Irish Church Quarterly

The Ministry of Dr. John Macleod in the Parish of Govan by Roger S. Kirkpatrick

Review by: R. K. Hanna

The Irish Church Quarterly, Vol. 9, No. 35 (Jul., 1916), pp. 240-243

Published by: [Irish Church Quarterly](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30067649>

Accessed: 13/06/2014 10:32

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at
<http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Irish Church Quarterly is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Irish Church Quarterly*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

true that "two mites make a farthing." These slight blemishes are referred to only because a second edition of so excellent a book is sure to be called for; careful revision would banish them.

It is impossible here to give specimens of Archdeacon Allen's notes, but attention may be called to the instructive dissertations on "the alleged 'little Apocalypse' in St. Mark xiii," on the chronology of Mk. xvi. 1, 2, and on the meaning of *σκανδαλίζω* which the Editor translates "ensnare." The volume is supplied with a good, and not overcrowded, map.

H. J. LAWLOR.

THE MINISTRY OF DR. JOHN MACLEOD IN THE PARISH OF GOVAN. By Roger S. Kirkpatrick, B.D. (Blackwood and Sons.) 2s. net.

This very readable book was originally composed as a Lecture—the seventh Macleod Memorial Lecture, was delivered as such in Oatlands Parish Church 14th December, 1913, and was subsequently expanded by the author into its present form. The Rev. Roger S. Kirkpatrick, Minister at Yarrow, was an assistant in Govan Parish Church during the ministry of Dr. John Macleod, and writes not only with skill and knowledge, but with a sincere admiration and deep affection for his subject.

The title of the book indicates a limited theme. The life of Dr. John Macleod, his ministry as a whole, his place and part in the general activities of the Church of Scotland, his convictions and teaching, his character and personality, are not dealt with, save in a casual way, in this volume. The subject before the author is Dr. Macleod's ministry in Govan Parish, and as a record of one of the most fruitful and remarkable ministries in the annals of the Church of Scotland, the book is a marked success. There are only three chapters (so that a danger is avoided that besets many recent biographies—the danger of undue length; the first chapter, from Dr. Macleod's induction to the dedication of the new parish church; the second, the new church; the third, from the dedication of the church to Dr. Macleod's death. In the Appendix there is a mass of valuable information concerning Dr. Macleod's ministry, but as its main interest lies for those who had a personal acquaintance with the Parish and the Parish Minister, it is, we think, wisely relegated to an Appendix.

Govan is a suburb of Glasgow, and the increase of the population during the latter half of the 19th century was, perhaps, unprecedented in Britain. From a country village, Govan increased by thousands and tens of thousands every decade, until it became a city of more than a quarter of a million people. Such a transformation brought with it social, religious, and ecclesiastical problems. The circumstances clamoured for vigorous initia-

tive and an administrator of exceptional power, and beyond all question a man in whom these qualities resided to an unusual degree was found in Dr. John Macleod.

The Church of Scotland is Presbyterian, so is the United Free Church; between them the two Churches contain an overwhelming majority of the people of Scotland. Both Churches did their part in meeting the exceptional situation at Govan, but it is with the Church of Scotland movement we are primarily concerned.

Dr. John Macleod was thirty-five years of age when he was inducted to the parish and church of Govan, and his ministry lasted for twenty-three years. In Archbishop Laud's diary we find a record of, "twenty-one things which I have projected to do if God bless me in them," and to fifteen of these he had been able to add his emphatic "done" before his fall. John Macleod's ministry is a record of things projected and done before his death in August, 1898.

As a preacher, Dr. Macleod does not rank among the historic names of his Church. Since the days of John Knox, Scotch Presbyterianism has been rich in preachers. No one would claim for John Macleod a place among the chosen few. But he was the master of a splendid and commanding eloquence, and in his preaching there was, we are told, a contact with the invisible and eternal, which made men conscious that it was a message coming from behind the veil. "Some preachers prepare *their* sermons; others prepare themselves," is a saying which Dr. Macleod commended to the consideration of young ministers, and to which he certainly gave heed himself.

As a parish minister, Dr. Macleod magnified his office. From the very first he took up the whole burden, and he bore it to the end. "A Parish Minister," he said, "is the servant, not of a congregation only, but of the parish. If I could suppose a case to arise in which my duty to the parish would seem to come into collision with my duty to the congregation, I would have to regard the former as having the prior claim." Like St. Paul, his labours were most abundant. From the beginning of the week until its close, from morning until late at night, every day—every hour—was a battle of engagements. His afternoons, unless broken in upon by business and by meetings in town, were generally spent in direct pastoral work. It used to be maintained by Dr. Chalmers that every minister should pervade his parish. Certainly Dr. Macleod pervaded Govan. He regarded visiting as the primary duty of a faithful pastor.

