

THE
Free Presbyterian Magazine
and Monthly Record

Vol. 97

DECEMBER 1992

No. 12

The Year Drawing to a Close

The present year is inexorably drawing to a close. Time does not stand still. Each day, each week, each month, as well as each year, draws to a close. We are hurrying on to eternity. Soon, too, it must be said of each one of us that our life in this world is drawing to a close. Beyond time there is the eternal world into which each soul is to be ushered, a world of which we can have very little conception while here in time. What we do know is that it must be for each one either an eternity of everlasting bliss or an eternity of everlasting woe.

So far as this present year is concerned it has now almost run its course. How much has taken place in the history of individuals and nations since the year began. What expectations a new year brings, yet when the year has ended it is clearly seen how few of these expectations were realised. Since the beginning of the year what troubles and devastation have overtaken certain parts of the world through war, earthquakes, hurricanes and famine. How many have perished and gone to their account owing to these events. Besides such catastrophes, economic troubles have plagued nations in Europe and elsewhere. Though we have been spared many of these calamities that affected other parts of the world, yet we can hardly have been unaffected by the suffering of our fellow-men.

While the year is drawing to a close, all that has happened in it has gone before to judgment. There is One who weighs the actions of men. There is One who perceives all that takes place and it is written in His book. A day of reckoning is to come. Men may think that all is forgotten because it is now over but it is not so. Of "every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of the judgment". In the light of these solemn matters, what need there is to lay to heart that death, judgment and eternity are before us.

During the year that is drawing to a close how many privileges we have enjoyed who have the Word of God preached to us. What warnings we

have heard from that Word lest we should go on in the ways of sin. What invitations we have heard through the gospel calling on us to forsake the foolish and live. Have we laid these to heart? Have we fled for refuge to the hope set before us in the gospel, or are we determined still to go on in the ways of sin? How gracious is the Lord in His dealings with us when He is still making His word sound in our ears! How many in our day hear no warnings or invitations! To many people another gospel is preached which is no gospel. Others have forsaken the house of God and are living as heathen without the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. How privileged we are if it is otherwise with us. Yet who has made us to differ? And if we do not make proper use of our privileges — if Christ continues to be to us as a root out of a dry ground, then our latter end will be worse than those who have never heard the gospel of Jesus Christ. What has been our attitude to the Lord Jesus Christ and to the gospel of His grace during the period of this year which has already passed away? And what is to be our attitude to Christ, and to the salvation which is to be found in Him, during the short period left until the year actually draws to a close. A few short weeks or days and the year will be gone. Has so much of the year gone and we have not found Christ in it? Should this not make us all the more anxious to find Christ for our soul in the short period that remains? We do not know if we shall see another year, therefore how anxious we should be to seek and find Christ for our never-dying souls. He is to be found of those that seek Him. He has never said to any of “the seed of Jacob, Seek ye Me in vain”. The shortness of time until the end of the year ought to make us all the more earnest in our longings and desires to find the Saviour before it is too late. To the thief on the cross it might have been said: “It is too late to call for mercy. It is too late to seek for pardon. Your life has been spent in sin. What hope have you of deliverance now in the last closing hours of your life?” Yet his cry went forth: “Lord, remember me”. Remember me, vile sinner though I have been, “remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom”. In the last expiring moments of his life he called on the Saviour and did not cry in vain. On his ears fell those gracious words spoken by the dying Lamb of God: “Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.”

The year is drawing to a close. Much of the year has passed. Yet how much can take place during the last expiring days and hours of this year that will have eternal consequences. Some will not see the end of the year. their life will close before the year ends. Others before the year ends will doubtless find life for their souls and deliverance from eternal death. Of some, whose life will close before the year ends, it can be said that they

shall be brought into the palace of the king; of others, that the day of mercy has passed and that they will go down into the blackness of darkness for ever. How would it be with us if our life was to end before the year draws to a close? Would it find us in the kingdom of Christ, or in the kingdom of darkness? May we take warning while the day of mercy lasts and flee from the wrath to come and find a hiding place under the shelter of the blood of Immanuel.

Sermon

by the Rev. C. J. Brown

II.

(Continued from page 330)

"I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what He will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved" (Have. 2: 1).

5. But this runs into a fifth great line of ministerial guilt. The four preceding, it will have been observed, belong rather to the habit, the frame and temper of the soul. From this state of soul, however, there spring a fifth iniquity, that might be branched out without end. I refer to great and criminal perfunctoriness in every department of our work. I believe that the more the matter is considered, it will be the more evident how a man may be diligent, comparatively, painstaking and conscientious in the ministry, and yet may discharge it, if its proper nature be regarded, in a very slight and perfunctory manner after all. Look at Paul's command to Timothy, "preach the word; be instant in season, out of season," connecting it with the distinction already so often drawn, between the heart of a Minister bent on the winning of souls, as the end of his work, and his seeking, substantially, the discharge of his duty, the satisfying of his conscience, by some due measure of laboriousness in his work. A man in this last state of mind will not be even able to understand that word, "instant in season, out of season". It evidently supposes a Minister bent on saving souls, any how, if it be at all possible. Such a man will take all sorts of times, and ways, and places, not forbidden by scripture, or by sound spiritual good sense, to attain his object. If, for example, he cannot get hearers to come to him, he will go to them, though it be to the streets and highways. Why not? If he can reach them "in season", well. But if not, yet "out of season" he must come at them. "I became all things to all men, that I might by all means save some." "They watch for your souls," says Paul, "as they that must give account." They watch for them. Look how it is with a man of this world, set on mercantile gains.

He watches his opportunity. He is not content with going through a routine. Bent on realising profits, he observes the prices. He watches their rise and fall, and eagerly steps in at what he deems the most favourable time. It is otherwise, alas! with us. We have exonerated our conscience — we have done our duty. Have we? In reality we have done nothing like it, since we have lost unnumbered opportunities, just from not lying on the watch — not being bent intently on the great gain, the gaining of imperishable souls. Ah! “the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light”.

This perfunctoriness appears, to take an example or two, in the preaching of the word. In our preparations it comes out, in our not seeking, laboriously and prayerfully, for those things which might be the most fitted under God, to save and edify souls, but rather being satisfied with things which will give ourselves less trouble, or may be pleasing, simply, and satisfying to the better part of our hearers. And then in the preaching itself it appears, in the absence, to a fearful extent, of that winning tenderness and affection, that simplicity, that chastened and loving zeal, for which noise and vehement gesticulation are but miserable substitutes. The same perfunctoriness appears in our dealing with young communicants, where we are too much satisfied with being just able conscientiously to admit or reject them, without longing after their souls, looking up to the Lord for them, seizing the golden opportunity, the most precious we can ever possess, of getting into close and earnest and personal dealing with them. In our discipline it appears, in that we are generally content, I fear, when we have given some due compliance with the letter of the Church’s laws, in place of sincerely “travailing with offenders,” (to use the language of our ancient statutes), to bring them, if the Lord will, to a repentance not to be repented of. In family visitation there is a miserable perfunctoriness. If we have got through the work of the day, comfortably and pleasantly, we are content, though we have neither wrestled before hand, nor much looked up, in the course of the work, for the Lord’s special presence and blessing in it. In the public prayers the same spirit comes out, in our not “stirring up ourselves to take hold of God” — not throwing our whole souls into “fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.” As to the government of the Church, our Presbyteries, and other ecclesiastical courts, we have but to look, I think, at the present Assembly, to see how miserably we have, in a great measure, thrown these away, deeming their work very much over, just where the chief spiritual efficacy of it might have begun. Altogether, who can read the following words of Paul, without seeing, in the contrast

of them, and seeing in everything, a great and lamentable perfunctoriness, "therefore watch, and remember that, by the space of three years, I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears."

