

THE BAPTISTRY

**The Revd Tom Davidson Kelly, MA BD
(Minister of Govan Old)**

From the birth of the Friends (. . . of Govan Old . . .) in 1990 the fully restored Baptistry has been seen as the kernel of our Ministry to Visitors. As we were planning how best to use the limited space in the Baptistry as an exhibition area, legacies and donations to restore the Shrigley & Hunt stained glass windows began to come in. These windows are part of the window scheme in which Dr John Macleod was involved at every stage, apart from the installation only months after his death in August 1898. These 7 windows encourage reflection on the significance of the Incarnation and the meaning of Christian Baptism.

The first act of vandalism to the Baptistry was recorded in the Kirk Session minute for 5th June 1900:

Mr Black [an Elder] intimated that the damaged windows in the Baptistry had been repaired by the Insurance Company.

We optimistically finished "The Stained Glass Windows of Govan Old Parish Church" with these words:

By 1990 the windows have become dirty and damaged. Hopefully, soon it will be possible to begin a programme of conservation, and where (as in the Baptistry) too much of the original glass has been lost, restoration.

Stained Glass Design Partnership had submitted a report on the Baptistry windows as early as 1990. By the time the First Annual Report was distributed in March 1991, sufficient funds were available to conserve the 5 more complete windows. Local showmen, and in particular the Stringfellow family, helped mount the First Govan Easter Carnival. Over £2,000 was gifted to Govan Old Parish Church to distribute among 7 other local charities. The Church's share and a couple of donations later, and we could afford to have the Elizabeth remade. You have just read the story of how Susan Bradbury and Paul Lucky and their team tackled the whole project. Meantime our own fabric team had prepared the six window openings for backlighting, and made the frames for them, using a template provided by Stained Glass Design Partnership. Minister and Architect were given the arduous task of devising the inscription recording the project.

The rededication service, which was used as an opportunity for church members to rededicate themselves, was held on Sunday, June 9th 1991. The Minister was assisted by two Friends, The Reverend Charles Inglis, formerly Minister of our daughter church of St Bride's in Partick, and The Reverend David Keddle, a member of council. The Senior Vice-President offered the windows back to the congregation, using the following words:

Reverend Sir,

On behalf of the Society of Friends of Govan Old, I invite you to receive back these six stained glass windows beautifully restored through the skills of the Stained Glass Design Partnership, Kilmaurs.

The inscription added to the base of the St Elizabeth window reads:

TO THE GLORY OF GOD AND IN MEMORY OF
CATHERINE MACAULEY, ALISTAIR McCURRONE PHYSICIAN,
and LESLIE BURNS SHOWMAN.
AS AN EXPRESSION OF THE DEVOTION OF THESE
AND OTHER FRIENDS, INCLUDING THE FIRST GOVAN EASTER CARNIVAL,
THESE SIX WINDOWS WERE RESTORED
AND REDEDICATED ON 9th JUNE 1991.

After rededicating the windows the Minister offered prayer as follows:

Most glorious God of our Fathers,

We give you our thanks for all those who first beautified this Baptistry:
Minister, Artists, Craftsmen and Benefactors.

We give you our thanks for the skills of Artists and Craftsmen today,
and for the generosity of Friends in life and in death,
who have caused light to shine from these windows once more.
Inspire us with the eternal truth of the Incarnation of your Son.

May these windows lead us to grasp more firmly
the truth of the Word made flesh, full of grace to help us,
and your divine truth to guide us:

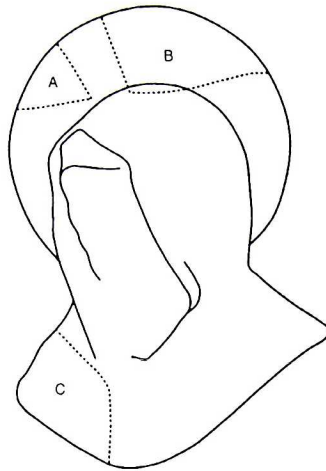
through Jesus Christ, born at Bethlehem to fill us with your divine life.

