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AN ACCOUNT

OF THE

CONSECRATION OF ST MATTHEW'S CHURCH,  
OLD MELDRUM,

BY

THE RIGHT REV. THE BISHOP OF ABERDEEN,

ON ST MATTHEW'S DAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 1863;

WITH

AN ABSTRACT OF THE SERMON PREACHED ON THE OCCASION,  
BY THE MOST REV. THE BISHOP OF MORAY AND ROSS,  
PRIMUS OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN SCOTLAND.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

THE SERMON PREACHED ON THE AFTERNOON OF THE SAME DAY,  
BY THE REV. J. H. COOPER, M.A.,  
CURATE OF ST MARY MAGDALENE'S, BRIGHTON.

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EDINBURGH:

R. GRANT & SON, 54 PRINCES STREET.

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*[Any Profits from the Sale of this Pamphlet to be devoted to  
defraying the Debt on the Church.]*

AN ACCOUNT  
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[REPRINTED FROM THE "SCOTTISH ECCLESIASTICAL JOURNAL."]

ON Monday, September 21, being St Matthew's Day, this church was consecrated by the Right Rev. the Bishop of Aberdeen.

The church, which has been built nearly over the site of the former one, consists of nave, chancel, south porch, organ chamber, and vestry. The spire, containing the bell, rises to the height of 80 feet at the south-west corner of the nave. The dimensions of the nave are 50 feet by 25, of the chancel 26 feet by 16 feet. The style adopted is Early decorated, treated in a simple manner suited to the material. Externally the walls are of dressed granite in courses, relieved over the window openings by alternate blocks of black marble in the arches; the tracery and internal finishings are of freestone. The roofs, which are of high pitch, are covered with blue slate, and the ridges furnished with rich iron cresting, and the gables surmounted by crosses—those over the chancel, east end of nave and porch, being of stone, and that over the west end of nave, of iron, and is (as is also the vane) a good specimen of Skidmore's iron work. The porch is an open one with moulded arch resting on columns of

polished Peterhead red granite, contrasting well with the bright grey granite. These columns are the gift of Mr Rothnie, Old Meldrum, contractor for the mason work. The roofs are framed throughout with arched principal couples resting on carved stone corbels. The open benches are of varnished yellow pine. The pulpit, which is of red pine with traceried panels, is placed on the north side of the chancel arch. The chancel arch, effectively moulded, rests on four columns of Purbeck marble, with Caen stone bases and capitals, elaborately carved by Mr Forsyth of London. The corbels and other carving have been very creditably executed by local workmen. The chancel, which is raised a step above the nave, has been laid in beautiful designs with Minton's finest encaustic tiles, the risers of the two sanctuary steps forming the inscription, "We will go into his tabernacle, and fall low on our knees before his footstool." The choir stalls (the work of Messrs Cox, London) are of solid oak, highly finished, the ends being decorated with beautiful carvings of passion-flowers, lilies, &c., with the symbols of the four Evangelists below. On the south side are recessed into the wall the sedilia and piscina, arched with freestone mouldings. On a footpace, round which the tiles form the inscription, "I will wash my hands in innocency, O Lord, and so will I go to thine altar," stands the altar, of good dimensions, and of solid oak, divided into three panels, which was given to the former church by the Rev. George Walker, Incumbent of Belford, Northumberland. The altar is vested in an elaborately embroidered frontal, and the east wall and sedilia hung with rich damask hangings supplied by Messrs Jones & Willis, Birmingham. Under the chancel arch is

