penalty by the amendment to the Criminal Justice Bill put forward by Member of Parliament, Mr Roger Gale, in June of last year. Further we also express our deep regret, that constant calls from Members of Parliament, from the public and, especially of late, from the Police Federation, for the restoration of capital punishment have gone unheeded by the Government.

We urge the Government to restore the death penalty as the just punishment for the murderer. This is required by the scriptures, our sole



authority for moral and religious conduct. "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man let his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man." Genesis 9: 6. While some demand the death penalty for certain categories of murder, the Word of God makes no such distinction and the word "whoso" covers all kinds of murderers.

Since it is Almighty God who has laid down this rule in His Word, our departure from it, as from any of His Laws, does not augur well for the nation. It is, therefore, a largely futile exercise to try to restore the confidence of society in the judicial system and to suppress violence when we ignore God's rule for dealing with the murderer. We believe that the Government would show proper concern for victims of this horrible crime and for the fears of people at the increase in murders if they restored the death penalty.

We are sure also that capital punishment is intended by God to deter potential murderers. The Scriptures, speaking of the power of magistrates to carry out capital punishment says, "For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same. For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, *be afraid*; for he beareth not the sword in vain; for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil," Romans 13: 3, 4.

### **A Resolution re Cremation**

The Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland met at Inverness on Wednesday, 24th May 1989, reaffirms the scriptural witness of this Church against cremation as an unscriptural manner of disposing of the body of the deceased.

Copies to the Editor of Life and Work, Editor of Monthly Record, Church of England Synod, Press.

### **A Resolution re the Control of AIDS**

The Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, met at Inverness on 24th May 1989, expresses its grave concern at the inadequacy of the Government's measures to prevent the spread of the HIV virus. We are very disappointed that the Government has not condemned homosexual practices, which are the primary cause of the disease, and that it has not highlighted AIDS as one result of the abandonment of the Christian teaching on marriage.

We therefore urge the Government to be emphasising that marriage,



and mutual faithfulness in that bond, is the principal way of containing and eradicating this dreadful disease.

We call also for the enacting of legislation, including penalties which would be a realistic deterrent, for the outlawing of homosexuality, prostitution, and drug abuse, these being the main causes of the spread of the disease.

Moreover we believe that there should be compulsory testing of everyone, beginning with high risk groups, to discover who is infectious. While some opponents of compulsory testing make much of the rights of the individual they fail to give due weight to the rights of others who are in danger of being infected.

We also believe that Governments have a moral obligation to take strict legislative measures to prevent infected persons spreading AIDS. This is all the more urgent when certain infected persons are continuing to ignore the warnings given and are reckless about the awful consequences for other people.

The increase in the incidents of AIDS predicted by the World Health Organisation, namely 100 million by 1991, and the consequent death toll ought to cause the Government to introduce mandatory testing. While the cost of such an exercise will be high we believe that it will not exceed the cost of treatment; and will be a small price to pay for the prevention of untold misery and tragic deaths.

On the Resolution re the Control of AIDS, Dr R. Dickie spoke of the medical and scientific problems connected with compulsory testing and suggested that part of the Resolution be removed until more information is available.

Rev. D. A. Ross, the Convener of the Committee on Religion and Morals, said that while he was aware of the situation he saw no reason to change the Resolution.

Rev. K. MacLeod suggested that para 4 begin with the words — “We believe very serious consideration be given to the introduction of compulsory testing.”

### **A Resolution re the Law of Blasphemy**

The Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, convened at Inverness on Wednesday, 24th May 1989, calls upon Her Majesty's Government to strengthen the law on blasphemy against God and the Christian religion. The law should recognise that blasphemy against God, Jesus Christ and the Bible are in a different category from blasphemy against man and his beliefs. The law should be objectively



defined and should not depend upon subjective feelings, such as outrage and insult, as the present law seems to do. Insults to religions other than Christianity should be treated separately and does not require further dilution of the present law respecting blasphemy.

The Synod deplores the decision of the Director of Public Prosecutions not to attempt a prosecution respecting the film "The Last Temptation of Christ" which we believe to be blasphemous, and is a gross misrepresentation of the Son of God in human nature. We are concerned, that to our knowledge, the basis of the DPP's decision has not been made readily available to the public. Further, any difficulty concerning whom to prosecute is more imaginary than real and should not deter the Director of Public Prosecutions.

Copies to Home Secretary; Church of Scotland; Church of England; Press; Mrs Mary Whitehouse; United Protestant Council; Director of Public Prosecutions; British Board of Film Censors; Inverness District Council.

The phrase "blasphemy against God and man" was queried. Rev. Fraser MacDonald gave as his view that we can only properly speak of blaspheming God, and with this Mr W. Taylor agreed.

The Clerk of Synod read out the acknowledgment of last year Synod's Loyal Address and then the LOYAL ADDRESS FOR 1989 was read to the Synod by Rev. Fraser MacDonald and approved of.

### 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 —

The Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, convened at Inverness, this twenty-third day of May, nineteen hundred and eighty-nine years, desire to renew the expression of our unfeigned allegiance to Your Majesty's Person and Throne, to Your Majesty's Consort, His Royal Highness, the Duke of Edinburgh, and to all the members of the Royal Family.

We felicitate Your Majesty on the joy occasioned by the birth of Princess Beatrice.

We reflect with sincere gratitude and pleasure on the participation of Your Majesty in the public acknowledgment of the significance both of the historic defeat of the Spanish Armada, and the establishment of the



Protestant character of the British Throne by the glorious Revolution of 1688. We pray that Your Majesty may be energised thereby to resist every attempt made by the Papal System and others to change the terms of the Protestant Coronation Oath.

We are deeply impressed and gratified by Your Majesty's exemplary devotion to duty and to your people, in a society which has deteriorated so sadly, both morally and spiritually since Your Majesty came to the Throne.

We continue to deplore the increasing secularisation of the Lord's Day in Your Majesty's Realm, to the dishonour of the true God, and the detriment of the nation.

We pray that Your Majesty may be blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, the only Mediator between God and man, and that Your Majesty may yet see and enjoy with your subjects the blessings that follow in the wake of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit by God's free and sovereign grace.

The following Reports were then approved of by the Synod:

The Welfare of Youth Report.

The Theological Tutor's Report.

The Training of the Ministry Report.

The Home of Rest Report (Ballifeary).

Under discussion of the Ballifeary Home of Rest the Committee noted that they had given due consideration to the matter brought before the last meeting of Synod when it was reported that Miss Mary MacRae was prepared to give freely to the Church her house in Gairloch, 'Drumindarroch', if it could be used as a Church Nursing Home.

Reluctantly the Committee had come to the conclusion that it was not possible for them to consider the siting of a Nursing Home in Gairloch. The Synod expressed its great thanks for the proposed gift of Miss MacRae and instructed the Clerk of Synod to convey this expression to Miss MacRae.

The Home of Rest, Leverburgh Report was approved. A suggestion to have this Home extended was not given approval of the Synod.

The following reports were approved:

The Outreach Report.

The Free Presbyterian Magazine Report.

The Young Peoples' Magazine Report.

The Publications' Committee Report.

The Bookroom Report.

The Centenary Committee Report.



The Clerk of Synod read the following correspondence — Letters acknowledging the tributes and letters of sympathy sent out by last Synod.

From Mrs F. Dunbar, Applecross.

