

Eve Of Assembly Pictures



The Lord Provost, Magistrates, and city officials (above) photographed at the City Chambers last night before leaving for the Palace of Holyroodhouse to present the City Keys. Left to right—Lord Provost Sir James Miller; Mr A. L. Imrie, City Chamberlain; Bailies D. Matthews, F. H. N. Walker, Mr K. M. Cameron, and Lord Dean of Guild Watherston. On the left — The Lord High Commissioner, the Duke of Hamilton, and the Duchess. ("News" photos.)

CORONATION YEAR INSPIRATION

Duke Of Hamilton Calls Church Laity To Action

Assembly Hears Plea For Youth Leadership

The need for lay members to take a greater share in the work of the Church in order to combat anti-Christian forces was emphasised by the Duke of Hamilton in his opening address as Lord High Commissioner to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in Edinburgh to-day.

The Duke said that he had been commanded by the Queen to assure the Assembly of her Majesty's great sense of their steady and firm zeal for her service, and of her resolution to maintain Presbyterian Government in Scotland.

After congratulating the Moderator, the Right Rev. Professor J. Pitt Watson, Glasgow, on his election to the historic chair of the Assembly, the Duke recalled that it was in darker days and more turbulent times that his own forebear held the King's Commission at the historic Glasgow Assembly of 1638.

"I count myself fortunate indeed that I cannot be faced with his problems," said his Grace. "Since these times the Church of Scotland has weathered many storms and survived turmoil and persecution. Now, with strength of purpose and harmony of spirit, we face a future full of hope, conscious that this Assembly, too, is historic, albeit in a happier sense; for we meet to-day on the eve of the Coronation and at the dawn of a new reign."

Young In Heart

The Lord High Commissioner went on to say that at this time, as they prepared to glory in traditions and ceremonies of the past, and in the ancient splendour they evoked, they must surely, too, have a sense that the nation was yet young in heart.

"This feeling," he said, "will find expression in vivid reality when her Majesty, who is herself so young in years, drives to her Coronation amid all the forms and pageantry of bygone centuries. On that day of consecration in which we all shall join it will be her simple faith and her devotion to her people that will be the inspiration of us all."

In Scotland they rejoiced that the Moderator had been called on to play so symbolic and significant a part in the Coronation ceremonies. In the presentation of the Bible to her Majesty, the historic and resolute devotion of their Church to the sacred authority of the Holy Word as its life and light was, in truth, most proudly honoured.

Ancient Emblems

Her Majesty's request that the Honours of Scotland be borne to national service in St Giles', the venerable High Kirk of Edinburgh had given much joy, said the Duke and the opportunity thus afforded of bringing forth the ancient emblems of Scottish sovereignty and nationhood on so stirring an occasion of national worship and dedication was profoundly and truly welcomed by Church and people.

His Grace said that it was now 29 years since first he attended a General Assembly, and, since then, as an elder or with the Commissioner, he had attended the great majority of Assemblies.

During those years they had endured, for the second time in this century, an Armageddon. They had seen far-reaching changes in thought and outlook and in the conditions under which they lived, and they had come to realise that Christianity was fiercely challenged by many of the forces that were abroad in the world to-day.

The Church had been subject to much criticism, mostly, perhaps, on the grounds of its sins of omission. He thought they would do well to ponder some of the difficulties the Church had had to face and the magnitude of its task in an age that was so largely materialistic in outlook.

The Answer

If they did that they could not fail to remember with thankfulness all that the Church had done and stood for, and the guidance, strength, and comfort with which it had blessed them alike in times of fair fortune and of trial.

"The answer to the problems confronting the Church — problems spiritual and material — lies in great measure with the laity," said the Duke. "Many there be who accept the Christian virtues as a code of ethics and earnestly endeavour to practice them in their lives. They do not, however, support the Church either in worship or fellowship, or in the many tasks it seeks to perform in the fulfilment of its divinely appointed mission."

"If those who now live (often without realising it) on the moral and spiritual capital that centuries of Christianity has built up would join in its fellowship, worship, and work, what added vigour and strength they could bring to the Church from which they have gained and to which they owe so much."

Needs Of Youth

There was one particular aspect of the Church's work on which he would like to touch, not only because it was one with which he had been associated, but because of its paramount importance, namely, the work among young people.

"There can be no better hope for the future than that the endeavours of those engaged in the Christian leadership of youth should prosper," said his Grace.

"The future wellbeing of our people, the strengthening of family ties as the basis of our society, and the whole vigour of our Christian life is in no small measure in their hands. It is disquieting that every youth organisation in the land is crippled for lack of leaders. This is surely a challenge to our young men and women."

DUKE RECEIVES KEYS OF CITY

Residence in the Palace of Holyroodhouse was yesterday taken up by the Duke of Hamilton and Brandon as Lord High Commissioner to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. As Hereditary Keeper of the Palace, the Duke has his own apartments at Holyroodhouse, but this is the first occasion on which he has occupied the State Apartments as Lord High Commissioner.

Later, his Grace received the keys of the City of Edinburgh from Lord Provost Sir James Miller, who was accompanied by the Magistrates, the city officials, and halberdiers.

After the ceremony, the Lord High Commissioner gave an official dinner in the Banqueting Hall.

A service in St Giles' Cathedral to-day precedes the opening of the General Assembly. A Woman's Guild Mass Meeting will be held at the Usher Hall in the afternoon.