6. I mark only one other line of our guilt, in the briefest manner, viz., our very imperfectly living, holding forth, in our lives, the ministry we have received of the Lord Jesus. I speak not, of course, of any outward immoralities — the Lord be praised we are kept from these. I speak of nothing that could indicate that we had entered the priest's office for a bit of bread. But what I point out is that high standard of living, which the apostle marks in the words, "giving none offence in anything, that the ministry be not blamed" — the elevated ministerial character marked in the following divine words of Bunyan, in his *Pilgrim*. Among other pictures which the Interpreter shewed Christian, furnishing him with certain great cardinal lessons for his journey, one is thus spoken of: "So he had him into a private room, and bid his man open a door, the which when he had done, Christian saw the picture of a very grave person hang up against the wall, and this was the fashion of it: — It had eyes lifted up to heaven, the best of books in his hand, the law of truth was written upon its lips, the world was behind his back, it stood as if it pleaded with men, and a crown of gold did hang over his head." Ah, "the picture of a very grave person!" Austerity and gloom, assuredly, are not good. But alas! for the levity, the poor unsavoury talk, the frivolity, the foibles, as they are called, of us men set, for a few short years, ambassadors of Heaven, to stand between the living and the dead, till the plague be stayed! Are we such, indeed? Are we going to heaven, and longing to take our people thither along with us? I remember that once a meal was eaten on the banks of the Sea of Galilee, where Ministers were present — where was present the chief Shepherd himself. But O the conversation at that meal! "so, when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter &c., &c. (see John 21: 15-22). "It had eyes lifted up to heaven, the best of books in his hand, the law of truth was written upon its lips, the world was behind his back, it stood as if it pleaded with men, and a crown of gold did hang over his head!" — How very faint a conception can we form of the infinite guilt and injury involved in all these heads of iniquity together! "Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I could weep day and night!" "Mine iniquities have taken hold on me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of my head." "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done evil in thy sight, that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest." "Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation; and my

tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.”

II. The space to which I must limit myself precludes so entirely any adequate notice, separately, of the sins of the Eldership and of the People, that I must content myself with a single remark in regard to the former, the Eldership. I believe that the most faithful among our beloved brethren holding that office are the most disposed, whether they look to the matter or to the spirit of their duties — such duties as the visiting of the sick, the holding of meetings for prayer in their several districts, looking after the spiritual state of the young, and specially young communicants, in the congregation, generally looking after the fruits of the Minister’s labours, and setting the example of a heavenly and devoted life before the flock — the most disposed to cry out, in reference to all of these, “My leanness! my leanness!” — the most disposed to bring out and acknowledge their many sins and shortcomings before the Lord and each other, and to welcome, with their whole hearts, whatever suggestions might be most fitted, under God, to lead to a more spiritual, and every way effective discharge of their important office.

III. With respect to the sins of the People, I shall pass by (though I trust and believe that this Church, in its future labours, will be very far from passing by) the case of the unhappy multitudes among us, who “forsake the assembling of themselves together,” neglect all ordinances together, despise God’s Sabbaths, and bring on themselves, and on the land, that chiefest guilt of the contempt of the gospel — of the offered Son of God. Let us seek to confess their guilt this day, who, alas! do not know, and cannot acknowledge it themselves. Among those, however, who attend the sanctuary of God, to how painful an extent are the following words of the prophet applicable (Exekial, 33: 30-32), “Also thou son of man, the children of thy people still are talking of thee by the walls, and in the doors of the houses, and speak one to another, every one to his brother, saying, Come, I pray you, and hear what is the word that cometh forth from the Lord. And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness. And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not.” Too evident it is, that vast numbers attend the House of God from little more than mere curiosity — to hear a man speak, not to meet with the Lord — to hear the Word, without any honest purpose of doing it, and who go away approving, it may be admiring the sermon and the preacher, yet answer-

ing exactly to James's account of the "man beholding his natural face in a glass," their heart going after their covetousness, and their souls, alas! sunk only to a lower level of spiritual death than before. Let us endeavour to confess their guilt, also, before the Lord this day.

As for those of whom better things may be hoped, and things accompanying salvation, let me put it to you solemnly, dear Christian friends, whether there is not among you a very great failing to "keep the foot," to take heed to the frame and temper of your souls, in "going to the house of God" — a miserable falling short of that language and spirit in reference to all divine ordinances, "My soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee; to see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary." "I will go about the city, in the streets and in the broad ways, I will seek Him whom my soul loveth." "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple." Be assured that the want of a definite aim, and of the right aim, in going to the sanctuary, even to meet with the blessed God, lies near the foundation of all misimprovement of its services together. As we go, too much, to preach our sermon, and too little yearning over your souls, so you come too much to hear us, and too little to meet with God, in the prayers, in the praises, and in the preaching together. And then, only call to mind the following names which are given to private members of the Church in scripture — "the saints," "a royal priesthood", "witnesses for God", "living epistles of Christ", "lights in the world, holding forth the Word of life". Alas! alas! there needs no comment on these titles. Come and join with us in our confessions of sin this day. Mingle your tears and prayers with ours, beloved brethren. Assuredly, we do not more weaken your hands by our shortcomings, than you do our hands, by yours. A praying people, is an old and true saying, makes a preaching minister. I would fain read here the close of a sermon on the ministry, by the excellent Traill of London — a sermon well worthy of being reprinted separately, as all his sermons are of being much read. "And lastly," says he, "for people: it is not unfit that you should hear of Ministers' work, and duty, and difficulties. You see that it is all of your concernment." "All things are for your sakes," as the apostle saith in another case. Then only I entreat you. I. Pity us. We are not angels, but men of like passions with yourselves. Be fuller of charity than of censure. We have all that you have to do about the saving of our own souls; and a great work besides about the saving of yours. We have all your difficulties as Christians; and some that you are not acquainted with, that are only

Ministers' temptations and trials. 2. Help us in our work. If you can do anything, help us in the work of winning souls. What can we do, say you? O! a great deal. Be but won to Christ, and we are made. Make haste to heaven, that you and we may meet joyfully before the throne of God and the Lamb. 3. Pray for us. How often and how earnestly doth Paul beg the prayers of the Churches! And if he did so, much more should we beg them, and you grant them; for our necessities and weaknesses are greater than his. "I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me." (Romans 15: 30).

