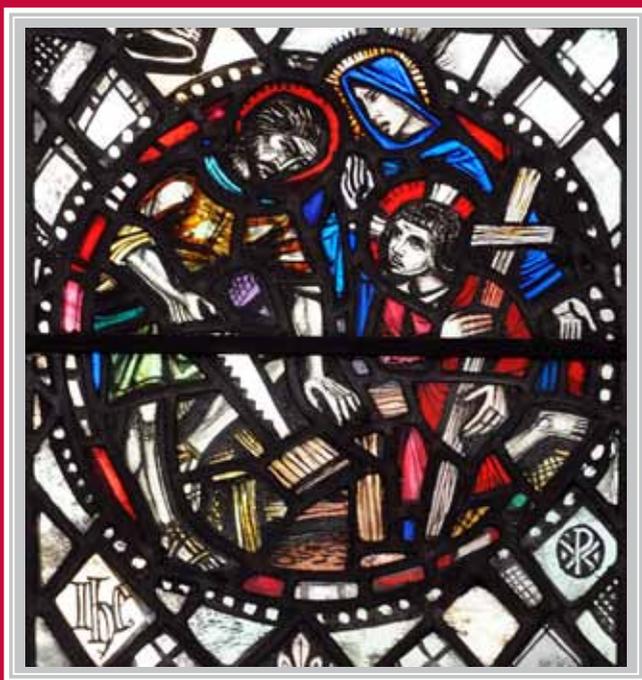


Guide to the
Stained Glass Windows
in
Greenbank Parish Church,
Edinburgh



The boy Jesus in the workshop – William Wilson

Donald G.M. Mackay
Minister 1950–1982

GUIDE
to the
STAINED GLASS WINDOWS
in
GREENBANK PARISH CHURCH,
EDINBURGH



Donald G.M. Mackay
Minister 1950–1982

• Preface to the Second Edition •

This booklet on the stained glass windows of Greenbank Parish Church, Edinburgh was written by the Reverend Donald G. M. Mackay and first published in 1988. At that time colour printing was expensive and it was decided that the accompanying photographs of the windows should be rendered in black and white.

Following a major renovation of the sanctuary of Greenbank Parish Church, completed in 2010, Mr Tony Gorzkowski of White House Studios, Edinburgh kindly agreed to take a series of colour photographs, in order to provide a record of the result. As requested, the stained glass windows – generally regarded as Greenbank’s strongest architectural feature – figured largely in this photographic record. Mr Gorzkowski has given freely of his time and professional skill before on behalf of Greenbank Church, notably when creating a photographic record of the Centenary Halls, completed in 2001, and I wish to take this opportunity to thank him.

Colour printing is now more affordable than it was in 1988, and the availability of professionally-produced colour photographs of Greenbank’s stained glass windows led the Kirk Session’s Communications Committee to consider the production of a second edition of the booklet.

Lord Mackay of Drumadoon, the author’s son, has agreed to the publication of this second edition. The photographs, as explained, are new; the text of the original has been reformatted but is otherwise unchanged.

John Murison
on behalf of the Kirk Session Communications Committee
Greenbank Parish Church
August 2012

Published by Edinburgh Greenbank Parish Church of Scotland,
Braidburn Terrace, Edinburgh EH10 6ES, Scotland
<http://www.greenbankchurch.org>
Charity No SCO11325

Copies are available from the Church Office at the above address

Price **£5** (plus postage)

• Introduction •

There are many interesting places and things in Edinburgh, and most of us have been to see at least some of them. We are very apt, however, to ignore the ones that lie at hand, as it were on our own doorstep, simply because we are so familiar with them. The stained glass windows in this church fall into this latter category. We see them on Sundays during the Morning Service all round us, but we seldom give them a second glance or thought, except perhaps occasionally to say to ourselves, 'What a pretty window!'