From Rev. D. J. MacAskill, Harris.

From Mrs P. Dunbar, Glasgow, who in her letter asked for the prayers of the Synod for herself and for her family.

Mr James Fraser, present from Toronto, acknowledged receipt of the letter sent to him by last year's Synod.

The Clerk of Synod read out the acknowledgments for the donations sent by last year's Synod to the various organisations listed below and it was agreed that similar donations be made this year with the exception that the Christian Witness to Israel be increased to £750.

Ockenden Venture (£500)

Aid to Persecuted (£500)

Reformation Translation Society (£600)

Blythwood Tract Society (£500 for Bibles and £250 for needy in Hungary and Rumania)

National Viewers (£250)

L.D.O.S. (£500)

Care Trust (£600)

Rev. Alex McPherson spoke re the Magazine of Care Trust and drew the attention of the Synod to an article contained in it on feminism to which he himself (and he was assured that the Synod joined with him in this) took most strong objection. He had taken up the matter with the Care Trust Authorities who gave him the assurance that such an article would not again appear.

A letter of greetings was read from the Trinitarian Bible Society. It was agreed that the letter of thanks from the Christian Witness to Israel would appear in the Church's Magazine.

## FRIDAY, 26th MAY

The Clerk of Synod introduced the business of an Overture which had been sent to him signed by several ministers and elders of the Court.

The Overture read:

It is overtured by the undersigned Members of the Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland to the ensuing Synod that

1. Whereas the Scripture allows a sure place within the Chris-



tian Church to both the weak and the strong, each with his right of private judgment in matters relating to the application of his Christian faith to daily living, although in such application one might differ from the other, as in Romans 14 and especially verse 3 “Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him that eateth not judge him that eateth; for God hath received him;”

2. And whereas, a) the Westminster Confession in Chapter 20 Section II stating “God alone is Lord of the conscience,” b) the Larger Catechism 105 stating that it is a sin against God in breach of the First Commandment to make “men the lords of our faith and conscience,” and c) the Manual of Practice at p.66 stating, “that the Free Presbyterian Church maintains most emphatically that no authority in the hands of fallible men, such as the authority of the Synod has any absolute rule over the consciences of believers,” preserve and enjoin the duty of private judgment;
3. And whereas the Roman Catholic Church, on the other hand, erroneously teaches in terms of the Council of Florence (1439 AD) that this power and authority belong *jure divino* to the Pope, viz. “the primacy or supremacy over the whole world; that he is the successor of St Peter, the prince of the apostles, the true vicar of Christ, the head of the whole church, and the father and teacher of all Christians; and that in St Peter full power was given to him by our Lord Jesus Christ of feeding, ruling, and governing the universal church;”
4. The Synod, believing that these important principles enshrined in the Scriptures and constitution of this Church are vital to the faithful life and witness of this Church, and the people within its communion, **DECLARES** that the maintenance of due order within this denomination does not require from its office-bearers and members a rigid uniformity of practice, an implicit faith and an absolute and blind obedience, and further **DECLARES** that all courts of this Church shall have regard to this declaration of Synod in all cases before them relating to the exercise of discipline and the granting of church privileges,

Or that they do otherwise for this object what to their wisdom may seem best. . . .



The Clerk intimated that the Overture had passed through the Bills and Overtures Committee and all that was necessary now was for one of the signatories to introduce it to the Synod.

Rev. R. R. Sinclair introduced it.

He said that the aim of the Overture was to clarify the law of the Church on liberty of conscience and the right of private judgment. Rev. S. F. Tallach then spoke and noted that the Overture was largely self-explanatory. He referred to a recent article in the Church's Magazine on the subject. That article referred to how the Church Courts are allowed to put limits to the liberty of conscience. In reply to this Rev. D. B. MacLeod, Editor of the Church's Magazine pointed out that the article was not written by himself but that it was a quotation.

Mr A. Gillies, said that the impression given nowadays was that the Scripture was not sufficient. He referred to the statements in the Overture re implicit faith and blind obedience and asked who is it that requires this? As far as the reference in the Overture that all courts of the Church should have this Overture before them in considering cases, Mr Gillies stated that what the Courts are true to, is the Word of God and the subordinate Standards and not this Overture. Further Mr Gillies asked how far was this Overture removed from Section Five of the Declaratory Act of 1892?

Rev. N. M. Ross thought that the Overture (para 4) cast a serious slur upon the practice of this Church.

Dr D. McSween referred to para 2 and said "one of the great dangers of this statement in regard to liberty of conscience stems from the misinterpretation of the role of conscience."

He went on to say "One of the most dangerous basis upon which to discuss liberty of conscience is to make conscience our standard. On the basis of the teaching of Scripture, on the basis of the Reformers and of the Confession of Faith, liberty of conscience should be based — not with the concept of conscience as judge but of God alone as Judge of the conscience."

Rev. H. I. MacKinnon said that he did not understand para 4 of the Overture to be saying anything like what Rev. N. M. Ross has said re casting aspersions on the Courts of the Church as at present. It is declaring something which is manifest in the substandards of our Church.

Rev. Alex McPherson referred to the epistle of Paul to the Corinthians and as to how the apostle exercised his authority in regard to the man guilty of incest.

As far as the man is concerned, said Mr McPherson, he had no sense



of guilt on his conscience and he had a right of private judgment. Paul required the Church to take to do with him.

Rev. Fraser MacDonald said: "I have accepted our standards like Mr Gillies says he had done, and I expect to continue that way until the end of my days by the grace of God. I feel that the very words used in this Overture had sinister associations in connection with the Declaratory Act. All I would say is this, I accept the Bible in its totality and accept the substandards of the Church in totality."

Mr R. Middleton asked why now after 95 years of the Church's existence such an Overture was needed?

Rev. J. W. Ross stated his view that the Overture did not affect adversely the subordinate standards of the Church and for him it was not a plea for freedom to sin as some had suggested.

Mr D. McPherson agreed.

The Rev. D. Boyd referred to the strange way that this Overture begins by speaking of liberty of conscience in applying Christian principles in one's private life. He regarded the overture as a plea for diversity of practice, but in signing the same formula office-bearers were committed to upholding uniformity of worship and practice. When the Churches speak of liberty of opinion they did not mean things which were unclear or in doubt, but things which were 'hot potatoes', such as Freemasonry and Cremation, which then became grey areas. The Westminster Confession said no man was lord of the conscience but it went on to say that liberty of conscience was regulated by lawful authority.

Rev. Alex Morrison thought it strange that the document had not reached the Outer Isles when it had found its way to places as distant as Canada. Had they no consciences who live in the Outer Isles?

Rev. D. J. MacDonald asked that if as the signatories contended there was nothing new in the Overture what was it doing there?

Rev. S. F. Tallach, in reply, thought that some speakers were seeking to create suspicions.

The Clerk of Synod ended the debate —

He said: "I am of the view that this Overture is completely unnecessary. It is unnecessary because I repudiate any aspersion that we are a Church in a danger of following the very thing we condemn and that is the spirit of Popery in riding over the conscience. Further it is not correct to say this is a mere statement on the conscience. It is a specific request. The Overture speaks of an implicit faith and of absolute blind obedience, and we never required that.