placed the lectern ; and at the west end of the nave, the font of Caen stone surmounted by a lofty canopy of oak. The font, as well as the altar, was in the old church. Provision has been made for lighting the church by brass candelabra on oak standards from the designs of Messrs Hardman. The church is heated by hot water—the apparatus being placed in a chamber for the purpose under the vestry, which is on the north side of the chancel, as is also a recess for the organ. The east window of three lights, with elaborate tracery, is filled with stained glass from the studio of Messrs Hardman, of Birmingham. The Crucifixion forms the subject of the centre light ; the Agony in the Garden, and the Resurrection, of the side lights—the tracery being filled with symbols of the Trinity. The subject of the glass in the window on the south side of the chancel is the Ascension. The nave is lighted by a west window of four lights, and seven single side lights with traceried heads of varied designs, which are filled with Powell's quarried glass. The west window contains one of the most successful works of Messrs Hardman, having for its subjects the four great types of Baptism—the Ark in the Deluge ; the Passage of the Red Sea ; the Stream flowing from the smitten Rock ; and the Washing of Naaman ; while the sexfoil above contains the Baptism of our Blessed Lord. This remarkable window was presented to the church in memory of the late Mrs Ramsay of Barra, by her father (the Rev. N. Bond, Rector of Steeple, Dorset, and Prebendary of Sarum) and other near relations. The nave was erected by subscription, chiefly from among the members of the congregation, the late Mr and Mrs Urquhart of Meldrum, in particular, being large contributors,



neither of them, nor Mrs Ramsay, having been spared to see the completion of a work, in which they had taken so deep an interest. The chancel has been built and decorated at the sole cost of Captain Ramsay, as a memorial to the late Mrs Ramsay, and a tablet of polished red granite beneath the east window, on the outside, bears the inscription, surrounding a floriated cross :—"In Honorem Dei, et in piam memoriam Leonoræ Sophiæ Ramsay, hujus Ecclesiæ cancellam fundavit Johannes Ramsay de Barra, A.S., MDCCCLXII." Her remains repose under a slab of Portland Purbeck stone in the churchyard, near the south wall of the nave. The whole work has been carried out from the designs of Messrs Ross and Joass, architects, of Inverness, and under their superintendence. Two handsomely bound copies of the altar services (containing both the Communion Offices of the Scottish Church) were presented by Miss Ramsay of Barra. The new wall of the churchyard was built at the expense of Mr Walker, farmer, Cuttlecraigs, Daviot, who has also been a liberal contributor to the building fund.

The church, on the morning of the consecration, was profusely and elegantly decorated with flowers and evergreens in wreaths round every arch and window, a large cross formed of heather being over the chancel arch. The candelabra were decked with ears of oats, box, and fuchsias; the outlines of the pulpit panels, and the front cover, &c., being effectively brought out in flowers.

There were present at the services—the Most Rev. the Bishop of Moray and Ross, Primus; the Bishop of the Diocese; the Dean of Aberdeen and the following Clergy of the Diocese :—Rev. W. Y. Moir, the



Incumbent; the Rev. J. Davidson, Banff (the late Incumbent); Rev. J. B. Pratt, Cruden; Rev. A. Ranken, Old Deer; Rev. W. Webster, New Pitsligo; Rev. A. Low, Longside; Rev. J. Christie, Turriff; Rev. James Smith, Forgue; Rev. W. Walker, Monymusk; Rev. A. Leslie, Meiklefolla; Rev. Dr Rorison, Peterhead; Rev. A. Harper, Inverury; Rev. J. Comper, St John's, Aberdeen; Rev. W. Temple, Cumines-town; Rev. N. K. M'Leod, Ellon; Rev. F. G. Lee, St Mary's, Aberdeen; Rev. J. Gammack, Tillymorgan; Rev. G. Akers; Rev. E. B. Pagnal and Rev. W. Low; also Rev. W. Nevins, Stonehaven, from the Diocese of Brechin; Rev. George Walker, Belford, Northumberland; and the Rev. J. H. Cooper, St Mary Magdalene's, Brighton. Amongst the laity present were—Mr Forbes Irvine of Drum (Convener of Aberdeenshire); Major Scott of Gala; Mr Mackenzie of Glack; Captain Ramsay of Barra; Mrs Fraser of Braelangwell; Mrs Grant of Druminnor; Mrs Nares, Danestown; Miss Ramsay of Barra; Mr A. F. Nares; Miss Urquhart of Meldrum; Miss C. Urquhart; Mr and Mrs Gordon Pirie; Dr Will, Aberdeen; Mr Bannerman Cumming; Mr Grub, advocate; Miss Cordiner; Provost Innes, Inverury, and Mrs Innes, &c., &c., besides the usual congregation, and many Presbyterians from the village and neighbourhood, who took a deep interest in the proceedings of the day. The church was crowded to excess. The hour of service was fixed at 10.45 A.M.