And now I have done, I have been probed, a little way down, some of our wounds. Many have not been approached, as, for instance, the too easy admitting of persons to the sealing ordinances of the church. And many aggravations of our sins I have not touched — such as the attainments, the vows and sufferings of our forefathers. I believe, however, that if the wounds which have been approached were only in the course of thorough probing and healing, all others would follow, by the Lord's good hand upon us, in due time. As for the devotions of this day, everything we need may, I think, be summed up in these two passages of scripture: (Zechariah 12: 10), "I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon me, whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first born." (Isaiah 6: 1-8), "In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the Seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory. . .

Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts. Then flew one of the Seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar. And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged. Also I heard the voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I, send me."

May the Lord give us understanding in all things; and to His name be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus, world without end. Amen.

Letter

by Rev. Hugh Martin, D.D.

Montrose, 8th June, 1880

My Dear Friend, — I was glad to see your handwriting again, and to know that you found cause of thanksgiving and praise, as well as of mourning and sorrow in the recent dispensation with which you have been visited. Believe me, or rather believe the Word of the Lord, “Yet God is good to Israel.”

I am sending you by this post a small treatise I have written and published, “The Prophetical Office of Christ,” the proof sheets of which you saw last winter. I myself see no merit in the little work except perhaps its catholicity. All the leading doctrines of Christianity may be gathered from it, yet not one word indicating to what branch of the visible Church the writer belongs. That is something, and something attained without being thought of or aimed at by me when writing. But the treatise itself is simply a shell from the shores of the ocean of divine truth. The glory of Christ’s prophetical office — the combination of Word and Spirit — which is truly and fully just Christ Himself as the ever-living and ever infallible Teacher in His Church, is far too little regarded in present-day thinking and teaching. Ah! it is when the Church hears Christ’s own voice in and through the written Word, that she will have a testimony for Him to give such as shall convince an unbelieving world — a testimony the voice of which is “Whom having not seen, we love, in whom, though now we see Him not, yet *believing*, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.”

I am not to write at length today, for I am troubled with rheumatic pains which flit down even to my fingers. And yet you were carving out more work for me. Well, if spared and able, I should like next to bring out something on Christ’s kingly office; if only the thoughts were God-given. A running commentary on the kingly Psalms would be the line I should like to adopt. For example, the 2nd, the 8th, the 24th, the 45th, and the 89th. Then the 90th, and those that follow with their repeated anthem, “The Lord doth reign.” Next would come, “Grace reigns,” a glorious theme, and lastly, “*They* shall reign, they who receive grace and the gift of righteousness, they shall reign in life by one, by Christ Jesus.”

Do you know I sometimes think I hear the words said, “Ye ought to be strong, and to remember the infirmities of the weak?” Who are to help “the weak” if such do not who have been long fed and watered in the pastures of divine truth? Is it right to be expecting to be always nursed

and dandled, taking up, as it were, the time of the Great Physician with simply one's own case, when the professing Church and a world lying in wickedness need Him so sorely? Who are to help "the weak" if they do not who have again and again received help at the Lord's gracious hands? His word to His followers was, "Freely ye have received, freely give." Are we prepared to turn round and say, "Lord, we did not receive very freely, we did not receive very much, we will wait until we receive more fully and more largely before we endeavour to give out." Truly, if that is our way of it, we need not wonder although we are left to be useless and unsavoury; "That which was kept of the manna until the morning bred worms, and stank." Therefore, while we ought to wait on the Lord for the opportunities and the encouragements to engage in His service, we ought to be ourselves in our hearts and lives that very workmanship which would glorify Him, and which might be a means of blessing to others. We ought to be His witnesses, witnesses to the power of His grace and truth; and we ought to be His remembrancers giving Him no rest till He arise and build up Zion, and make her a praise in the earth.

What did you think of last Assembly? It appears to be forgotten that some of the views now called "new" were known and debated in the Church centuries ago, so that our young critics seem to me like so many relics of the middle ages!

But I am not to begin another sheet, so conclude at present.

— Yours, &C.,

Hugh Martin.

God's Love to His People

By Rev. John Brown, Haddington

So *exceeding abundant* is the love of God towards his people, that it never ceases; never changes; no, not sin itself can interrupt his love, nor change their happy state of fellowship with him, or hinder the communication of such influence from him as are altogether necessary for the preservation of their new nature. He indeed hates their sin; but he loves their person as well as ever, and in love to it, corrects them for their sin. When they outrageously sin, he withdraws from them his comfortable intimacy, and diminishes his gracious influences; but their fellowship of interest in him is still the same; God is still their *God* and *guide even unto death*; Jesus still their Husband and Saviour; the Holy Ghost still their inhabitant; and they are still justified *heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ*.¹ Such measures of gracious influence as are necessary so the existence of

their spiritual life are still communicated from Christ to their soul: for the saints' act of sin cannot render their new nature an independent deity that can support itself: — nay, if sin could break the bond of union between Christ and his people, or totally stop their fellowship with him in his love, how could he have any fellowship of interest, or communion of influence with them here, while sin dwelleth in them? — Indeed, were an Arminian present, he would cry out, What abominable doctrine! what damnable heresy is this! But let us hear what Jesus, what JEHOVAH saith. *Having loved his own he loved them unto the end: — with everlasting kindness, will I gather them. I have sworn that I would not be wroth with thee — my kindness shall not depart from thee, nor the covenant of my peace be removed. — I will betroth thee unto me for ever. I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not depart from them to do them good, and I will put my fear in their heart, that they shall not depart from me. I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee: they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. I give to my shee, eternal life, and none shall pluck them out of my hand, none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment; lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day. The water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up to everlasting life. The Comforter abides with the saints for ever, and shall be in them. The good part shall not be taken away: the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. Neither death nor life — nor any other creature, is able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*²

Visit to Canada

by Rev. John MacLeod

Mr Robert Ross and I left Glasgow on an Air Canada flight at 11.30 am on Tuesday, 23rd June, 1992, and after a pleasant flight arrived in Toronto about seven hours later. At the airport we soon spotted the familiar figure of Mr Gerrit Schuit and after being warmly welcomed by him we set off for Oakville where we called on Mrs Scambler. After being hospitably entertained in her apartment we headed north for Chesley and duly arrived at Mr Schuit's house in the late evening. Mrs Scambler came with us.

¹ Psal. 48: 14. Rom. 8: 17. ² John 13: 1. Is. 54: 8, 9, 10. Hos. 2: 19. Jer. 32: 39, 40. Heb. 13: 5. 1 Peter 1: 5. John 10: 28, 29. Is. 27: 3. John 4: 14, and 14: 16, 17. Luke 10: 42. Rom 11: 29 and 8: 38, 39. See Confession of Faith, chap. 17.

The following Saturday I conducted the marriage service of Gilbert Zekveld and Dorene Schuit. This was in the Chesley church which, on the occasion, was very nearly filled to capacity. Both Gilbert and Dorene are communicant members of the Church. Dorene comes from Mississippi and is the daughter of Mr Jacob Schuit who, in turn, is a brother of our Chesley elder. Gilbert's sister, Anne, is a staff nurse at our Mbumba Hospital in Zimbabwe. They are setting up home in Chesley.