Yet each of these windows is the product of consummate artistic and technical skill, and represents many months of dedicated craftsmanship. In mediaeval times the Liturgy was said or sung entirely in Latin, and ordinary people could not understand what was being said. Many of them being uneducated, and the Bible being available only in Latin, they were very ignorant of the Scriptures. Mediaeval stained glass artists set out to remedy this in part by re-creating the personalities and scenes of the Bible in glorious colour in such windows as those in Chartres Cathedral.

The present Greenbank Church building was erected and opened for worship as recently as 1927, but despite its comparatively short history it has the good fortune to possess six stained glass windows of outstanding quality and great religious value. The purpose of this Guide is to help members and visitors to understand and appreciate them better, and to provide some information about the Scottish artists who executed them.

As it happens, the stained glass windows in the sanctuary stand in chronological order of the artists from left to right, beginning with the Ballantine window in the south aisle. The descriptions in this Guide will therefore follow this order. The careful observer will be able to trace in them the development of the art of stained glass during this century. The following extract from the Guide and History of Kings College, Old Aberdeen by Leslie J. Macfarlane (quoted by his kind permission) will help the reader to appreciate better the significance of this. In the beautiful King's College Chapel, there are several fine windows by Dr Douglas Strachan, the brother of Alexander Strachan, and one by William Wilson in which this contrast between 19th century stained glass and modern stained glass can be seen.

‘In the 19th century, artists did not fully understand the part played by stained glass in medieval church decoration, in consequence of which their windows were too static, and the biblical themes they were meant to portray were too reminiscent of set religious tableaux, as if their designs were consciously trying to reproduce pages of an illuminated manuscript; a medium, however, which cannot successfully be transferred to stained glass, not only because the eye cannot take in too much intimate detail at a distance, but also because it needs the changing play of light behind and through the glass to bring each scene to life. Strachan, however, lived through a critical period when the crafts were being liberated away from representational to design-oriented forms, and when the importance of lead as an integral part of the design of stained glass windows, which medieval craftsmen understood so well, was coming back into its own. Moreover, Dr Strachan had an exceptionally sensitive understanding both of the medieval liturgical use of colour in the overall design of his windows, and of the relation of his windows to the position of the sun at various times of the day, so that their colours were meant to catch fire or to remain soft and muted as the light itself changed. Nor was there anything pseudo-medieval about his figures.’

THE MINISTRY OF MUSIC WINDOW

James Ballantine, Jr., FSA (Scot) (1878–1940)

(1928 – South Aisle)

The central feature is St. Cecilia (a Roman martyr of the 2nd or 3rd century), traditionally the patroness of Church Music. She is playing a Portative Organ, i.e. one that could be carried, as opposed to a Positive Organ, which was a fixture.