AMEN.

The Baptised members of the Congregation rededicated themselves, saying:
Let us rededicate ourselves to God our Father,
and recommit ourselves to serving our neighbours
and visitors to this ancient place of worship.

The next stage will be the conversion of the Baptistry to accommodate a permanent exhibition telling the history of the Christian centuries (including the present !) in Govan Parish.

Outline of the head of St Elizabeth



The dotted lines show the positions of the three existing fragments of the original head.

A & B confirmed the halo design.

C confirmed that by using the evidence from the Stockport window we had the correct pattern of drapery folds in the veil.

- 1 'Works', 321
- 2 Ezek.xli.22; Hebrews xiii.10; Malachi i.7; I Cor. x. 21
- 3 "Altar" 'Cath. Enc,' Vol. I
- 4 At St Michael's Church, Dumfries, so late as 1867, shortbread stamped with a cross was displaced at Holy Communion by ordinary bread.
- 5 Calderwood speaks of Benediction as a rite without which the Sacrament is invalid. '*Altare Damascenum*,' 520.
- 6 Vide Art. on Pigments in "Rosslyn Missal" and a Celtic Psalter. Principal AP Laurie, MA DSc, 'Soc. Ant. Scot,' Vol.IX
- 7 Archaic term for posture at Holy Communion. Calderwood refers to the Benedictines as receiving sitting on Maundy Thursday. At the Hampton Court Conference King James spoke of "ambling Communion." 'Barlow Hist.,' 177
- 8 Originally bread contributed by the faithful for use in the Holy Communion and, so far as not required for consecration, distributed after Service to non-communicants.
- 9 Ridley denounces holy bread as a superstitious practice prevalent in London in 1550. 'Works,' 320
- 10 Ps xxix. 9, last clause
- 11 Eg., Reg. Ep. Aberdeen, 27
- 12 'Ritual of the Church of Scotland,' 343
- 13 'Kelso Presb. Reg.'
- 14 Sacramental Directory.
- 15 Plumtre's 'Life of Ken,' i. 37.
- 16 'St Andrew's Reg.,' I. 471
- 17 'Offices for Occasional Use,' by W H Macleod, BA BD, Glasgow, 1927
- 18 *anakeimenos*, St John 13:23
- 19 Vide 'Matthew Leishman of Govan.' App. C.
- 20 [In Mansfield College's, [Oxford], Library, resides a doctoral thesis on the 'Common Cup'. From the outset it is stated that the innovation of 'individual' (sic) "communion cups" was the result of the inventiveness of a Birmingham glass manufacturer in 1902/1903. [Ed. TGL]
- 21 The caveats of the Deliverance (1909) must not be overlooked:

"The General Assembly see no sufficient reason for departing from the ancient and uniform practice of the Church in the administration of the Lord's Supper, - so expressive and solemn, and endeared by the hallowed associations of centuries; they do not feel justified in forbidding . . . much as they regret the introduction of a practice so novel and in many respects so undesirable. The General Assembly . . . charge ministers and Presbyteries to see that the harmony and peace of congregations are not disturbed, and that those who desire it shall always have as convenient means and opportunity of partaking in the manner heretofore in use."
- 22 For detailed description of both churches, vide 'Scot. Ecc. Soc. Trans.,' 1909-10, also 1914-15.
- 23 Scott's 'History of Scots Reformers,' 191.
- 24 Vide 'Hymns and Songs of the Church,' by George Wither (1621), who styles himself "a Catholic Christian."
- 25 Letter penes me from Archbishop Germanos.
- 26 Act of recollection and penitence. In the Eastern Churches the Consecrated Elements are administered together to the communicants in a spoon. In the French Church where "they receive passing or giving" they "first make a lowly cringe or courtesy [sic] before they take it on their hands. Vide Hammond, 'Directory,' 22.