On Sabbath I preached morning and evening in Chesley. As some of the wedding guests stayed over for the weekend the congregation numbered around eighty-five. In accordance with the arrangements made by the Kirk Session intimation was made of an election of elders and of the holding of a congregational meeting for the purpose of opening the envelopes containing the ballot papers and the counting of them in the presence of the congregation. It was also intimated that the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper would be dispensed on the following Sabbath.

The usual services were held from the following Thursday onwards until the thanksgiving service on the Monday. These were well attended. We were sorry that Mr John A. MacLeod, Vancouver (with whom we were in contact by telephone) was not able to attend and also Mr and Mrs Hardy who, we heard, might well have come had they been told in time. Two new members were admitted and their names added to the Communion Roll. They were the fore-mentioned Jacob Schuit from Mississippi and his daughter now domiciled in Chesley. Jacob is a frequent visitor to Chesley having many relatives living in the area. If we had labourers we could, I believe, form a congregation in Mississippi!

The congregational meeting for the purpose of counting the number of votes which were cast for each of the men eligible for election was duly held and it was found that only one man — David Kuiper — had received sufficient votes. He indicated his willingness to accept office and the ordination was duly carried out on Wednesday, 15th July.

On my last Sabbath in Chesley the infant children of Mr Henry Winkels and Mr John Winkels were baptised after the morning service. There were nigh on ninety souls present in the church when the Sacrament was administered.

It was my intention to hold a service in our Toronto church and it was accordingly arranged with the Rev Quincy Caldwell that the building would be available on Friday, 10th July, at 8 pm. Some families from the Dundas area, forty miles or so away, intended to come and it was hoped that others in the Toronto area might also attend. One of the Toronto APC's elders, however, phoned on the Monday before that date to say that Mr Caldwell

had overstepped his authority and that the Church would not be available for any such service. The proposal was thus abandoned. We believe that we were kept out of the building, not by Mr Caldwell (who could not have been more helpful or courteous) but by his office-bearers. Contrary to established Presbyterian practice they denied their minister the right to exercise his own liberty and discretion in this particular matter. One wonders if, consistent with the practice of the Aberdeen APC's, access would have been denied had the request come from a religious organisation other than the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

Throughout our sojourn we stayed at the home of Mr and Mrs Schuit. We are much indebted to them and to all others in the congregation who showed us so much kindness. It is our prayer that a faithful minister will soon be settled in Chesley. Our people remain, notwithstanding difficulties, unwavering as far as attachment to the Free Presbyterian Church's testimony is concerned. They are in an isolated situation and it is highly desirable, in the meantime, that deputies from the home Church visit them at frequent intervals if only to administer the Sacraments. We appeal to all who love Sion to pray for the peace and prosperity of our Canadian congregations.

Mr Ross and I have, above all, to acknowledge the Lord's kindness in taking us to Canada, preserving us in health while there, and then bringing us safely back when our mission was accomplished.

Notes and Comments

Britain's Sad Plight

The spiritual and moral decline of a once highly favoured land is evident on every hand. National newspapers daily produce evidence of our moral degeneration. The marriage bond, once the anchor of family life, is cast aside on the least provocation, or on no provocation at all. Britain heads the divorce league of Western Europe. A de-Christianised culture has brought forth its own fruit. Promiscuity, lauded by a pagan culture, has become endemic. Abuse of young and old is habitual. The legalisation of euthanasia — more properly termed the murder of the elderly and infirm — is being contemplated to complement the practice of abortion, practices reminiscent of the worst excesses of heathenism. Persons living in unnatural relationships are counted suitable persons to adopt children. The Saviour is mocked on television by godless producers. The word of God is set aside as a thing of nought. The house of God is forsaken. Britain is in economic decline and men wonder why it is so. How blind men

can be to the cause of the nation's woes. We have forsaken the Fountain of Life and what wisdom is in us?

The way of return to God is the only hope for a decadent nation. The call of God went out long ago to Israel — "Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings." Well it would be for Britain today if, hearing this call, she responded in the words of Scripture, "Behold, we come unto Thee; for Thou art the Lord our God." Without such a return to the Lord, greater and greater judgments must be expected on a backsliding land.

The Government and Europe

Many years ago our government made the fatal mistake of allying itself with the predominantly Roman Catholic nations of Western Europe. It was said at that time that it was merely an economic union, though it was evident to anyone with eyes to see that ultimately a political union was contemplated. Whatever commercial benefits Britain may have obtained from this alliance, they were surely short lived. Now the eyes of the people have been opened to see how they have been duped, and opposition to political union is rising. Britain trusted in a broken reed and is now reaping the consequences. May the Lord in His mercy deliver her, and may she be brought once again to trust in God, her Maker.

Far from the Truth

The Bishop of Durham has for some time provided a particularly clear example of where present trends are taking the Church of England. He is certainly particularly forthright in the way he expresses his views. One of his latest public pronouncements makes clear that his moral ideas are as unscriptural as his doctrines. He has contributed a foreward to a book of prayers for homosexuals, which has the shameless title, *Daring to Speak in Love's Name*. The bishop's action has special significance because the book was dropped by SPCK (Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge) who were originally to be its publishers. They dropped it when the Archbishop of Canterbury threatened to resign as its president, albeit on the rather lame excuse that some passages might give the impression that AIDS is an exclusively heterosexual disease.

A Church of England source was quoted as saying, "The Bishop of Durham's views are well known, but Lambeth Palace (the Archbishop's headquarters) will still be furious." It is of course a complete abdication of responsibility for the Archbishop to leave someone like Bishop Jenkins

in the high office which he holds, and without so much as a rebuke. Someone who can complain, as the Bishop did, of the churches "seeming to curse homosexual friendships and commitments" has particularly flagrantly rejected the authority of the Scriptures which he is pledged to uphold, for these Scriptures make it perfectly plain that such sins are specially under God's curse. When will the leaders of the Church of England take seriously their responsibility to give clear moral and spiritual direction to their people, and to do so exclusively in the clear light of the Bible?

— K.D.M.

The National Bible Society of Scotland

As time passes it becomes more evident that this Society has moved further and further from a due regard to the Holy Scriptures. Several of their leaflets referring to Bible scenes are in the form of 'cartoons' bringing the solemn high doctrines of the Word to the base level of 'comic strips'. This is nothing short of blasphemous, in our opinion.

The contents of some of their literature, specially prepared for the sick and the dying, are calculated to administer false comfort and delusive hopes. There is one, for example, entitled 'Gone from View' which is referring to death. The cover has the design of a ship, and the reading is that one watching the ship disappear says " 'There's she's gone'. Gone where! Gone from view that is all. Just at that moment there are other eyes watching her coming and other souls taking up the glad shout, 'There, she's coming!' AND THAT IS DYING."

In our opinion the Society is guilty of great sin in treating the Word of God as it does, and people supporting this Society have their own responsibility.

A.E.W.N.