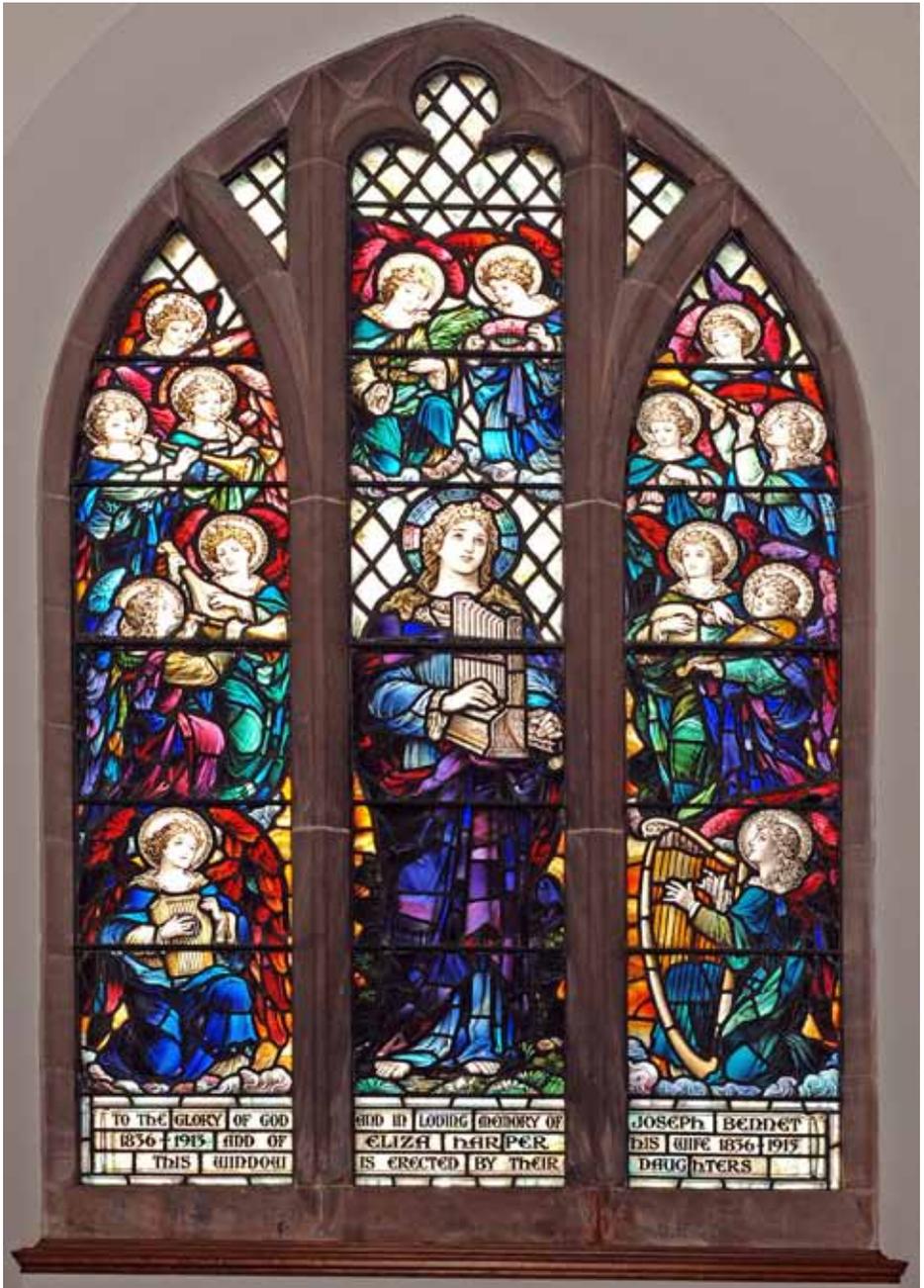
On the side lights are grouped cherubic performers on different instruments. Our Organist, Mr Tom Sommerville, has identified these as follows.

The cherubs are playing trumpets. The other instruments (correctly portrayed) are a harp, two lutes, a viol (at the top right) and a rotte or rotta (bottom right[†]) which was a lyre or small harp, called a crot by the early Britons and a crwth by the Welsh.

Blues, purples and greens, with suggestions of ruby and gold comprise the scheme of colours which is designed to suit the strong south light which shines through it.

The window was the first to be erected in the church after its opening in 1927, and was given in memory of Mr & Mrs Joseph Bennet by their daughters Mrs Hargreaves and Mrs McKechney. Mr Bennet was largely responsible for the founding of the congregation in 1900 and was one of the two original elders. He and his wife were deeply interested in music.

[†]*2nd Edition comment:* This should read 'bottom left'.



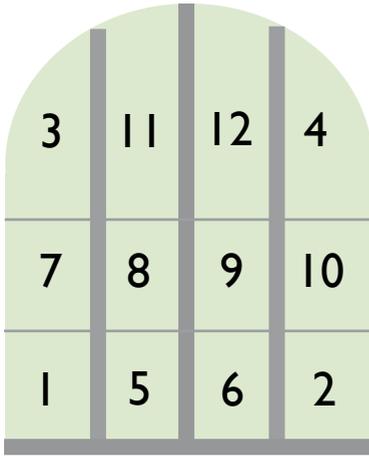
THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS WINDOW

Alexander Strachan (1878–1954)

1934 — *South Transept*

The theme of the window is the pilgrimage of Mr Valiant-for-truth in John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678–84). Mr Valiant-for-truth was the brave young knight who joined Mr Greatheart and his companions near the end of their pilgrimage. By that time he himself had passed through many of





the same experiences as Christian, Faithful and Hopeful. These are recounted in Part I of the book, and are portrayed in this window. The twelve little panels describe his adventures in the Christian Way, and symbolise graphically the pilgrimage of every Christian disciple.