The Bishop of the Diocese, accompanied by the Primus, the Dean, and the Incumbent, first proceeded to the chancel, when the petition for consecration was presented by the Managers of the congregation, and read by N. Clyne, Esq., Registrar for the Diocese.

The Bishop having acceded to the prayer of the petition, the consecration services commenced by a procession of the bishops and clergy preceded by a surpliced choir (forty in all), up the nave, chanting the 24th Psalm. The Bishop having offered up the prayers appointed to be used in this service, signed the deed of consecration. The morning prayers were then read by the Incumbent and the Rev. J. Davidson; the lessons by the Revs. A. Harper and A. Leslie. The musical portions of the service, including the Psalms and the Creeds, were rendered most effective by the help of Mr C. Walker and other members of the choir of St John's, Aberdeen, who most kindly gave their services on the occasion. The anthem was "Blessed City, heavenly Salem," and the introit, "Christ is made the sure foundation." The Communion service was then said by the Bishop of the Diocese, the epistle being read by the Very Rev. the Dean, and the Gospel by the Right Rev. the Primus, who preached an eloquent and impressive sermon on St Luke xix. 45-46, "And He went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold therein and them that bought, saying unto them, It is written, My house is the house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves."

The Bishop commenced by pointing out, from our Lord's example in this instance, the way in which wise and well-directed zeal purifies and reforms whatever may be found amiss in the temple and worship of Almighty God;—that while, in long-suffering mercy, God endeavours, by the voices of his prophets and ministers, to stay the progress of irreverence and profanation, He will nevertheless at length arise to vindicate His own honour by allowing the spoiler to enter in. As when the prophets of old were unheeded by His people, He suffered the Assyrian to despoil

the “Holy and beautiful House” which Solomon had built, so again, when in His own day they heeded not His own gentle chastisement of the “scourge of small cords,” but sought to destroy Him for His holy zeal, in just but long-delayed judgment, He permitted “the abomination of desolation” to stand in the Holy Place, and delivered Zion and His Holy Temple into the hands of those who hated Him, who laid them even with the ground, and left not one stone upon another. The Bishop pointed to the remarkable fact, that in these instances it was not the zeal of Reformers, nor the hands of reverence which destroyed God’s Houses of Prayer, but those who were the enemies alike of God and His people, for that true piety and real reverence for everything that belongs to God ever go hand in hand. That the special lesson taught by our Divine Redeemer in the incident related in his text, was reverence for the House of God, because it was God’s house, His house of Prayer—the place consecrated to His worship.

He proceeded to point out how, from the very beginning, devotion and piety had set apart particular spots for the worship of the Omnipresent God ;—that the belief of His Omnipresence had never deterred His people from fixing upon special places where they might hold converse with Him. He instanced the altar which our first parents raised, and those which at different times and in different places the patriarchs built ; he then referred to the sanction which God gave to these acts which natural piety had prompted, by commanding the erection of the tabernacle in the wilderness, and which He was pleased Himself to declare to be the residence of His presence and glory ; and how this was afterwards followed by the building of Solomon’s temple, wherein He was pleased to fix a visible emblem of His Presence ;—unmistakable evidences these of an especial, even though unseen, presence of God Himself in a place which should be specially devoted to His worship and honour. Having shown from these instances how God himself not only sanctioned but approved the setting apart of places for His worship and service, and how He thus taught us that He condescended to be specially present in such dedicated spots, the bishop proceeded to point out how clearly God

had made known to us that He would not tolerate presumption and irreverence, because He was thus graciously pleased to condescend to our weaknesses and infirmities. He instanced, amongst others, as evidence of this, the solemn charge to Moses at the burning bush, "Come not nigh hither; put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place where thou standest is holy ground. I am the God of thy father," &c.; and, again, the awful charge to the people, when God came down upon Sinai, not to break through the barrier which Moses had raised, "to gaze," lest God "should break forth upon them, and many of them perish." But, he especially dwelt upon the provision made in the arrangement of the several courts of the temple of Solomon, calculated to impress all who should worship there with the deepest awe and reverence of the greatness and majesty of that Being, who would not permit any eye to behold even the faint emblem of His glory, which was enshrined in the holy of holies, save that of the high priest only, and to be seen by him once only in the year.