Euthanasia

The recent conviction of an English doctor for attempted murder raises wide questions about the conduct of the medical profession in this country. The doctor in question administered a lethal injection to a dying woman who was in particularly great suffering. This injection could have no effect in reducing pain; hence the conviction for attempted murder. An injection whose intended effect was to relieve pain, but also hastened death, would be legal. Obviously there are difficult questions involved. But in the midst of all the difficulties we must keep a firm hold of the fact that no man has the right to take away anyone else's life — (except in exceptional circumstances, as when the state takes away the life of the murderer).

After such a case, which involved a person in particularly severe suf-

fering and the conviction of a doctor whose good qualities were sufficiently extolled at his trial, there is always the danger of a groundswell of sympathy which could eventually sweep away the safeguards of our present law, which prohibits euthanasia. It is a good question how far the present law does prevent doctors from hastening the death of terminally ill patients. Certainly an unnamed GP was quoted in the press as admitting to having done just this on more than one occasion. God's word must provide the basis for all our moral judgments, but in a society, which is moving further and further away from God and His Word it need not surprise us to find the medical profession drifting in the same direction.

It is in a godless environment like ours that a clamour could arise for a change in the law to permit euthanasia. Thankfully this conviction for attempted murder will act as a restraint on the medical profession for the time being. It gives no guarantee of permanent protection if public opinion, without the stability of Christian conviction, swings in the same way as it has done in approving of murder in the womb on the present horrific scale.

At present, doctors in the Netherlands are in certain circumstances safe from prosecution if they take away the life of someone who has requested them to end their life. Their opinion polls suggest widespread public support for voluntary euthanasia; people get used to any kind of sin. But when acceptance is secured for voluntary euthanasia, how long can it be before there is pressure for compulsory euthanasia? Who then will be condemned to die? The unconscious? The terminally ill? Those with acute loss of memory?

And where will it stop? And how can those feel secure for the future who are still relatively fit? Or even those in the best of health? God's Word gives the only sure foundation: "Thou shalt not kill". Any tampering with the present law can only prove disastrous. — K.D.M.

Letter from Kenya

Dear Friends

It is now time to try and tell you about some of our travels in Malawi.

On Friday 14 August, we flew from Nairobi to Lilongwe, the capital city of Blantyre. We were met by Mr Neil MacDougall and stayed with them for one night. Mr and Mrs MacDougall showed us much kindness.

The next day we flew from Lilongwe to Blantyre. The house we rent is in a quiet area of the city, and is very comfortable. Blantyre itself is a beautiful, well kept little city. It seems to be better organised than

Nairobi, and things get done more efficiently. On the other hand, there are an amazing number of beggars, from little boys who run up holding out their hands and whining "Hungry sir, buy food" and asking for "tam-bala" (ie pennies), to some of the most pathetic sights I have ever seen. Some of them have legs which are literally skin and bone, completely devoid of any muscle at all. They walk on their hands, pulling their legs along behind them, usually with cloth tied round their knees to protect them from scraping on the pavement. As a white person, you are automatically considered to be rich, and also likely to be more generous than their fellow Malawians, so you become a target for all the beggars in the area. Side by side with this destitution are some of the most wealthy people I have seen, both black and white.

The mission's situation in Malawi is very different from that in Kenya. There are far more stations, and they are spread over a very wide area, covering the southern half of the country and the mission house is located in the city of Blantyre, so that you do not have the feeling of living among the people.

There are three native evangelists employed by the church here, Mr Phiri, Mr Mwaze and Mr Tembo.

Our first visit was to one of the mission stations near Blantyre in an area called Thyolo. It is one of the stations in which Mr Phiri works. The church is an old shop building, and there were about fifty present. Mr Phiri started by catechising the congregation and then Mr MacLeod preached.

We also went to an area called Bangwe. It reminds me of the pictures I have seen of shanty towns, very run down and dilapidated. Yet amongst it all we found the people had built a little church, almost unaided, with broken stones for a floor, and a few home made benches to sit on. When we arrived, a bell was rung to call the people to worship. While we were waiting Mr Phiri started singing psalms with the few who were already present. It struck me as being a particularly good way of spending time while waiting for the service to begin. The singing was very good indeed, although the selection of tunes is fairly limited. When the people know a tune well, they sing with beautiful harmonies, and I managed to get down the notes of a particularly nice one which is one of their own melodies. Many of them could not read, or did not have psalm books, so Mr Phiri gave out the line! It is fairly similar to our way of doing it except that the precentor only sings the first few words of each line. Eventually we started the service with 46 present. Mr MacLeod preached on 1 Timothy 1: 15.

Later that afternoon, Mr MacLeod and I went to buy some bags of maize flour to take with us on our visit to the south where there are many very hungry people.

On Tuesday 18 August we travelled south to the area in which Mr Tembo works. We left Blantyre at 10.30 am, and after a short while, the road goes very suddenly down a very steep incline into the valley of the river Shire (pronounced Shee-ray). As we went down, it got much hotter, and the landscape became very dry and barren. I spent the journey in the back of the truck, along with 100 bags of Mr MacLeod's maize! Perched on top of them, I got a good view of the surrounding countryside, and could not help wondering what the people live on. When I say there was no sign of any food growing, that is no exaggeration, and I learned later that the people had planted seed three times this year, and each time nothing grew. Those of us who are blessed with a competent portion of the necessities of this life should surely remember those who are in such dire straits.

We reached Ngabo, where Mr Tembo lives, and gathered for a service in a rented shop building. It was about 3 pm, and by this time very hot, and the sun beating down on the iron roof made the church feel like an oven. Mr MacLeod spoke on Isaiah 55, and was attentively listened to. One young boy in particular caught my attention. He was immediately noticeable, because he had only one leg. His right leg was lost as a result of an accident, and in its place he has a strange looking contraption consisting of two metal rods, attached to his thigh, which lead to a cylinder of wood, the bottom of which he walks on. As the service progressed, I could not help noticing how intently he seemed to hang on to every word that was said. I found out later that he is 14 years old, and that he WALKS about three miles each way to church every Sabbath with another boy the same age. His parents do not attend the church so he receives no encouragement from them, yet he is one of the most attentive in the congregation, and diligent in learning his catechism. I found the story very moving. Surely we should be asking ourselves whether we would make such efforts to attend the means of grace so diligently. It is sad that so many young folk in our own lands seems to have so little interest in the gospel, especially when we hear of such desire among our fellows in areas that do not have the privileges we do.

The church building here is not really suitable, and as this is the village where Mr Tembo lives, there are plans to build a permanent one. The estimated cost is about 15,000 Malawi Kwacha (about £2000), each brick costs about 16p! Again, a little money goes a long way.