The first panel (1) is at the bottom left-hand corner. In it the evangelist Mr Tell-True points out the way to the Celestial City for the young pilgrim.

The second subject (2) is at the bottom right-hand corner. In it we see him knock-

ing at the Wicket Gate, the narrow door through which all travellers to the Holy City must pass.

The third subject (3) is in the top left-hand corner pointed panel, containing the similitude of the Man with the Muck Rake. The poor wretch looks only at his feet, raking together dust and straws, oblivious to the crown which the angel holds over his head and who would give it to him if he would only raise his eyes to heaven.

The fourth subject (4) is over in the right-hand pointed panel. In it the Three Shining Ones stand at the Cross, saying 'Peace be unto thee'. They give him new raiment, a sealed scroll to present at the Celestial Gate, and set a mark



Mr Tell True 1



Wicket Gate 2



Man with the Muck Rake 3



Three Shining Ones 4

upon his forehead.

We return now to the two central panels at the bottom of the window for the fifth and sixth scenes. These are The Hill Difficulty (5) which every Christian pilgrim must climb, and the Palace Beautiful (6)



The Hill Difficulty 5



Palace Beautiful 6

where the three Maids of Honour — Prudence, Piety and Charity — arm the pilgrim fully for the conflict which lies ahead, and encourage him with a distant view of the Delectable Mountains.

The next four scenes (7–10) take up the four central panels across the window from left to right — The Valley of the Shadow of Death (7) with its fiery darts above, its fires beneath and its fearful hobgoblins, satyrs and dragon: The

Delectable Mountains (8) with its woods, springs, vineyards and fountains, its shepherds and their lambs and its distant glimpse of the Celestial City: Mr Valiant-for-truth's meeting with Mr Greatheart (9), that



Valley of the Shadow of Death 7



The Delectable Mountains 8

incomparable guide of the Holy Way: and The Enchanted Ground (10), the delicious beguiling air of which makes the pilgrims drowsy as they wander through its poppy-strewn meadows (note the tempting seats, the lordly peacock and the flowers of sleep



Mr Greatheart 9



The Enchanted Ground 10



Death, where is thy sting? 11

at their feet). The last two scenes (11 and 12) are in the middle central panels at the top of the window, full of light and glory by contrast, with the darker scenes below. In the left-hand one (11) Mr Valiant-for-truth, standing in the brink of the river, his feet already in the water, bequeaths his sword 'to him that shall succeed me in my pilgrimage, and my courage and skill to him that can get it', and then passes through the waters with this ringing challenge on his fearless lips, 'Death, where is thy sting?' while all the trumpets sound for him on the other side.

The right-hand central panel (12) portrays the Celestial City where the gallant pilgrim after many troubles bravely borne hears the voice of his

Redeemer saying 'Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord'. The twelve scenes are surmounted by the Holy Spirit as a Dove hovering over the Redeemer's head, while the two small triangular lights, one on either side, contain symbols of Faith and Hope, i.e. a Communion Cup surmounted by a Cross, and an Anchor.



The Celestial City 12

There is one charming, intimate, personal touch in the imagery of the window which is a memorial to Dr W. Inglis Clark whose home was at Oakwood in Roslin. Dr Clark was a great garden-lover, and in his unique garden, with its pilgrim paths and resting place, many of his friends in Greenbank and its minister (Dr T. Ratcliffe Barnett) spent happy hours. In the Palace Beautiful panel (6) the artist has given a hint of this happy home and garden by including a picture of its flower-beset lawns, and distant view of the blue Pentland Hills, the lovely prospect which confronted visitors resting beside the highest path in the garden, filling them with a sense of sabbath peace.