The Overture asks that the Courts of this Church should have respect



to this Overture in cases coming before it. We have the Confession of Faith and the Word of God — and we value the Word of God. We also profess to have our consciences enlightened by the Word of God and rejoice in the fact that 'the entrance of Thy Word gives light': not only to an individual but also to the Courts of the Church."

After a division the Synod approved of the motion made by Rev. D. Maclean:

Having considered the Overture concerning Liberty of Conscience the Synod affirms that the practice of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland is in accord with the Scriptures and her subordinate standards. Furthermore, the Synod views the Overture as casting aspersions on the spirit and practice of the Church. Therefore the Synod resolve that the Overture be dismissed.

Several members of Synod dissented.

#### TRIBUTE TO DECEASED MEMBER OF SYNOD

The Rev. Alex McPherson together with Mr I. MacLeod had prepared the following tribute to the late Mr Donald MacLennan, elder, Dornoch.

##### **Tribute to the late Mr Donald M. MacLennan, Missionary, Dornoch**

Year by year the Synod is reminded that while the Court itself remains and continues to function, yet the membership of the supreme court, as of the Church itself is changing and must do if for no other reason than by death.

The Synod, met in Inverness this 26th day of May 1989, hereby places on record its sense of loss at the passing away on 21st November, 1988 of Mr D. M. MacLennan, Missionary and Elder at Dornoch, and a one time member of this Court; and pays this short tribute to his memory.

Mr MacLennan belonged to that worthy band of men who were "Home Missionaries" in the Church and who in the history of our denomination have done so much to maintain to our people the public ordinances of the Gospel and, particularly so, in many of our remote and smaller congregations. This they did ungrudgingly when the remuneration received was meagre by any standards. Among these men were Christians of true piety who adorned the profession of the Church in their day.

Donald MacLennan's labours extended to some 20 years, mainly in Dornoch and Rogart in his native county of Sutherland where he took much delight in conducting public worship and in the visitation of the sick and elderly. Mr MacLennan was known to all God's people with



whom he came into contact, as godly and upright, transparently honest and truthful, and the possessor of acute spiritual discernment. When over many years, ill-health took its toll of his strength, he manifested great patience and a trusting, loving, prayerful spirit. That all worked together for his good we may not question, and that now there is laid up for him the reward of the righteous.

To the widow and four daughters and other relatives the Synod would express its heartfelt sympathy.

“Instead of the thy fathers shall by be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth.” Ps. 45: 1.

Rev. D. B. MacLeod reminded the Court that in the passing away of Mr Donald MacLennan the Church had lost a truly God-fearing man and this was also the view of Rev. Donald MacLean who added “that Mr Donald MacLennan was a precious and a godly man and had much spirituality of mind. We are glad to believe that he is before the Throne of glory.”

The same sentiment was expressed by other members of Synod.

The business of the JEWISH AND FOREIGN MISSION COMMITTEE was begun with the Convener giving in his Report and this was followed by a speech from Ds De Jong from Holland who in his speech stressed that his interest was in seeing that pure Calvinistic teaching was spread among the heathen and emphasis put upon the work of the Lord and not upon what man can do spiritually.

Ds De Jong was accompanied by Mr van Vliet who is responsible for much of the translation work in connection with the Mbumba Zending. It is Mr van Vliet who interprets the speeches of the Church deputies when they attend the yearly meeting of Mbumba Zending in Holland.

At this stage Rev. A. E. W. MacDonald referred to his visit this year to the Mbumba Zending Meeting held in Zwolle, Holland, when thousands had gathered to show their interest in the work of the Mission. He thanked the Mbumba Zending Committee for all they were doing for the Church.

The several Reports concerning work in the Mission were then presented to the Synod and approved of. Revs. A. Ndebele and P. Mzamo were both present and spoke on their Reports and on the general work of the Mission and asked for the prayers of the Lord's people.

The Clerk of Synod said: “I feel great pleasure in seeing Mr Mzamo, Mr Ndebele and Mr Cecil Sobantu present at this Synod. I greatly appreciate, as we all do, that they put themselves to the trouble of com-



ing over to this Synod to give their support to the work of the Synod and indicate very clearly where they stand.”

Rev. P. L. Roberts referred to his recent visit to Zimbabwe and Mr D. Vermeulen gave an account of his work in Malawi and Kenya.

From the Dominions and Overseas there were present at the Synod Revs. E. Rayner and J. van Dorp who presented their respective Reports to the Synod. The other Reports in connection with work in this field of the Church's labour were also presented and approved of by the Synod.

From Canada were present Mr G. Schuit and Mr James Fraser.

In connection with Church work in Italy Rev. Angus Morrison gave his Report.

The presentation of the Magazine Committee Report brought the business of Synod in public to an end and the Moderator thanked the Inverness congregation for their help.

### **Letter to Her Majesty The Queen**

May it please Your Majesty.

We, the Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland convened at Inverness this 24th day of May, 1989, wish to express to Your Majesty our disquiet at the continued deference being shown to idolatrous and heathen worship at all levels of society. However, the Synod wishes to draw to Your Majesty's particular attention the representations of Your Majesty at the idolatrous service of the memorial mass for El Marques de Santa Cruz on 21st July, 1988.

The Synod recalls our thankfulness at the beginning of Your Majesty's reign when we noted with gratitude that Your Majesty chose not to be represented at the requiem mass for Cardinal Griffin on 8th August, 1956 and we cannot understand the recent advice of Your Majesty's counsellors that Your Majesty should be represented at the memorial mass for the leader of the Spanish Armada's invading force. It may be that this advice is intended to show respect to the Roman Catholic citizens of this country. However, one is entitled to conclude that such citizens of this country, out of a patriotic regard for the constitution of this land, should not expect Your Majesty to remember with honour the leader of such an invading force, any more than one would accord honour to Adolf Hitler.

The 39 Articles of the Church of England describe the Roman mass as “a blasphemous fable and a dangerous deceit”. (The Articles of Religion No. 31) and the Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 29, Section 2,



describes it as "most abominably injurious to Christ's one, only sacrifice, the alone propitiation for all the sins of His elect."

We pray that Your Majesty will give prayerful consideration to our concern which is motivated by a conscientious regard for Your Majesty's spiritual and temporal well-being. We assure Your Majesty of the prayers of our Church that God will spare Your Majesty many years on our Protestant Throne.

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

## The Testimony of 1893

It pleased the Lord in His merciful kindness to raise a testimony on the side of truth in 1893 at a time when the Disruption Free Church had so departed from its standards as to pass a Declaratory Act to relieve its office-bearers from whole hearted attachment to these standards which were based on the Word of God. Rev. Donald MacFarlane, Rev. Donald MacDonald and a body of office-bearers, members and adherents separated themselves from the Disruption Free Church and formed the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. That Church in the kindness of the Lord has continued to the present day and has maintained a witness on the side of truth and against all opposed to the truth of God's Word.

As our readers well know, at the recent Synod a Protest was laid on the table and subsequently another body was formed by those who seceded from the Free Presbyterian Church. Those who have seceded allege that the Church has violated her constitution in the matter of liberty of conscience, particularly in relation to three recent cases — those of Mr Alistair Fraser, Rev. Alex Murray and Lord Mackay. The new body has been formed on the basis of these three cases. Its three pillars are, therefore, the right of a member of the Church to be a member of a sports club which is open on the Sabbath, the right of a minister of the Church to ask a popish priest to pray, and the right of an elder of the Church to attend a requiem mass. It is for this and no doubt, similar liberties that the new body contends, and has considered these things sufficient grounds for rending the Free Presbyterian Church in two. Whether these things are sufficient grounds for such action we leave to our readers to judge for themselves. To our own mind we cannot see how such action can be described in any other way than schismatic.