Having shown from these instances under the old dispensation, how offensive to Almighty God must be anything approaching to irreverence or familiarity in those who worshipped him, the bishop reminded his hearers that the God whom we worship is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever," and that although, through the mystery of the incarnation, He had come even nearer to us than He ever came to His people of old, yet that such condescension should in no way lessen our appreciation of His greatness and majesty, or our sense of the infinite distance between the high and holy One who inhabiteth eternity and the sinful beings whom He came to redeem, He said that nothing but want of faith could prevent those who should come to worship in the beautiful temple which had that day been solemnly dedicated to the service of Almighty God, from seeing Him who is invisible standing in their very midst, as really and truly as when He stood in the upper chamber at Jerusalem, ere He made Himself visible to His sorrowing disciples;—that the nearest approach which He vouchsafes to His redeemed here on earth is when he makes them partake of His own most precious Body and Blood—a nearness and com-



munion such as was never vouchsafed to those of old time—and which therefore demanded of all who should come to the holy Communion of His Body and Blood the very deepest reverence and devotion both of soul and body. He then cautioned his hearers against bringing into God's house of prayer thoughts of this world, its vanities and follies, as offensive to Him who searcheth the heart as was the presence of the tables of the money-changers in the temple to Him who drove them out with His "scourge of small cords;" and he concluded by reminding them of the necessity of always keeping pure and undefiled another temple in which God dwelt, viz., their own bodies, in which God the Holy Ghost had vouchsafed to come and dwell, remembering that as their bodies had become the temple of the Holy Ghost, so whoso should defile the temple of God, him would God destroy.

The offerings were then collected, and amounted to L.61, 2s. 10d., to which were added in the afternoon service, L.7, 14s. 9d., making the total offering of the day L.68, 17s. 7d. The holy Communion was then celebrated by the Bishop of Aberdeen, according to the Scotch Office.

At the conclusion of the service, the congregation adjourned to a large room in the town, kindly placed at their disposal by J. Manson, Esq., where an abundant luncheon was provided by the managers for the visitors and all the congregation. The Bishop of Aberdeen presided, and after drinking the Queen's health, proposed the Incumbent and Managers of St Matthew's, which was replied to by Captain Ramsay, who gave the toast of the Bishops and Clergy, acknowledged by the Primus in a speech, which was received with great enthusiasm.

The evening service commenced at a quarter to four o'clock, when the Bishops, and Clergy, and Choir entered the church, chanting Psalm xcix. The

prayers were read by the Rev. N. M'Leod and the Rev. James Smith; the lessons by the Revs. W. Webster and A. Ranken. The hymns sung were—"To thee, O dear, dear country," "Christ is made the sure Foundation," and "Jerusalem the Golden." A deeply devotional and impressive sermon was preached by the Rev. J. H. Cooper, of St Mary Magdalene's, Brighton, from Rev. iii. 8, in which reference was made to the present hopeful prospect of the Church in Scotland, and to the particular circumstances of this new sanctuary of God.



## S E R M O N.

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“ Behold I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it; for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word.—  
REV. iii. 8.

WHO opens this door but He who, “ when He had overcome the sharpness of death opened the kingdom of Heaven to all believers?” It is the incarnate Son of God who has set before us an open door—“ a door opened in Heaven.” By the mystery of His incarnation, by His cross and passion, has He prepared the way and unclosed the door through which men can enter into the presence of God, and sinners have an eternal place in the company of unfallen angels. It is His doing, the fruit of His sufferings: at His “ It is finished,” the veil was rent in twain which had hung so long before the mercy-seat of God, and we now “ enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way;” henceforth, after He had wrested the keys of palace and of prison, of hell and of Heaven, from the mighty one who had erst the power of death, and had tempted men to close the heavenly portal against themselves, He proclaims Himself as being “ He that openeth and no man shutteth;” or, yet more forcibly, as He tells of the pathway which His example and death have prepared for us, or of the gates which rolled back before Him at His ascension, He can say, “ I am the Way,” and “ I am the Door, by Me, if any man will enter in he shall be saved.”