It may be that the artist, carried away by the rich variety of people and incidents in Bunyan's classic, has attempted to include too much detail into the window, thereby detracting from its overall effect, but there is no doubt

that his faithful and imaginative treatment of the pilgrims and their many adventures teach John Bunyan's lesson better than many a lecture would. It is a pity that the window's location in the sanctuary makes a study of it difficult, especially during worship.

The window was given by Mrs Clark in memory of her husband Dr W. Inglis Clark, DSc, FRSE, a generous and well-loved member of Greenbank who died on 21 December 1932.

It was designed and erected by Alexander Strachan, the artist of the Revelation Window in the Chancel, which is in memory of Dr and Mrs Clark's son.

THE REVELATION WINDOW

Alexander Strachan (1878–1954)

1928 – Chancel

This window faces the congregation at every act of worship, and its theme is the Worship of the Redeemer, the Lamb of God. The imagery is taken from the Book of Revelation from whose rich symbolism the artist has made an imaginative and careful selection. His composite picture is spread over the five lights.

At the top of the central light is the figure of the Redeemer enthroned (Rev. 4.2) with the Seven Doves of the Spirit around him. Below the Redeemer is the Sacred Lamb (5.6) which was slain.

On either side of the enthroned Redeemer are angels holding spheres containing symbols of fire and water, and next to these in the two pointed panels are angels holding the sun and moon in their hands. Taken together these may be taken to represent God's almighty power over the world He has created.

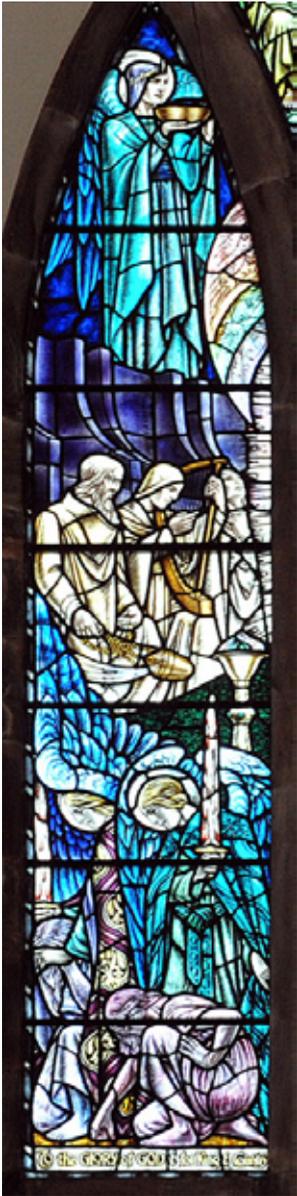
Around the throne is a rainbow (4.3), wrought in most delicate colours within which can be seen many faces of angels perhaps or of the saints in heaven. On the rainbow are imposed the medallions of the four apocalyptic creatures — a man, a lion, a calf and an eagle (4.6–8).

In the centre of the window is the Tree of Life (22.2) whose leaves are for the healing of the nations, while immediately below there stands the angel at the altar (8.3–4) swinging a golden censer, gathering up the prayers of the faithful before the throne of God. Round about stand the Seven Angels (8.2)



with the trumpets of God in their hands, and in front of the Altar burn the Seven Lamps of Fire which are the Seven Churches (1.12, 1.20). On either side of the throne and round about it are some of the four and twenty Elders, sitting on thrones of judgment and clothed in white raiment with crowns in their hands (4.4).

Immediately above these Elders and on either side of the window are two angels, each holding one of the Vials of Wrath (15.6–9). In the two corners at the very foot of the window are figures of the four angels (7.1) who stand at the four corners of the Earth with upraised swords and restraining hands,



Leftmost Light



Rightmost Light

From top downwards: Angels holding the Vials of Wrath; Some of the four and twenty Elders; Angels with upraised swords and restraining hands, holding in check the Four Winds



Redeemer; Sacred Lamb which was slain



Angels holding symbols of Water and Fire



Angels holding the Sun and the Moon



Central medallions: lion and calf



Tree of Life; Angel with golden censer



Inner Left Light



Inner Right Light

From top downwards: Rainbow with imposed medallions of man (left) and eagle (right); Angels with the trumpets of God; Some of the four and twenty Elders; Some of that great multitude whom no man can number, men and women with palms in their hands

holding in check the Four Winds which might otherwise destroy the world.