The following day we carried on our journey south, and reached the

very bottom tip of Malawi, right on the Mozambique border. The scenery was just what I had imagined Africa to be like. On either side of the road, as far as the eye could see, there was dry parched scrubland, with a few stunted bushes here and there. There was red dust everywhere, and the heat hung in a shimmering haze over everything. Every now and then we would catch sight of the round thatched roof of an African mud hut. It was hard to believe I was actually there, jolting along the road in the back of a truck. We passed several "rivers" which were nothing more than dry, dusty river beds. The drought has badly affected the area, and many people are in need. I saw with my own eyes for the first time, children with bloated stomachs and matchstick limbs, the marks of prolonged malnutrition, and we passed an area where the previous week five little ones had passed from the scene of time, never to return, as a result of starvation. Even more solemnising is the realisation that most of those killed by the famine have never heard of the Bread of Life which came down from heaven. What a responsibility there is on us who have heard. How are we using what we have, for the good of our own souls and the good of others. It breaks my heart to think of children, as well as men and women, perishing from hunger, and going out into the blackness of darkness for ever, when there is enough and to spare in Christ. Also, humanly speaking, a lot needs to be done to help these poor people in their bodily needs. We passed several places where the Red Cross, United Nations and the like are feeding thousands of people, and I could only admire the efforts of such worldly people. Surely those of us who have tasted that God is gracious should be even more zealous in caring for our fellows. The Bible says:

"Whoso hath this world's good and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth" (1 John 3: 17,18).

We arrived at Mankokwe refugee camp, which houses thousands of Mozambiquan refugees who have fled the civil war in their home country. The people, being refugees, have very little, but are generally reasonably well fed by relief organisations. In fact, they are often better off than the native Malawians, but they have no income, and are very poorly dressed. Our connection with them came about in quite a remarkable way. One of the men from the camp was present at a service held elsewhere by Tembo and decided he wanted our church to come and preach to them in the refugee camp. He went back and got the people to build a church, completely out of mud! The walls are mud, and so are

the seats, platform and pulpit! There is even a mud bookboard in the pulpit! They had no thatch for the roof, and no money to buy it, so they sold the blankets they had been given since they had fled home with nothing, and with the proceeds roofed their church. Then they asked the church to come and teach them. The camp is huge, and full of false missionaries, predominantly Romanists and charismatics, but those who attend our services ask not to be forgotten, and say that when they are allowed to return to Mozambique, they wish the church to come and teach them there also. So yet another field could open up to us, right in the middle of Roman Catholic dominated territory. How we need labourers sent by the Lord of the harvest. We had a congregation of about 65, and Mr MacLeod preached on the Pharisee and the publican. We then set off on the return trip, and on the way called in at another refugee camp at Nyamatutu. This was set up to take the overflow from the first which was overcrowded. The story of our church there is even more remarkable. The man who was so instrumental in establishing a congregation in Mankokwe was among those moved to this new site. Undeterred at having to leave his church behind, he set about establishing yet another! He organised the making of mud bricks, and single handedly raised 300 Kwacha for roofing by selling maize and blankets from the relief supplies he received. To give you an idea of the extent of his efforts, K300 is about two months earnings in Malawi, and as a refugee, this man has no regular income whatsoever! Such dedication and effort is quite overwhelming to think of. This man would have been made very welcome by any of the religious groups in the new camp, or he might have been ready to give up, after being moved from the scene of his original efforts, but he persevered, by grace we believe, and as a result we now have a congregation of between fifty and sixty in this camp also. Truly God honours those that honour Him. The question we must all face in the light of such heroism is: will the refugees of Mankokwe and Nyamatutu rise in the day of judgment and condemn us, in spite of all our gospel privileges? To whom much is given, much will be required.

On Saturday 22nd August, we set off on the last of our long trips, this time north of Blantyre to the area where Mr Mwaze works, and on Sabbath Mr MacLeod and I travelled up to Ntaja, about two hours drive north. This is Mr Mwaze's home town, and to get there we had to drive for part of the way along a very bumpy sand road. We arrived safely at Ntaja where we picked up Mr Mwaze, and a few others, and drove on for about 40 minutes, along little dust tracks through the scrub till we came to a village called Namikhango. The church was nearly full with

about seventy people, and Mr MacLeod preached on Genesis 13: 8. Again, as so often in our travels, I could not help noticing how attentively many of the people seemed to listen to the Word. We then returned to Ntaja, and had another service, this time in Mwaze's house, with about 45 present. Later on I was reading in Luke chapter 10, and was struck by the appropriateness of verse 2: "The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He would send forth labourers into his harvest". There is undoubtedly a great need here. Mr MacLeod took a note from the evangelists, and we worked out that in Malawi alone, there are over two thousand people attending our churches, at over twenty different stations, spread out over half a country, all to be covered by three lay evangelists, who must travel on foot, by bike or public transport. What a great door lies open for us. We must seriously ask ourselves how we are to bring the gospel to these people.

I cannot finish my account of my time in Malawi however, without telling you about my friend George! George is a little 11-year-old boy who begs on the streets of Blantyre. As I said before, there are many such here, but George has a certain skill and persistence which is very hard to ignore. George's father is blind and cannot work. There is no social security in Malawi for the poor, and so the family had been supported by George's mother. Eighteen months ago, she died, leaving her blind husband to look after George and his little sister Margaret. So at 9½ years old, George had to leave school and take on the responsibility of providing for his family by begging. Even if they could afford the fees, if he were to go to school, he and his sister and father would starve.

I then asked him if he went to church at all, and he told me that he went to the Christian centre every week. The "Christian" centre is a Charismatic establishment which as well as holding services, has a bookshop absolutely full of books telling us why Christians should not be sick or poor. Meanwhile, they let George beg on the streets of the city. The sooner the face of the earth is purged of such pestilent people and places the better. I have since found out that we have opened a preaching station fairly near to George's home, so the next time I see him, I will tell him, and ask him to start attending.

There are literally hundreds of such street children here, mostly little boys. Many have to sleep out on the streets at night since they are orphans and have no homes. Last winter, there was a flash flood one night, and scores of youngsters sleeping under some of the city's bridges were drowned, and swept into eternity. These harrowing tales could be multiplied, and one is left wondering what is to be done, in the face of such tragedies.

What havoc humans have brought upon themselves by sin. If there was only some way of providing a secure Christian background and education for these children, then by God's grace we might see many of them turning to him, and becoming salt and light in their own generation.

We arrived safely back in Nairobi on Thursday, 27th August, and the following day I had to say 'Goodbye' to Mr and Mrs MacLeod as they returned home to Scotland. We were all thankful to God for His care and keeping of us during the time we were together, and I was especially thankful that the way had been opened up for me to be introduced to the mission folk by Mr MacLeod who knew them so well.

Well, I will close here for the time being. We beseech you "brethren, pray for us" and for all involved in the work begun here, "that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified". I have mentioned many matters above which we hope will be brought to a Throne of Grace by God's people. Let us not be forgetful of the poor and the needy, and let us call on the God of mercy for provision for all needs, bodily and spiritual. Above all let us seek that salvation which is for time and eternity, for ourselves and our fellow men, desiring that God's kingdom may be established in our own hearts and throughout the whole world.

Best wishes to you all.