What then of the testimony of 1893? Where is that testimony now? Is it in the seceding body or in the Free Presbyterian Church? Only one



answer can be given to these questions. It remains where it has ever been and that is in the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland which has held and continues to hold inviolably to the standards of the Church, standards based on the Word of God. The Word of God is our supreme standard and from that standard, by the grace of God, we as a people will never be moved. Adherence to the whole counsel of God must be maintained at all costs. Whatever we may be called on to suffer of reproach from those who have parted from us or whatever reviling we may have to bear from the world for our steadfast adherence to the Word of God, let us not be moved or dismayed. We have the clear testimony of our consciences that it was in no spirit of envy, bitterness or malice that the members of Synod came to the conclusions to which they did, but in the spirit of love to those whom we judged to have erred, and with a sincere desire for their recovery and restoration to the fellowship of the Church and to usefulness in the Lord's vineyard. The base motives attributed by some to members of Synod we repudiate entirely. The decisions arrived at were come to with a sincere desire for the glory of God and the maintenance of the purity of the Church of God. For those who have seceded from us our desire is that they would see their sin in rending the Church of God, repent for it, and return to the Church from whence they have gone out. Our prayer is that the Lord may grant them such repentance.

What can we say to those who have remained firm in their attachment to the Free Presbyterian Church and its witness? To our people in this the hour of the Church's upheaval we would say in the words of the prophet Isaiah: "Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength." He is the Rock of ages in whom we may put our trust and He will never suffer us to be moved. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee." "The Lord on High is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea." While in our view the present events comprise the greatest attack that has ever been made upon our Church during the ninety-six years of its existence as a separate denomination, in an attempt to destroy its witness, yet we also believe that the Lord will maintain His own Cause in our midst, and bring our Church through the storm. When He has done so, may our Church come forth from these trials "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners".

It would be wrong of us not to recognise the Lord's hand in our deliverance as a Church at this time. We believe that this was in answer to



the earnest pleadings of His people, who recognised the danger in which the Church was placed. He, who was her Deliverer in her hour of need, is the One who alone can keep her in this dark day. May we look to Him for it.

## Notes of Synod Sermon

by **Rev. James Macleod,**

Preached at St. Jude's, Glasgow, 18th May, 1937

"Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful." (I Cor. 4: 1,2)

As we may be enabled let us bring before your notice the portion of God's truth read in your hearing.

I. Let us point out in connection with the gospel the necessity of knowing it savingly, personally, and experimentally irrespective of what may be our position in relationship to the cause of Christ in the world. Everyone who will be saved from sin and its consequences must know the gospel for himself or herself. It is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.

II. The Apostle brings before us that those who are stewards of the mysteries of the gospel, must be faithful men.

III. They have their work, and instructions from the Lord Jesus in preaching the gospel.

IV. They must give their final account to Christ, for He is their Master, as well as their Saviour.

I. Let me draw your attention to the fact that we can never appreciate the gospel unless we know ourselves as ruined, fallen sinners. We must be convinced of sin by the Holy Spirit through the Word of God before we can realise savingly that our sins are against an infinitely holy God. The law of God demands of us perfect obedience in our fallen state as sure as it required perfect obedience of Adam in a state of innocency. The Law of God or His justice never changed although Adam miserably changed. It may be quite easy for some to use the word "sin" in a loose, careless manner without realising in the least measure what the awfulness of sin is. There is something inherent in sin which no finite mind can conceive, nevertheless, although there is that something in sin which is inexplicable, yet, every one taught by the Spirit of God must realise in a saving measure that he is a sinner who sinned against God not only in Adam, but in his own person. There are those who try to repudiate the



truth of the fact that mankind fell in Adam at all. That is their way of trying to remove their responsibility from themselves to some other cause or reason, yet, that will never remove their guilt of sin from the conscience. That evil disposition of blaming others for our sins and crimes has followed the human race down through the ages — “the woman whom thou gavest to be with me,” said Adam. The spirit of Adam is as much in evidence today as ever it was and will remain so long as men are under the power of sin. The Holy Ghost alone can remove that deception from us. There are others who know full well through the teaching of the Holy Spirit that they are sinners, daily and hourly groaning under its burdens, guilt, and painful depravity. Dr. Owen said, that it was a great step in the knowledge of God to know one’s self as a sinner. Some may perhaps say: “What value can I place on that, that I know myself as a sinner”? Friend, there is an infinite difference between knowing yourself as a sinner on this side of the grave and knowing yourself as a sinner in a lost eternity! Those who have passed out of time Christless know to their eternal loss what it is to have sinned against God’s law. Men may and do trifle with sin but the justice of God shall not trifle with sinners! God’s people know that they are sinners because they have been convinced of sin, and they found out that no mere creature could remove the guilt of sin from their consciences until God revealed Himself to them in Christ as most just, merciful and gracious in pardoning their sins through the blood of His Son. This was the remedy God provided to meet the needs of men in accordance with His justice, law and holiness — the remedy itself is Jesus Christ and Him crucified set forth in the gospel. There is infinite efficacy in the blood of Christ to reconcile sinners to God: and all other efforts at reconciliation with an offended God will perish miserably eternally. It is not by works of supererogation as the Church of Rome teaches, or going to a priest to confess sin, or to the altars of idolatry. No! but by the precious blood of Jesus Christ applied by the Holy Spirit through the Word of God; for there is nothing so sweet on this side of heaven to the children of God than to know that there is a remedy prepared by God for their immortal souls. The gospel of the grace of God is for poor, needy, helpless sinners. It is of the utmost importance that we should know it in our hearts, minds and experience.

Let us now briefly consider the ministry of the everlasting gospel. We can never understand the gospel nor be able to preach it unless we are born again. Every preacher of the everlasting gospel, before he can preach in accordance with the mind of God as set forth in His own Word, must be born again. It is no proof at all that you are born again to



be a mere minister, an elder, or church member. That is not the new-birth; church membership is not a qualification for heaven. It is essential to be in Christ by faith otherwise you can not be a servant of Jesus Christ in the gospel ministry. There are thousands of men out today who prove by their conduct, and public statements that they are not in Christ because they do not believe the Word of God. If they do not believe the inspired Word how can they accept the Word Incarnate? They are hirelings, not servants of Jesus Christ. The prophet Isaiah calls them dumb dogs that cannot bark. Paul says that they are enemies to the cross of Christ. You remember how great a mystery the gospel was to you, and still is, but I mean at the time you were awakened by the Spirit of God. Could you preach the gospel then? No! As it is written: "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Neither could any of you preach the gospel until you were reconciled to God, and sent out by a divine commission to declare the truth as it is in Jesus Christ. I believe you are here tonight and that at one time in your history if any were to say to you that you should enter the ministry of the Church of Christ you would consider such a suggestion presumptuous, because you never thought of it for many a day after you were reconciled to God. Some may be commissioned immediately after they are reconciled to the Most High as is evident in the case of Paul, but his case was unique. You were quite satisfied in that heavenly calmness of soul that came through the Word of God into your whole being and life. The time came when the Lord set you apart for the work of the ministry. You might have been like Moses refusing to obey the divine command until the Lord defeated your doubts, mastered your fears, and promised you grace to sustain, support, and strengthen you for all the duties you were in honour bound to perform in connection with your holy calling. As we have said before, it is the duty of every one brought from darkness to light from the power of sin and Satan to God to tell to their fellow creatures what Christ has done for their soul. The woman of Samaria (although women have no warrant to preach), told what the Lord did for her soul and body. We read of the little girl that was taken captive from Israel and became a maid to Naaman's wife, who had the great privilege (and her words are recorded by the Holy Spirit) of telling Naaman, the Syrian, of the great Prophet that was in the land of Israel. Was it on purpose the Holy Spirit left their history on record? Surely! Therefore, it is for us, our sons and daughters to learn from the Word of God what was done by His people in the past. Every man and woman, young and old,