This, then, is the door set open before the Church—the way of salvation through the Cross of Christ, the “ access to the Father through the Spirit” by the Son, and ever since that “ door was opened in Heaven,” Father, Son, and Spirit call to us, “ Come up hither;” the door of approach to

the glory and peace of God's house ever stands open, "its gates shall be open continually, they shall not be shut day nor night," for though the wickedness of men would force them back again, yet the pleadings of an Advocate suffer them not to close, and the prayers and Eucharists of the Church are ever entering there, and the blessings and mercies of God ever proceeding forth on their way to minister in this earth of ours.

Thus the never-failing virtue of the Blood once sprinkled on the door-posts keeps the way clear for our approach, and the veil which the Cross once rent in twain never again closes the path to the throne of grace. "Behold I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it." Do we realise these words as spoken to each one of us? Do we realise that "the way which leadeth unto life" is before *us*; that the kingdom of Heaven is opened to *us*; that it is our own fault if the brightness which streams through the everlasting doors from the Face of God does not shine on our path here, aye, "more and more," as time bears us nearer and nearer, "till the perfect day," which has no night, dawns upon us, and we have entered into the joy of our Lord? If so, are our lives a pressing on to Heaven, our affections set on things above; are we using this fleeting world simply as a pathway to that which fadeth not away, making our work and pleasures, our hopes and aims, our trials and falls, but so many steps upward to the door which a Saviour has opened to us, which the Spirit and the Bride are ever calling us to enter, and through which pours down on us the glory and love of the eternal Father?

But there is another use of this metaphor occurring, especially in the writings of St Paul, to which, also, reference is doubtless made in our text, not merely as implying the access to all gospel privileges given to the Church at large through the death of Christ, but as implying some fresh opportunity of making known that good news to others, and bringing them also with ourselves to tread that path and enter the gates of the daughter of Sion. (Acts xiv. 27; 1 Cor. xvi. 9; Col. iv. 3.) He who has the keys of death and Heaven has the key of the human heart, and that He

alone opens to attend to the things spoken by His Church. All might be saved ; the door set open in Heaven is wide enough for the whole race of men, and our Father's house is prepared to entertain them all ; but there are those who have greater opportunities than others, to whom the way is pointed out more distinctly, so that they cannot err, and to whom are given more and greater helps to attain the "door opened in Heaven." In our text, then, allusion is made to the special opportunity offered to the Church of Philadelphia of promoting the conversion of those who were then her enemies, and bringing them to know the love of Christ, and to feel the power of His cross. And, further, it would seem that this privilege was offered as an encouragement deserved (if I may so speak) by the Church's great faithfulness, energy, and present trials. "I know thy works : thou hast a little strength, and hast kept My Word." The believers to whom Christ had opened the kingdom of heaven, had laboured in the faith of Him who laboured for them, "by the innocency of their lives, and constancy of their faith even unto death," they had glorified His name, and now He would have them glorify it still more, and greater opportunities of promoting His glory were to be given them. Moreover, they were depressed outwardly, little in numbers, in wealth, in power. Yet "the little one should become a thousand, and a small one a great nation." Yet they were to learn that inwardly they were strong, rich in Christ, powerful in heaven, doing a great work for God upon earth ; and though their strength seemed, and was, "little," in His strength they would do great things. So very often it has been, and is, that before a Church "little" in the numbers, and wealth, and power of its congregations, a Church persecuted and depressed, the Lord sets an open door, which He will make "great and effectual" to the increase of His kingdom. Remember, however, that first He would "know our works," know that we are labouring for Him, that through much weakness and trial we have kept His Word, through much temptation and persecution we have not denied His name ; and, further, remember that our strength must not be our own, but His : little of strength ourselves, yet mighty through Him ; not murmuring or cast down,