Donald MacDonald

The Centenary of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland

by **Rev. Donald MacLean, Moderator of Synod**

When the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland met in Edinburgh in May, 1893, the Church's Jubilee formed a prominent part of the proceedings. Fifty years had passed since the famous Disruption, when the Church of Scotland Free took up a separate position from the Church of Scotland Established. This special position had become necessary to maintain a Scriptural witness to the right of congregations to have pastors settled over them by Church Courts, rather than having pastors imposed on them against their will by Civil Courts. In other words, the crown rights of Christ as Head of the Church had to be safeguarded. Although this separation meant the loss of manses, glebes and salaries, these sufferings were nobly borne by the founders of the Free Church, knowing that they were maintaining the constitutional position of the Church of the Refor-

mation, with the Word of God as its supreme standard, and the Westminster Confession of Faith its subordinate standard.

The promising beginning of this Church was not maintained however. After the Disruption fathers had passed away to their eternal rest, a generation of ministers and office-bearers arose who had not the same love for the Word of God and its doctrines, as set out in systematised form in the Confession of Faith. A process of declension set in with which the readers of this Magazine are well acquainted. This process came to a head in the formation of the notorious Declaratory Act, composed to give relief to those whose consciences were not captive to the Word of God.

In 1892 this Act was passed by the General Assembly, and became a binding law and constitution of the Free Church. The passing of the Act meant that the constitution of the Free Church was changed, as the doctrines contained in this Act were opposed to the doctrines of the Confession of Faith. The Free Church of Scotland of 1843 no longer existed — the Free Church of 1893 now had the Declaratory Act in its constitution. The party in the Free Church which had been opposing the Declaratory Act was called the Constitutional Party. When the Act was passed in the Assembly of 1892, some of the leaders of this party had thoughts of separation, but the policy was adopted of acting together to endeavour to have the Act repealed at the 1893 Assembly. In the dissent and protest entered when the Declaratory Act was passed, an appeal was made to the Assembly of 1893 to take steps to repeal the Act. Accordingly, several Overtures to this effect were sent up to the General Assembly. We do not know what the weather was like in the city of Edinburgh on Thursday 25th May, 1893. The sun may have been shining or a cold east wind blowing. We are sure, however, that there were some heavy and anxious hearts, as the ministers and elders made their way to the Assembly Hall, where the General Assembly was to consider the Overtures.

It had become increasingly evident that there was no likelihood of the Overtures receiving favourable consideration. When the voting took place the Overtures were passed from, and the last effort by these means to save the Free Church came to an end.

All was not to be lost, however. In the midst of this large Assembly of over six hundred members, who had shown hostility to any attempt to repeal the Declaratory Act, there was one minister who knew how to act. Some time before this Rev Donald MacFarlane had been assisting at a Communion in Argyllshire. On the Monday, after the service, there was a large gathering in the Manse for a meal. At the conclusion of the meal, the minister gave out Psalm 133 to be sung. He asked Neil Cameron,

who was then a divinity student, to lead the singing. This he refused to do, and when the minister pressed him to do so, he broke down. The minister led the singing of the psalm himself. On retiring to the Manse study the minister asked Mr Cameron what was wrong with him when he refused to lead the singing. Mr Cameron replied: "If men are to be faithful to the Cause of Christ in Scotland, that psalm could not be sung in the company at that table." Rev D. MacFarlane, who was present, was heard saying "If I will get grace, I will be faithful". This was the source from which he was to draw strength to do as he did.

When the motion to pass from the Overtures was concluded in the Assembly, Rev D. MacFarlane was given grace to take the proper step to conserve the Constitution of the Free Church of 1843. He came forward and tabled his Protest, which he refused to change to a Dissent.

By this step he separated himself and all who followed him, from the Declaratory Act Free Church, and preserved pure and entire the Constitution of the Church of the Disruption. He left behind him both the Rainy party and the Constitutional party, who were content with a Dissent when their Overtures failed. We have no doubt that the step was taken by Mr MacFarlane because the Lord fulfilled His promise to him "My grace is sufficient for thee; for My strength is made perfect in weakness" 2 Cor. 12: 9. He accordingly gave the Lord all the glory.

It is the centenary of this event that we, as a Church, are to commemorate, on Tuesday, 25th May, 1993 (D.V.), for by it the Free Presbyterian Church commenced its separate existence to preserve a full-orbed testimony for Divine Truth in doctrine, worship and practice. May we, too, be given grace to ascribe all the glory to Christ for the grace given to His servant at that critical time, and to Rev D. MacDonald, who came to stand with him, as well as the students, elders and people who flocked to this banner.

It has been considered most appropriate that the meeting to commemorate this event should be held in the very Assembly Hall in Edinburgh where Rev D. MacFarlane tabled his historic Protest. It is likely that it is the same Clerk's table which is in this Hall. Accordingly, the Assembly Hall has been hired from the Church of Scotland for the whole day on Tuesday 25th May, 1993. This Commemoration Meeting will be entirely distinct from the Annual Meeting of Synod, which will take place (D.V.) in Inverness on 1st June, 1993. This meeting is primarily for ministers, office-bearers and our people to render thanks to God for the grace given to make this unique stand for the Word of God in its doctrine, worship and government, but naturally all other interested friends

will be welcome. We look forward to a large gathering of our people, not only from the United Kingdom, but from Africa, New Zealand, Canada and Australia.

We will also seek to render praise and thanks for the grace given to enable us, as a Church, to continue during these past one hundred years. It is truly wonderful that, in the midst of the most appalling apostacy of Protestant Churches during this time, the church has been preserved faithfully to the testimony raised in 1893. This has taken place despite the naked enmity of the ungodly, and the treachery of false friends. The Lord has indeed been mindful of us, and our hope and prayer is that He will continue to bless us, for He alone is our refuge and our strength, and in difficulties and trials has indeed proved a present aid.

As we therefore, render praise for the loving kindness of the Lord during these past one hundred years, let us also unite in fervent prayer, that He would grant an outpouring of His Holy Spirit to revive His work in the midst of these years of wrath.

“For Thou, Lord, by Thy mighty works
hast made my heart right glad:
And I will triumph in the works
which by Thine hands are made”

Psalm 92: 4

A programme of events has been arranged for Tuesday, 25th May, 1993, to take place in the Assembly Hall in Edinburgh.

These are as follows:

1. 2 p.m. Public Worship conducted by Rev. Donald MacLean, Moderator of Synod.
2. 3 p.m. Paper on the history of events by Rev. Alex MacPherson, Perth.
3. Paper by Rev. Donald Maclean — The Hundred Years.
4. Several ministers of the Church will give short addresses of 10 minutes each. (Details will be given in due course D.V.)
5. The meeting will close with prayer, praise and the Benediction about 6 p.m. A meal will be arranged for 7 p.m.

Deacons' Courts will be expected to make all arrangements for their Congregations to come to this Commemoration Meeting.

All expenses of travel, accommodation (which will be provided where necessary) and the meal, will be provided by the Church.

The Finance Committee has opened a **Centenary Commemoration Fund** for the purpose of financing this event. Contributions should be sent to the General Treasurer.

It should be noted that this Fund is different from the **Centenary Fund**, which is intended to finance the publication of the Centenary Volume.