has the right to tell what the Lord has done for their soul: and would that this was the conversation of boys and girls, men and women in our Church and throughout the whole earth, meditating, praying to, and speaking about, Christ and His love to their souls! How few there are to-day that can speak about the love of Christ — that can speak of His love to their souls — that know the love of God to themselves as perishing sinners, and were it not for His love that they would have gone down into hell for ever — out of sight and out of mind for all eternity! It is a pitiable thing to meet men and women in the world who cannot say one word about Him whom they profess as their Saviour! How unlike the Roman, Ephesian, Colossian believers are such men and women!

There are essential qualifications for a gospel ministry. The man who preaches must know the gospel, and understand it in his own soul. It is not by knowing several languages, mathematics, and all the branches of science that we can come to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus but by the demonstration of the Spirit in our souls. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not charity, I am becoming a sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing" (I. Cor. 13: 1,2). The value of sound and liberal education to the servants of Christ is to demonstrate the truth of God to the consciences of ruined men and women. The Holy Ghost will teach the servants of Christ the best logic that was ever taught in this world. Paul was the greatest logician that the world ever saw or will see being taught of the Holy Spirit.

The best logician the world can produce is like what Isaiah describes him to be — "Surely the princes of Zoan are fools, the counsel of the wise counsellors of Pharaoh is become brutish: how say ye unto Pharaoh, I am the son of the wise, the son of ancient kings."

We must never be tired of preaching Christ and Him crucified. We must not tire of showing poor sinners the way from the brink of hell to the glories of heaven. There may be times when the servants of God may feel weary and tired — not tired of preaching Christ — but tired, being afraid that they do not preach Him as they ought and as they should, and indeed desire to tell more about Him who is altogether lovely. The servants of Christ can never preach enough concerning Him who is God with us; who laid down His life that we might live. It is He they preach. They love the souls of their fellow sinners — not their sins. The poor worldlings think that the servants of God hate them because they rebuke



them for their sins, and warn them of the wrath of God against all ungodliness. The men who flatter their congregations and lull their souls to sleep on the brink of ruin are their worst enemies, yet poor blind sinners do not understand this. They think they are their friends. The servant of God must not associate with the world or its evil company. If an officer of His Majesty's forces was to associate with his men unduly his authority would be gone. How much more must the servant of Christ keep aloof from the world, and its wicked associations. The servant of Christ must be qualified to declare law and gospel. It is not part truth that they must preach but the whole truth. Their text book must be the Bible. They must be men of prayer, not by restraint, or after the fashion of "prayer-book" mummary. It is part of their daily life praying, and seeking the mind of the Lord in His own Word, to guide them, and to direct them in the path of duty. They must pray for all men, for kings, and all in authority, as well as for the sick, afflicted, fatherless and widows in their affliction. Their prayer is called "all manner of supplication" for all men friends and enemies. Some lecture in what they call prayers. It is most detestable even in the ears of the men and women who listen to such prayers when it is done in the name of "being engaged in prayer". That is not prayer, it is mockery! Christ set an example before His servant and people for all time as how they were to pray. It is not a lecture but prayer. That was a public example how men ought to pray in public. It was not a passing-time prayer, nor vain repetitions, nor lecturing to men, but a prayer directed to God. We read of the blessed Redeemer praying all night on the hill side. They who are taught of God must learn from His own Word. The Pharisees had long prayers in public, but probably none at all in private!

II. They must be faithful men. Some of you may be thinking that it an easy matter to be a minister of the gospel. I am not to tell you all I know for it does not concern you so much as it does some of us, but if that is your opinion, let me warn you, that you will understand differently at the Great Day of Judgment if you will not understand it in time. The man to whom it is an easy matter to be a pastor in the Church of Christ in the world, woe betide that man! for the Word of God is against him. One common distinguishing characteristic between the servants of Christ and hirelings is that the world will speak well of the latter, but they hate the true servants of Christ. I hope the woe is taken off every one of us! They must be faithful to Him that sent them to preach the gospel. It is to Him they must render their final account. Faithful to the Word of God. Faithful to the people of God. Faithful in the courts of His house.



Faithful to the souls of men. They need constant supply of grace to keep them faithful to the end. It is most painful to see, and read of men who were faithful for a time in the vineyard of the Lord and then going backwards and covering their retreat by deception and irrational carnal policy. Men may cheat themselves and others; but they will not cheat the Most High by their carnal subterfuge. He shall search out their sin, however much it may be hid from the eyes of their fellow men in the world. There are thousands of men in this country today who profess to be servants of Christ and prove by their daily conduct that they are serving the devil, and the flesh. They may not be as profligate as they were in the days of John Knox: nor as openly profane, but, notwithstanding all that, they are publicly denying the truth of God, and the gospel of Jesus Christ. If they will not repent God will punish them in eternity. The cause of Christ is profaned in Scotland by these men. You will get no sympathy from such men nor help in any way. They would persecute you if the law of the land would allow them. They hate you. They call you bigots, narrow minded, unlearned, superstitious, obscurantists, intellectually dishonest, not decent-minded, mischievous and fanatical because you do not accept their own semi-pagan religion! They say, that they are broad-minded for Christ, His atonement, His inspired Word, the Holy Spirit, sin, hell, death, law, justice, future punishment, regeneration, justification, adoption, sanctification; for the saving grace of God is not in their creed. They have framed a religion to suit the times. They must change with the times. No wonder although Romanism should be gaining ground in Britain today!

The servants of God must be on the watch-tower warning the people against such wicked men. It was the duty of the watchmen in Israel to sound the trumpet so that the people should prepare for the battle when the enemy was to attack them. It will be your duty to warn the people under your charge, especially the young. The dangers are great! It is required in stewards that they be faithful men, and this will keep them dependent on the Holy Spirit, and the Word of God. The Holy Spirit can unfold the mysteries of the gospel — Christ born of a woman, going down to the accursed cross of Calvary, and to the cold grave of Joseph of Arimathea. As we have said already they must be dependent on the Holy Spirit and not on human learning, so that they may pour out what is made known to them in the Word of God of the infinite riches of the gospel for the benefit of the poor and needy in Zion. This feeds the people of God when they hear about the love of God in Christ to their poor souls. The true servant of Christ must preach Christ crucified in all His



adorable fulness. He is the centre, the beginning, the end of the gospel. it is an infinite Saviour, almighty, all-powerful, all knowing, all seeing, as Prophet, Priest, and King you must preach. A mere finite being would be like a Roman Catholic image. The servant of Christ needs constant supply of grace to preach Christ fully, freely, and lovingly to the people of God.