The building of the new church naturally comes under his work as a Parish Minister. It was the result of many years of thought, prayer and toil. The old building which had served a country village was not suited for the requirements of a big city, and Dr. Macleod faced the situation with characteristic courage. In

Scotland the building of parish churches is done by the heritors. These heritors are the owners of land in a parish liable to public burdens. And one of these burdens is to repair the parish church and manse, or rebuild them when necessary. The new church cost about £27,000. The whole group of church buildings which Dr. Macleod erected demanded resources of about £47,000. Yet to avoid the risk of disagreement and to reserve a fuller measure of independence, Dr. Macleod and his Kirk-Session bound themselves not to ask for any assessment from the heritors, and raised this extra sum by voluntary contributions. It is perhaps enough to say that on the 14th January, 1890, in a letter to parishioners, Dr. Macleod was able to announce the extinction of all debt. The Church itself was admittedly the most notable erected in Scotland since the Reformation. It was as Dr. Macleod had intended a great church, free to all (there were no seat rents of any kind), and open always. A church (1) "which should witness by its teaching to the full and un mutilated Creed, (2) in which should be celebrated systematically with understanding, dignity, and joy, the Sacraments of the Faith, and the Offices of Public Worship, (3) which should become at once the glowing focus and the perennial fountain of active Christian life and manifold good works."

But it was as a great Presbyterian Churchman that Dr. Macleod most profoundly influenced the Church life of his times. He was pre-eminently the High-Churchman of Scotland. "There is," he used frequently to say, "nothing which I long more to see than an alliance between Evangelical and Sacramental teaching. It is well to lead men to Christ the Sacrifice on the Cross, but having done that let us lead men also to Christ the Bread of Life." He considered the restoration of the Eucharist to its right position as the central and distinctive feature of Christian devotion to be the reform immediately required in Scottish Worship. We find, accordingly, half-yearly Communion giving place in Govan to Communion four times a year; four times to six; six times to monthly; and this frequency was further augmented by additional celebrations.

Another development in Worship introduced by Dr. Macleod was the observance of the Christian year. In recent years this recognition in its main features has become quite common in Scotland, but here, as elsewhere, Dr. Macleod was a pioneer.

It was, however, as the principal founder and resolute leader of the Scottish Church Society—a society formed in 1892 to defend and advance Catholic doctrine as set forth in the ancient creeds, and embodied in the Standards of the Church of Scotland—that Dr. Macleod became most widely known. This Society encountered much suspicion at first, and has never been a smooth avenue to preferment. But that it has exercised a large and

leavening influence on Presbyterians not only in Scotland, but throughout the world, few, we imagine, would now deny.

At the present moment the situation in Scotland is exceedingly interesting. A union between the Church of Scotland and the United Free Church had been under consideration for some years. The War has, we imagine, brought it nearer. It would not have been Dr. Macleod's solution of the position. But while most Presbyterians outside Scotland long to see this union completed, they cannot and do not withhold their admiration from this big-hearted, big-handed Christian minister. "He never did the little easy things with which small men are content. He did great things and did them greatly." And his name and his work and his memory will be long treasured, not only in Govan, but throughout the Church as that of a faithful minister of the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ.

R. K. HANNA.

PESSIMISM AND LOVE IN ECCLESIASTES AND THE SONG OF SONGS. With translations from the same. By David Russell Scott, M.A. (James Clarke.) 3s. 6d. net.

This is the first volume in "The Humanism of the Bible" Series, the aim of which "is to set forth the human experience that underlies and is reflected in the Bible." It is, we think, a fortunate coincidence that this series should commence with a volume on *Ecclesiastes* and *The Song of Songs*, for no other two books in the Bible need more to be viewed as human documents with a human background. Since the day that they were first admitted into the Sacred Canon, they must often have prayed to be delivered from their friends, who have caused them to masquerade in a pious garb which makes the brutal common-sense of the 20th century smile.

Mr. Scott has done his work well and attractively. His book is not intended primarily for the scholar or the theologian, and it is written in a popular, unstilted and sometimes humorous style, yet he is frequently original and provocative of thought. He finds in *Ecclesiastes* the four standpoints of a consistent pessimist, a consistent hedonist, a consistent deist and a consistent sophist. The integrity of the book is denied on the ground of these varying standpoints, we venture to think, rather summarily, although it is suggested that the Pessimist may have acted the part of compiler, and brought the book into its present form.

No detailed exegesis is, of course, attempted in a volume of this kind, but the various sections are treated discursively, and a suitable antidote provided for the poison of the Preacher. Mr. Scott has, obviously, no difficulty in shewing how far Koheleth