Finally, at the bottom level of the window, there kneel facing the throne some of that great multitude whom no man can number (7.9–11), men and women with palms in their hands. ‘These are they which came out of great tribulation and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb’ (7.14).

The window was given by Dr and Mrs W. Inglis Clark, loyal and generous members of the congregation, in loving memory of their only son, Capt. Charles Inglis Clark, BSc, who served in World War I from August 1914 and died of wounds in Mesopotamia on 6 March 1918. The date and his initials can be seen on the base of the altar in the centre of the window. The artist was Alexander Strachan, who in 1934 also executed the Pilgrim’s Progress window, and like all his windows this one was designed and made in his Studio in Balcarres Street.

THE PARABLES WINDOW

William Wilson, OBE, RSA, RSW (1905–1972)

1954 – North Transept

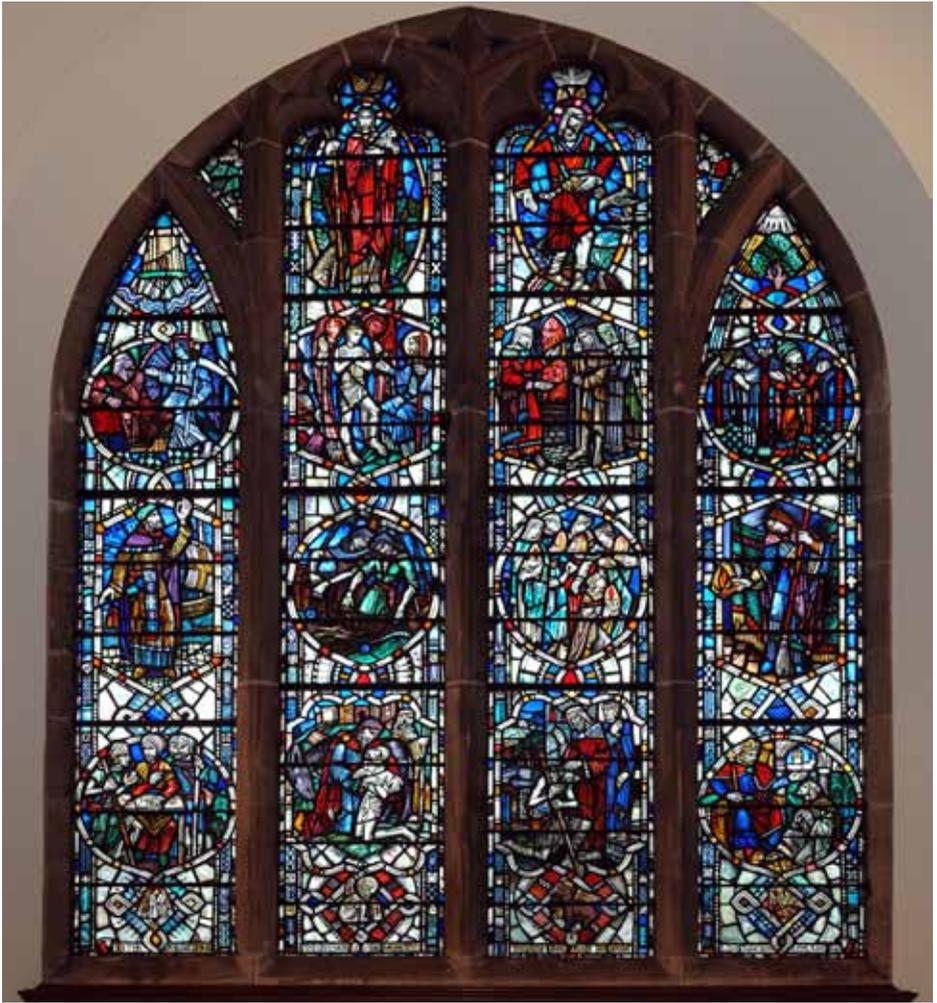
The general subject is ‘The Parables of Jesus’. Like the Pilgrim’s Progress window which faces it in the opposite transept, the window is divided into small panels, each of which depicts a scene in one of the parables. These are placed in no special order except that the artist has put The Good Samaritan and The Prodigal Son, the ones which the children know best, at the foot where they can more easily be seen.