III. They have their work and instructions from the Lord Jesus in preaching the gospel. You may not see much fruit of your labours. Let us leave the issues with the Lord. Noah did not see much fruit of his long laborious labours in the vineyard, however, the day came when he saw the Word of God fulfilled in the letter as he will see it fulfilled in the spirit yet. Men are not to be judges as to the various successes or otherwise of the servants of Christ. The Great Day of Judgment will reveal who was blessed in his labour and who was not. I am not saying but there are times when the Lord will be giving them tokens for good, and they, need them, and when God will give them such tokens, it is a divine cordial to strengthen them in order to carry on; for the seed sown in love shall not return void to Him that sent it. Who can tell that the word you are preaching today to your congregation will show itself thirty years hence in some poor souls. Leave these things with the Lord, your duty is clear, your instructions are from heaven — preach the Word. We must not be jealous of the success of by-gone days. This is our day and if we merely look to the past we shall become stale and to the future we shall become stagnant. It is our duty to sow the seed now, or, if not now, never. Jealousy is a cruel sin; nothing can destroy it but grace. We see jealousy more openly in children. We are so crafty. We hide it. Let us be jealous about nothing but the glory of God, zealous for His truth, and cause in the world. You have to leave your success to the Lord Himself. You may be weeping and groaning like Jeremiah, so that he was called “the weeping Prophet”. The servants of God have cause to weep in our day when they see how the powers of darkness are prevailing in all directions; but although the cloud is dark, the sun is shining behind it — the Lord Jesus Christ is above the darkness, and as sure as He is behind it He will shine forth gloriously in His own good time. Nothing can heal this broken down world but the gospel. Men are trying to make peace by what is called a “League of Nations”. What madness and stupid folly! A League that refused to acknowledge publicly the Supreme Being to make and keep the peace! Nothing can bring peace, quietness, and harmony among the nations but the gospel of peace. You who know the gospel understand that thoroughly. The people of God are looking forward to



the day when men shall not learn the art of war any more. They shall not require warships, machine guns, or poisonous bombs in that day. The kingdom is the Lord's and that is what they are looking forward to. Popery shall then be cast down into hell from whence it came. When the "Harlot" of Rome shall be no more — the blasphemer, the Pope of Rome, his Cardinals, and soul-destroying priests shall be destroyed from the face of the earth. What will do that wonderful work? The gospel of the grace of God. We have our instructions, and as it came before my mind what used to be said in the War — "Carry on!" We are up against a tremendous power in our day and generation, but let us "carry on" in the strength of His grace to the last. Christ never lost a battle. He will be the victor on this field.

IV. We were to bring before your notice that when our work is finished like faithful stewards we must give in our account to our precious Master Christ. Some of us may be trembling, and often afraid what the issues will be at last. My dear friends, you will go back to a loving Saviour — to the sweetest of all Masters. It will be welcome home. He will say: "Well done, good and faithful servant." It is home they are going. The poor servants of Christ need rest. They were tired of sin, of Satan, and of the cold, cruel world. They were tired of unbelief. They were tired of darkness. They were tired of fears and doubts.

They were tired of their natural depravity, indwelling sin, as Owen calls it. It is but for a short moment they are here. Many a sweet moment of fellowship they had with the blessed Saviour in His Word, and with the people of God. The servants of Christ are very much alone, and apart because of the nature of their work. We may be a despised people, few in number, but our hope is in the Word of God. There will be yet a turning back to the Word of God in this land and in other lands according to His promise. We are like men in a state of siege holding the fort in the face of the most determined opposition. To yield would mean disaster. We cannot yield. We must not compromise. It is for the truth of God we are contending. May the Lord bless His own Word!

## The Church and the World

The Church and the World walked far apart  
On the changing shores of time;  
The World was singing a giddy song,  
And the Church a hymn sublime.



"Come, give me your hand," cried the merry World,  
    "And walk with me this way;  
But the good Church hid her *snowy hand*,  
    And solemnly answered "Nay".

"I will not give you my hand at all,  
    And I will not walk with you;  
Your way is the way of endless death,  
    Your words are all untrue."

"Nay, walk with me but a little space,"  
    Said the World with a kindly air  
"The road I walk is a pleasant road,  
    And the sun shines always there.

"Your path is thorny, and rough, and rude,  
    And mine is broad and plain;  
My road is paved with flowers and gems,  
    And yours with tears and pain.

"The sky above me is always blue,  
    No want, no toil I know;  
The sky above you is always dark,  
    Your lot is a lot of woe.

"My path, you see, is a broad, fair path,  
    And my gate is high and wide;  
There is room enough for you and me  
    To travel side by side."  
Half shyly the Church approached the World  
    And gave him her hand of snow;  
The old World grasped it and walked along,  
    Saying in accents low —

"Your dress is too simple to suit my taste,  
    I will give you pearls to wear;  
Rich velvet and silk for your graceful form,  
    And diamonds to deck your hair."  
The Church looked down on her plain, white robes,  
    And then at the dazzling World;  
And blushed as she saw his handsome lip  
    With a smile contemptuous curled.

"I will change my dress for a costlier one,"  
    Said the Church with a smile of grace;



Then her pure *white garments* drifted away,  
And the World gave in their place  
Beautiful satins and shining silks,  
And roses, and gems, and pearls;  
And over her forehead her bright hair fell,  
Crisped in a thousand curls,  
“Your house is too plain,” said the proud old World,  
“I’ll build you one like mine;  
Carpets of Brussels and curtains of lace,  
And furniture ever so fine.”  
So he bought her a costly and beautiful house,  
Splendid it was to behold;  
Her sons and her beautiful daughters dwelt there,  
Gleaming in purple and gold.  
And fairs and shows in the halls were held,  
And the World and his children were there;  
And the laughter and music and feasts were heard  
In the place that was meant for prayer,  
She had cushioned pews for the rich and the great  
To sit in their pomp and pride,  
While the poor folks clad in their shabby suits  
Sat meekly down outside.  
The Angel of Mercy flew over the Church,  
And whispered, “I know thy sin;”  
The Church looked back — a sigh, and longed  
To gather her children in.  
But some were off in the midnight ball,  
And some were off at the play;  
And some were drinking in gay saloons,  
So she quietly went away.  
The sly World gallantly said to her,  
“Your children mean no harm;  
Merely indulging in innocent sports,”  
And she leaned on his proffered arm,  
And smiled, and chatted, and gathered flowers  
As she walked along with the World;  
While millions and millions of deathless souls  
To the horrible pit were hurled.



“Your preachers are all too old and plain,”  
Said the gay old World with a sneer:  
“They frighten my children with dreadful tales,  
Which I like not for them to hear  
They talk of brimstone, and fire, and pain,  
And the horrors of endless night;  
They talk of a place that should not be  
Mentioned in ears polite.

“I will send you some of the better stamp,  
Brilliant, and gay, and fast  
Who will tell them that people may live as they list,  
And go to heaven at last.  
“The Father is merciful, great, and good,  
Tender, and true and kind,  
Do you think He would take one child to heaven,  
And leave the rest behind?”