Church Notes

Presbytery Meetings (D.V.)

Western: At Laide on 8th December at 6 p.m.

Southern: At Glasgow on 11th February 1993 at 6 p.m.

Outer Isles: At Stornoway on 19th January 1993 at 1 p.m..

Skye: At Portree on 9th February 1993 at 11 a.m.

Zimbabwe: At Bulawayo on 8th March 1993 at 2 p.m.

Day of Prayer

At the Synod in May the following motion was passed:—

“In the light of the increasing apostacy of the age in which our lot is cast, and the determination to enlist the law on the side of evil-doers, that Wednesday 16th December or Thursday 17th December 1992 be held throughout the whole Church as a day of humiliation and prayer for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit to stem the tide of religious and moral corruption.”

Report of the Tomatin Church Opening

On Wednesday 23rd of September 1992 a full congregation gathered at Morile, Tomatin for the opening service in the new Church building. Rev. A. MacPherson preached on Exodus 25: 8. “*And let them make Me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them.*” After the sermon Mr MacPherson and Rev. D. Boyd, both former ministers of the congregation, each gave a short address. Among other remarks reference was made to the ministry of Rev. D. MacFarlane in Tomatin (1879-1889), and his faithful protest against the introduction of the infamous Declaratory Act. Rev. A. F. Mackay who was interim moderator for many years made mention of the late Rev. D. J. Matheson, first minister of the joint congregation of Daviot, Stratherrick and Tomatin, who died in 1962. The Lord’s kindness in providence was acknowledged in providing this place of worship. Acknowledgement was also made of the kindness of many persons who gave of their labour and substance, especially the gift of an excellent site on which to build the church. After the service a large number of those who attended retired to the village hall for refreshments. In thanking the

ladies of the congregation for their ample provision Rev. N. Ross made reference to the Apostle Paul's commendation of "Phebe our sister and servant of the church . . . a succourer of many" (Rom. 16: 1, 2).

Excellent work was done by the builders (most of whom are Free Presbyterians). A most suitable church has been constructed at a very reasonable cost. The building stands in sight of the original church and manse occupied by Rev. D. MacFarlane and it is worthy of note that this new church has been opened exactly one hundred years after he tabled his protest against the Declaratory Act, which led to the formation of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. Contrary to pessimistic forecasts that this denomination would be short lived, we are still here. It should be a matter of humble gratitude with us that the Lord has seen fit to preserve the scriptural witness of the Gospel of Christ among us. Our holding fast to the truth has made us many enemies so that we are left "as a cottage in the vineyard and as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city." Yet, hitherto the Lord has helped us.

We believe the prayers and desires of many, some of whom are now in eternity have been answered thus far, in the restoration and continuity of a Free Presbyterian place of worship and witness in Tomatin and we hope that the Lord Himself will be meeting with souls in mercy as He did in former days in this place, raising by His own grace, a seed to do Him service.

It will be of interest to those with a concern for the cause of Christ in Tomatin to observe the continuity between the present Free Presbyterian congregation and those who separated from the Church of Scotland at the Disruption in 1843. The minister of Tomatin in 1843 was a Rev. Dr Thomas MacLauchlan. The whole congregation are reported to have followed him out of the Church of Scotland. In 1844 the Rev. Archie Cook came to Daviot and took the oversight of Tomatin until 1862.

Some of those who took their stand with Rev. D. MacFarlane in 1893 were converted under the preaching of Archie Cook. One example of these was Mrs S. Davidson, Findhorn Bridge, who attended Mr Cook's ministry for many years. In her father's house Mr Cook held regular diets of catechising and she entertained him in her own home. When Mr Cook's Gaelic and English sermons were published in 1907 she received them with delight and read them over and over again. Mr Cook was succeeded in 1862 by the Rev. John Baillie who subsequently became minister of Gairloch. The Rev. D. MacFarlane came in 1879 and remained ten years. His ministry was greatly appreciated by his people who nearly all followed him in 1893 although by this time he was minister of Raasay. Preaching

on the Monday of the last Communion at which Mr MacFarlane officiated in Tomatin he said, "I am going to heaven, will you not come with me?"

List of Communions

The list of Communions on the inside front of the Magazine has been corrected for 1993. The editor would be grateful if ministers would let him know of any further corrections required.

Notice to Congregational Treasurers

The General Treasurer requests Congregational Treasurers to send him the last payments for 1992 by Thursday, 24th December 1992. All payments not banked by him by 29th December 1992 will be entered as receipts for 1993.

Acknowledgment of Donations

The General Treasurer, Mr Rod Campbell, 133 Woodlands Road, Glasgow, G3 6LE wishes to acknowledge with sincere thanks the following donations:

Zimbabwe Famine Relief: Anon., \$Can. 100.

Eastern Europe Fund: Friend, Staffin £10; Anon., Canada £47.73.

Centenary Fund: Friend, Staffin £10.

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

Bracadale-Strath: Friend, Stockinish £10; Friend, Stockinish £20, both "where most needed", both per Rev. G. G. H.

Daviot-Stratherrick-Tomatin: Glasgow Friend £10; Friend, Stornoway £30, both for the new Tomatin Church.

Dundee: Eastern Europe Mission £100; £60; £30; £20; £20; £10 all per Rev. A.N.M.

Edinburgh: Friend, £50, Psalm 144: 1, for Kenya Famine Relief.

Glasgow (St. Jude's): Anon., (four donations) £40 "where most needed"; M.A.M. £10 per Rev D.M.; Matth. 6: 3 £10; Anon., £10; Anon., £10; Anon., £5; Anon., £5, all for Bus. Fund; Anon., £2 for Sust. Fd.; Anon., £20 for Foreign Missions; Anon., £100 "Sponsor a Blind Child".

Greenock: D.R.M. £30; Anon., £30; Anon., £20; Glasgow Friend, £20, all for Congr. Purposes, all per Rev. L.M.

Lochinver: D. & A. MacL., Strathconon £10, "where most needed" per M.K.G.

North Uist: A Friend, North Tolsta, £10 per Rev. A.M.

Portree: Anon., £10 for Foreign Mission; Anon., £8; Anon., £8, both for Door Coll., all by envelope in plate; Two Friends £25 for Sust. Fd.; Friend £5 Friend £10, both for door collections, last three per S.Y.M.

South Harris: Friend, Seilebost £50; Friend, Kinlulavaig £300, both per D. MacK.; Friend, Glen £20 per Rev. K.D.M.; Friend, Leachlee £30; Friend, Quidinish £10; Friend, Stornoway £50; Friend, Northon £20, last four Communion donations.

Staffin: Friend, Portree £10 for Sust. Fd. per Rev. A.M.C.; by envelope £10 for Sust. Fd., £5 for Door. Coll.

Stornoway: Miss K. A. Macleod, The Cottage, Callanish £10; Friend, Stockinish £10; Friend, Stockinish £20, all for Sust. Fund; all per Rev. J.M.; Anon., £5 for Comm. Exps.; Anon., £50 for Centenary Fund; Friend of the Cause, Breasclate £10, all per Church plate.