because we are poor and without influence in the world, but rejoicing that His strength is sufficient for us, and that however the world may despise, He knows our works. Seek for strength in holiness of life, and simple clinging to the Christian faith, which unites us with God and perfects our weakness in His strength. Seek for it in brotherly love, in the mutual help and comfort the one ought to have of the other, in binding ourselves together with the cords of Christ's Divine charity, for "union is strength." Seek for it in the self-denial, large-heartedness, and almsgiving, which gives not grudgingly, or as we can afford, but plenteously, as to God Himself, for the support of His ministry, the beauty of His sanctuary, the relief of His poor, the comforting of His sick, the teaching of His children. In such giving up of will and substance, such self-forgetting charity, offered in union with the self-denial and love of Christ Jesus, lies the strength of His Church.

May God give of such strength to His Church in Scotland; for indeed who can tell, as he looks upon the movement which is working in the minds of those who are without, the dissatisfaction every day more clearly felt with the husks on which sectarianism feeds her starving children, the cravings after what will alone answer the longings God has implanted in men's hearts, and which the Church, as the means of union between the creature and the Creator, the sinner and the Saviour, alone can supply—who can tell as he looks further, and sees the longing after unity now stirring the hearts of Christians throughout the world, and reflects on the influence of your Eucharistic office as one remaining link of that close communion which bound us to the Churches of the East—who can tell what work God may not mean Scotland's Church to do in bringing back her sons to the faith of their fathers, and in obtaining for the whole Church that unity which is agreeable to His will? Surely this fair house, which your self-denying piety offers to God to-day, is a sign that God has heard the prayers for this Vine and turns again to visit it with His favour; that some spark of the ancient spirit which built Dunblane and rebuilt Elgin is rekindled amongst us, and the ancient hills of Aberdeenshire shall rejoice to echo again the old



chaunts and hymns as the old churches rise again from their ruins twice as fair as before. Once more shall it be said, "The glory of the latter house shall be greater than of the former;" greater in the purity of its faith, the devotion of its worship, the union of its children, in one word, in the manifestation of the presence of its Lord. But wherein does your strength lie? Not in disputes, however sincerely opened and zealously maintained, but in quietness and confidence; not in newspaper controversies, but in so acting and teaching, that the flock be "our epistle, known and read of all men;" not in courting the favour of the strong, or the politician, by the surrender of national traditions and peculiarities, but by holding fast the creeds and preserving the rights of national churches. May Scotland be first herself the Philadelphia of these days,—the city of brotherly love, "at unity in itself," and then may she have the old Philadelphian blessing,—"I know thy works: behold I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word. I will make thine enemies to worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee."

May we not venture to blend these two meanings of our text,—the use which Christ Himself made of this metaphor, and the one St Paul so often makes of it,—in that service which has brought us here to-day? We have come to witness the consecration to God of this church which your love has built in such order and beauty, and to which many even afar off have gladly given of their alms and prayers—happy token in this controversial age of the communion of saints, and the care of the members of Christ for one another. May we not recognise in this festival of yours the opening of a door which, if we use it aright, may be to us the door of heaven, as its worship trains us for, and its ordinances help us to, heaven, and which also affords a fresh opportunity of spreading the gospel of Christ?

In an especial manner is a church the door of heaven. When first a spot on earth was consecrated by simple ritual to be the house of God, the patriarch was permitted to see there "a ladder set up on the earth and the top of it

reached to heaven, and behold the angels of God ascending and descending upon it ;” and he said, “ this is none other but the house of God, this is the gate of heaven ;” not merely a type of heaven in its speaking beauty, its holy quiet, its loving adoration ; not merely the outer court where stand awe-struck worshippers, to prepare themselves for closer approach, but the door of heaven itself—the very threshold of God’s eternal dwelling-place, through which the angels are ever passing, “ ascending and descending upon the Son of Man,” *i.e.*, through the merits and in the virtue of the sacred Humanity of Christ, bearing up in their hands the prayers and praises, the offerings and Eucharists, of the Church, and bringing down the gifts and blessings which ever flow from the right Hand of God,—forgiveness to the penitent ; comfort to the sorrowful ; sympathy to the weary ; strength to the weak ; food—the bread of heaven—to the hungry ; and drink—the water of life—to the thirsty. Here, actually in this place, “ with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify the glorious name ;” and, above all, presenting our worship—poor, imperfect, and unworthy though our very best—in union with the perfect prayers and perfect sacrifice of Jesus, which alone can give any value to ours ; here we are overshadowed by the near presence of the Most High, Whom we have so solemnly invoked and prayed to come amongst us this day ; Who has promised to be in the midst of any, however few, gathered together in His name ; Who has promised that His Spirit shall move upon the waters of that font and consecrate our children into precious temples of His presence ; Who has promised that the bread which we break shall be the communion of His Body, and the cup which we bless the communion of His Blood.