So he filled her house with gay divines,  
Gifted, and great, and learned;  
And the plain old men that preached the Cross  
Were out of the pulpit turned.  
“You give too much to the poor,” said the World,  
“Far more than you ought to do;  
If the poor need shelter, and food, and clothes,  
Why need it trouble you?

“Go, take your money and buy rich robes,  
And horses and carriages fine;  
And pearls and jewels, and dainty food,  
And the rarest and costliest wine.  
My children they dote on all such things,  
And if you their love would win  
You must do as they do, and walk in the ways  
That they are walking in.”

The Church held tightly the strings of her purse,  
And gracefully lowered her head  
And simpered, “I’ve given too much away  
I’ll do, sir, as you have said.”  
So the poor were turned from the door in scorn,  
And she heard not the orphan’s cry;



And she drew her beautiful robes aside  
As the widows went weeping by.

The sons of the World and the sons of the Church  
Walked closely hand and heart;  
And only the Master, who knoweth all,  
Could tell the two apart.

Then the Church sat down at her ease, and said,  
"I am rich, and in goods increased;  
I have need of nothing, have nought to do  
But to laugh, and dance, and feast."

## Seventh Day Adventism — Of God or of Satan?

(Continued from Page 187)

### **The Sabbath**

The Fourth Commandment is an integral and permanent part of the Moral Law and is therefore universally binding upon all men as a rule of life and conduct as surely as the other commandments in the Decalogue. The Sabbath is not a temporary Jewish ordinance, as some falsely aver. Its institution pre-dates the Fall, and is "made for men" as the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of the Sabbath declares. The ceremonial law pertaining to the sacrifices and carnal ordinances of the Old Testament Church was typical and therefore temporary. It was not engraven in tables of stone. It was the law of the shadows of the things to come, and having been fulfilled in Christ it passed away.

But not so the Moral Law. The Ten Commandments engraven in tables of stone by the finger of God, as proof and evidence of their permanency, remain the unchanged and unchangeable divine rule of life and manners. The change of the day to the first day of the week did not in the least degree interfere with the spirit, the substance and the complete authority of the Fourth Commandment — to keep one whole day in seven holy to the Lord. "The precepts of the Decalogue," writes Dr. Hodge, "bind the Church in all ages; while the specific details contained in the books of Moses, designed to point out the way in which the duty they enjoined was then to be performed, are no longer in force. The Fifth Commandment still binds children to obey their parents; but the Jewish law giving fathers the power of life and death over their children, is no



longer in force. The Seventh Commandment forbids adultery, but the ordeal enjoined for the trial of a woman suspected of that crime is a thing of the past. The same principle applies to the interpretation of the Fourth Commandment. The command itself is still in force; the Mosaic laws respecting the mode of its observance have passed away with the economy to which they belonged. It is unjust therefore to represent the advocates of the continued obligation of the Fourth Commandment, as Judaisers. They are no more Judaisers than those who hold that the other precepts of the Decalogue are still in force.” (“Systematic Theology,” Part III, p. 337).

### **The Sabbath Days of Col. II, 16**

Appeal is made to Colossians II, 16, “Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days,” by those who deny the perpetual obligation of the Fourth Commandment. “Every one knows,” writes Dr. Hodge, “that the apostolic churches were greatly troubled by Judaisers, who insisted that the Mosaic law continued in force, and that Christians were bound to conform to its prescriptions with regard to the distinction between clean and unclean meats, and its numerous feast days, on which all labour was to be intermitted. These were the false teachers and this was the false doctrine against which so much of Paul’s epistles was directed. It is in obvious reference to these men and their doctrines that this passage was directed. It has no reference to the weekly Sabbath, which had been observed from the Creation, and which the apostles themselves introduced and perpetuated in the Christian Church.” (“Systematic Theology,” Part III, p.332).

### **The Believers’ Relationship to the Law**

The view that the Fourth Commandment is no longer binding in New Testament times flows from an erroneous interpretation of the believers’ relationship to the law, as set forth in texts as, “Ye are not under the law, but under grace.”

Believers are not under the law as a covenant of works to be thereby justified or condemned, but under the covenant of grace, and therefore, “under the law to Christ” (I Cor. 9: 21) as the Head and Mediator thereof, and they seek the grace of the covenant to give obedience to what Christ their Lord and Master requires of them, when He says, “If ye love Me, keep my commandments.” John Howe, the Puritan divine, expresses the Scriptural view held by the Church of God in all genera-



tions. "Christ redeems us," he writes, "from the curse of the law, not from the command of the law. He saves us from the wrath of God, not from His government. (Gal. 3: 13, 14; Rom. 8: 3,4). Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, in order that the promised Spirit might be given (Gal. 3: 13,14) who should write the law in our hearts, fulfil the righteousness of it in us; regenerating us; begetting us after God's image, and making us partakers of a God-like nature. So we through the law become dead to the malediction and curse of it, that we may live to God more devoted lives than ever." "For this is the love of God that we keep his commandments." (1 John 5: 3).

### **A Challenging Question**

"Did you ever meet with a lively believer," asks the saintly Robert Murray McCheyne, "in any country under heaven — one who loved Christ, and lived a holy life — who did not delight in keeping holy to God the entire Lord's Day?"

### **An Appeal**

"My fellow traveller to eternity, it is commanded, when God says, "Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy." He claims all the day as much as any part in it. To profane the morning or the evening is as much rebellion against God as to profane the whole, and unless you religiously improve the day, you have no share in the blessings promised to those who improve not the morning nor the afternoon but who remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. As to making too much of this sacred day, do they who are in heaven think that this can be done? Do they who are lost in hell? or will you when death and eternity are near? You do not complain that six days are too long for serving the world; you are contented all the week without the house of God, but not one day without the world. If you are not awfully blind to your own state, you must perceive this; and while you are a lover of the world, the love of God is not in you. If one Sabbath is a burden to you, what would an eternal Sabbath be? If you cannot be content for a few hours without the world, what happiness would you find even in heaven, where all is spiritual and devout? That you are indisposed for religious exercises is both your sin and your misery, and confirms the importance of a change in you, great as a second birth. They that are after the flesh, the Lord declares, do mind the things of the flesh; and this is your case. While it is so you are a perishing sinner, and never can be happy, unless you become a new creature in Jesus Christ.



Improve your Sabbaths. Forsake not the regular assembling with the children of God; but keep in sight the day that fast approaches, the day when the guilt of broken Sabbaths must be answered for. But if your Sabbaths are improved, a day when the worship of earth, shall be exchanged for the worship of heaven, the praises of time for those of eternity, a day of blessedness for you shall dawn that never more shall end.” (Rev. J. C. Pike).

“If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord honourable; and shalt honour Him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words; then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.” (Isaiah 58: 13, 14).

Ergatees

## The Psalms in Worship

by the Rev. Henry Cooke, D.D., LL.D.

My earliest recollection of family and public psalmody is that of the exclusive use of the English version of the Biblical Psalms, authorised by the Reformed Church of Scotland. In our Presbyterian Churches, so far as my knowledge extends, others were unknown. When I entered the ministry, in 1807, the Scottish selection of Paraphrases and Hymns had come into partial use; and influenced by the feeling in their favour, I was gradually led to adopt them. The principle of their use once adopted, the way to others was opened to an unlimited extent; for, if these paraphrases and hymns be good for public worship, it follows that others may be as good, or better. Accordingly, at one time of my ministry, I dedicated both time and pains to selecting, from all accessible sources, an additional volume, with an essay, embodying a defence of its use in private or in public worship. I need scarcely add, that I believed my arguments — which were partly original and partly derivative — to be unanswerable.