And therefore it is because this church you have given to God to-day is not a place for men to meet in or to preach in, but because it is God’s house which He permits us to build for Him to dwell in, because we come to meet Him, and offer Him our best worship, that we consecrate art, and skill, and industry, by making them minister to God, and bring together marbles and costly stones, carvings



of wood and of stone, the excellent work of the potter and the smith, the varied hues and skilful drawings in glass to adorn the place of His sanctuary and make it glorious. Were this not our firm belief, all costliness and decoration would be thrown away, and the finest church be but an architectural curiosity, or a religious picture gallery. But as we know this is the threshold of that glorious temple which St John was permitted to enter further, and which he has told us is all glorious with colour and beauty of form, with precious stones and gold, we, as best we can, would make our churches after the pattern which St John saw above. It is your privilege here, through the pious care of some who have received those tokens of God's love, we sometimes call bereavements (but which I should rather call the transferring of our dear ones to the bosom of God, that He may guard them and care for them the better,) to have in your church works of the painter on glass which are not only by the richness and brilliancy of their colouring, and beauty of their design, well fitted to be ornaments of the Lord's house, but are also full of instruction to yourselves and your children. One,\* for instance, teaches us what the Bible has revealed about Baptism, how by it we enter the ark of Christ's Church, which, if we remain therein, will bear us safe over the waves and the storms of this troublesome life; how it delivers us from the land of bondage, and sets us out in our journey through the wilderness of this world to the heavenly Canaan, with our old enemies "dead on the sea-shore," and the pillar of God's Spirit to lead us onward in the right way; how "He smote the stony rock that the water gushed out and the streams flowed withal," to show that the blessings of Baptism will follow us all our journey through; and how, without asking us to do some great thing, God bids us wash in the spiritual Jordan, and be clean from the leprosy of sin. And, lastly, how all these types of Baptism had their fulfilment in that Baptism of our dear Lord's, in which He sanctified water to the mystical washing away of sin, and as on Him, so no less on our little ones, descends the Holy Ghost, and the voice of the Father proclaims with joy the birth of another child

\* See page 5.

of His, in whom, thus washed in His Son's blood He is well pleased.

Again, we have pictured before our eyes that great event, from which alone Baptism, or any other ordinance, has any efficacy ; that which is the centre of our faith, the source of our hopes, the spring of our love—the crucifixion of our Lord Jesus Christ—so that if it were possible that in after ages the doctrine of the Atonement were obscured in this pulpit, it will stand out unmistakeably in that window. And on the one side the Agony in the garden warns us to watch and pray against temptation, and opens a door of comfort in the real sympathy of Him who has tasted our cup of sorrow and pain ere He gave it to us ; and, on the other, the Resurrection of Him who has the keys of death and Hades opens “ a door of hope ” in the confidence we have that the grave has no power over us or ours, that our own beloved wait awhile for us till our trial is over and done. And then the Ascension teaches us that we with them shall “ sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus,” and invites us even now to “ ascend thither in heart and mind.”

Thus, on the fairest portion of your church is shed the soft light of the memory of one whom God so loved, that He has taken early to Himself ; and the polished granite\* shows so quietly how that memory is sanctified to God's honour by the Cross. May God grant that the seed thus sown in tears may, through His blessing, bear rich fruit in the comfort, and peace, and holy hope which this sanctuary shall bring to you and your children after you.

“ The green blades will rise the quicker,  
Perchance for the tears you weep.”

As with a Church, so with individuals ; it depends on ourselves whether we so use this open door that it indeed bring us to heaven, or whether, in our carelessness and neglect we just glance in, but approach no nearer to the glories of the “ House eternal in the Heavens.” Our feet stayed at the threshold, our eyes seeing something of “ The King in His beauty ; ” yet we enter only so far that when the door is shut we are left in the outer darkness. Let us see,

\* See page 6.

then, that when we "come up hither," we are "in the Spirit," under His sanctifying influence; that we draw nigh with holy fear, behaving as if we were, as indeed we really are, at the open door of heaven, reverencing the majesty of that God before whose throne we bend, remembering the love of the Son who has opened that door to us, yielding to the gracious drawing of the Spirit who invites us hither and inspires our prayers, feeling the presence about us of the angels who wait to carry up our worship to their Lord and ours. Let every sinful imagination of the heart be left without; here let all covetous, uncharitable, impure thoughts have no place, but may our souls be filled with love to God and love to all others in Him. For oh! if we fail, how are we reproached by the inanimate creatures around us; if we hold our peace, would not "the stone cry out of the wall" against us, "and the beam out of the timber answer it?" See here how day and night in their places they declare the glory of God; "there is neither speech nor language, yet surely their voices are heard among us;" they tell us how "by many a blow and biting sculpture," they were shaped and fitted for their places, and so shall the living stones of the heavenly Jerusalem be prepared for their places there by the sharp chiselling of sorrow. Some silently preach of Christ as they hold up His cross above us; some, bearing undecaying flowers and leaves which never fall, bid us bring forth blossoms and fruit which bloom and ripen in all seasons; and there are windows which, in rich colouring, picture to us the love of Jesus in His Passion, the victory of Jesus in His Resurrection and Ascension, and bid us bear those scenes deep graven in our hearts. Aye, and each little stone in these walls, humble and unnoticed, doing its part in supporting and beautifying the place of His sanctuary, is an example to us of how we should do our duty each in our respective position, each in that station of life to which God has called him or her. None too little or too lowly, but that we have our part in rearing and adorning the spiritual temple.

Pray we, then, that if there come into this Church any whose sins are open beforehand, or any bound in the chain of secret sin, their souls may be melted at the sight of their

Saviour's cross, may clasp those torn and wounded Feet in penitence and self-abasement, and be washed with the cleansing stream of that precious Blood.

If there come in any who are yet unrecking of heaven, or full of earth's cares or earth's pleasures, may their eyes be lifted up to their ascending Lord, and their hearts moved to follow Him, to live *for* Him here as St Matthew, and to live *with* Him hereafter.

If there enter these walls any who are at variance, may they forgive as they would be forgiven, and love as they would be loved. May they open the door of mercy and charity to one another, as they hope to have it open for themselves.

If there come in here any of the children of sorrow, to them in their solitude and trial, as to St John in Patmos, may a door be opened in heaven which shall draw them to resign what most they prize, to suffer what they most dread, in union with the resignation and passion of Jesus, and kneeling before that altar, to say with Him and through Him, "Not my will but thine be done."

If there come in here any who, through their sins, or their love of the world, or their lack of charity, or their unblest sorrows, are strangers to the strength and comfort of that altar; may they be moved at once to prepare themselves for its heavenly feast; may they in repentance, and faith, and love, seek and find the blessings of their Saviour's death there given.

I have said nothing, and will say nothing, about your collection this afternoon; for I know that if you feel the truth of what I have said; if you feel that to-day we have seen a fresh token of God's care for this ancient Church of Scotland; that to day have been set before us fresh opportunities of working out our own salvation, and that of those around us; that the sad memories which will ever linger round this Chancel have some responsive echoes in your own breasts; if you feel that it is unworthy of a Christian, for whom Jesus gave up His life, to leave His house unfinished, while your own is complete and furnished, you will do all you can, more than you can afford, to wipe off this debt, and seek God's blessing on yourselves

and your families, by giving to Him as He has given to you.

“ Prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it; and all nations shall call you blessed, for ye shall be a delightful land, saith the Lord of Hosts.”  
(Mal. iii. 10, 12.)

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