I shall now detail, and as briefly as may be, the circumstances that first led me to doubt, and finally to reject my former conclusions.

Having been appointed to a short missionary tour, I left my home in good health, but was taken suddenly ill, and, during a month, was unable to return; and it was when “wearisome nights were appointed to me, and tossings to and fro until the dawning of the day,” that, in fre-



quent solitude, I was thrown, almost entirely, on the resources of memory. But with that faculty God had sufficiently endowed me; and the psalms committed in schoolboy days, and paraphrases and hymns of riper years, presented ready subjects of meditation. And it was then, that, all unexpectedly, yet irresistibly, it was impressed upon me, by experience and feeling, that the most celebrated hymns of uninspired men were, like Job's friends, "miserable comforters," when compared with the experience of Christ, in the days of humiliation of which the Book of Psalms is the true prophetic picture. . . .

Now, while I set not up my own convictions as a rule or measure of the consciences of others, I cannot fail to pity those who can find, as they assert, so little of Christ in the inspired psalmody of the Bible, that they must seek and employ an uninspired psalmody as exhibiting Him more fully. Our Lord Himself found Himself in the psalms — (Luke 24: 44, 45) — and thereby "opened His disciples' understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures." Surely what was the clearest light to *their* eyes, should be light to *ours*. And, truly, I believe, there is one view of Christ — and that not the least important to the tired and troubled believer — that can be discovered only in the Book of Psalms — I mean His inward life. No eye-witness of the outward man — though an inspired evangelist — could penetrate the heart. But the Spirit who "searcheth the deep things of God," has, in the psalms, laid open the inmost thoughts, sorrows, and conflicts of our Lord. The Evangelists faithfully and intelligently depict the sinless Man; the psalms alone lay open the heart of "the Man of sorrows". The most pious productions of uninspired men are a shallow stream — the Psalms an unfathomable and shoreless ocean.

In conclusion, I beg to record, that two things confirmed my decision in favour of the exclusive use of inspired psalmody in public worship. First, the Biblical Psalms being inspired by the Holy Ghost (2 Tim. 3: 16; 1 Peter 1: 21), in using them, there can be no error. Secondly, though in uninspired sacred poetry I had discovered many beauties and other excellencies, I never had discovered any compilations which I could pronounce free from serious doctrinal errors. This I perceived to be especially the case with not a few of the Paraphrases and Hymns, authorised by the Church of Scotland. If a doctrinal error be, at all times, dangerous, how much more when it is stereotyped in the devotions of the sanctuary!

H. Cooke

Belfast, April 8, 1861



# Notes and Comments

## **The Peking Massacre**

In Peking, the capital of China, students who had been demonstrating in the main square of the city for some days were ruthlessly mown down by Government troops. Hundreds of students are reckoned to have been killed. In this action we see emerging the true face of Communism, as it has been seen in other countries at different times. Lives can be callously squandered by a system that is atheistical in outlook. The students were craving more freedom, but freedom is a commodity of which Communism cannot grant much to its people lest the whole system collapse. It is a set-back for those who seek to bring the Bible and the Gospel to China as, no doubt, repressive measures are likely to follow the failure of the protests. China has now been 50 years under the oppression of a Communist regime. It is to be hoped that she will yet be delivered from this evil system in the merciful providence of God and that the gospel of the grace of God will overspread the land.

## **Ayatollah Khomeini's Death**

The Iranian Muslim leader has gone to his account. Thousands gathered for his funeral and expressed their sorrow at the death of a man who was responsible for the deaths of hundreds of thousands of his countrymen through the war with Iraq and through the purges conducted under his leadership from time to time. Iran during his period in power returned to an Islamic State under Islamic laws. It is to be hoped that those who succeed him will prove to be of a different sort and that Christians in that land will be free to practise their religion without any molestation. What a blessing it would be for Iran and for other Moslem countries if they were brought to see the falseness of the claims of the prophet Mohammed and to behold the true Prophet of the Church, the Lord Jesus Christ.

# Church Notes

## **Resignation of General Treasurer**

Mr W. D. Fraser, General Treasurer, has resigned from his post as General Treasurer of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. In his letter of resignation, Mr Fraser stated that he was willing to conduct the duties of his office until such time as a new General Treasurer was appointed. He also expressed his willingness to introduce the new General Treasurer, when appointed, to his duties. On these conditions,



the Church Interests' Committee accepted Mr Fraser's resignation at its meeting on 7th June, 1989. Mr Fraser rendered valuable service to the Church over the years, as was acknowledged annually at the Synod. It is a matter of regret that he has now resigned from his work.

Until a new General Treasurer is appointed in the good providence of the Lord, Congregational Treasurers and others should continue to send their contributions to Room 7, Seafield House, Seafield Road, Inverness IV1 1SJ.

Rev. Donald MacLean, Clerk of Synod.

### **Presbytery Meetings (D.V.)**

**Western:** At Laide on 4th July at 6 p.m.

**Australia and New Zealand:** At Gisborne on 20th October at 2 p.m.

## **Acknowledgment of Donations**

(Some of these acknowledgments were sent in for publication before the Synod)

The General Treasurer, Room 7, Seafield House, Seafield Road, Inverness, acknowledges the following donation with sincere thanks:—

**Sustentation Fund:** Anon., £300.

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

**Aberdeen:** From Mrs Flora Skinner, £20 for Aberdeen Congregation; Anon., Wick, £100 for new Church at Aberdeen.

**Dingwall:** Mrs G., £10, per I. M. for Sust. Fund.

**Dundee:** Anon., Dundee Congregation, £500 towards replacement of Minister's Car; A Friend, Stornoway, £30 for Sust Fund.

**Dunoon:** Mrs MacG., Tarbet, Harris, £10 for Congr. Purposes.

**Fort William:** Friend, Caol, £20 for Sustentation Fund.

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

**Larne:** Friend, Inverness, £10 per G. G. H., where most needed.

**Oban:** Foreign Mission Fund, envelope in plate, £5; A. MacD., Blane, £60; Inverness Friend, £5 for Congr. Fund; Mrs B., Kinlochleven, £20 for Communion Expenses.

**Perth:** Perth Friend, £100; Anon., Glasgow, £10; Mrs MacM. (Chequers) £5; Mrs G. (Chequers) £1; M. McL., Aberfeldy, £20, all for Perth Congregation; Anon., Glasgow, £10 for Sust. Fund; Anon., Glasgow, £10 for Foreign Missions, last six per Rev. D. J. MacD.

**Portree:** Friends, £100; Friend, £6, both for Sust. Fund; A. M., £10, where most needed, per S. Y. M.

**Raasay:** Stornoway Friend, £5; B. N., £20, both for Sust. Fund, both per Rev. J. R. Tallach; Envelope in plate, £20 for Car Fund; B. N., £20 for Tapes, per Mrs Tallach.

**Stornoway:** P. J. M., Tolsta Chaolais, £70 for Sust. Fund, per Rev. J. MacLeod; Miss K. A. MacLeod, The Cottage, Callanish, Isle of Lewis, £100 for Sust. Fund, per Rev. J. MacLeod.