3	1	2	13
4	7	10	14
5	8	11	15
6	9	12	16
Matt.	Mark	Luke	John

At the top of the window in the two central lights are the commanding figures of the Good Shepherd (John 10.11) (No. 1) and the Sower (Mark 4.1–9) (No. 2).



The window on the left contains, reading from the top downwards, ‘The City set upon a Rock’ (Matt. 7.24) (3) in the diamond



at the apex, 'The Rich Fool' (Luke 12.13–21) (4), 'The Costly Pearl' (Matt. 13.45–46) (5), and 'The Labourers in the Vineyard' (Matt. 20.1–16) (6).

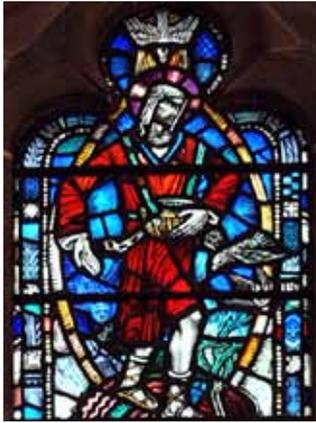
The window next to this contains, again reading down from the top, 'The Rich Man and Lazarus' (Luke 16.19–31) (7), 'The Net full of Fish' (Matt. 13.47–50) (8) and 'The Good Samaritan' (Luke 10.29–37) (9).

The next window contains (beneath 'The Sower') 'The Wedding Feast' (Luke 14.15–24) (10), 'The Ten Bridesmaids' (Matt. 25.1–13) (11), and 'The Prodigal Son' (Luke 15.11–32) (12).

The window on the right contains (again from the top downwards) 'The



The Good Shepherd 1



The Sower 2



The Costly Pearl 5



The Rich Man and Lazarus 7



The Net full of Fish 8



The Ten Bridesmaids 11



The Pharisee and the Publican 14



The Lost Coin 15



The Rich Fool 4



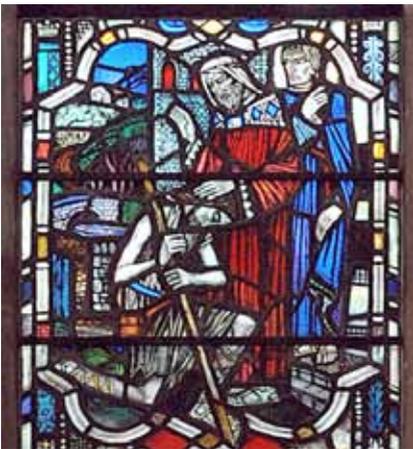
The Labourers in the Vineyard 6



The Good Samaritan 9



The Wedding Feast 10



The Prodigal Son 12



The Wicked Steward 16



The Mustard Seed 13

Mustard Seed' (Matt. 13.31–32) (13), 'The Pharisee and the Publican' (Luke 18.9–14) (14), 'The Lost Coin' (Luke 15.8–10) (15) and 'The Wicked Steward' (Matt. 18.23–25) (16).

At the foot of the four lights are to be found, from left to right, the traditional symbols of the four Evangelists in whose gospels the record of the parables is contained. These are a winged figure writing in a book (Matthew), a winged lion (Mark), a winged ox (Luke), and an eagle (John).



Matthew



Mark



Luke



John



At the top of the window on either side in small diamond-shaped panels are the figures of two children, a girl in the form of an adoring cherub (cf. Matt. 18.10) and a boy in modern costume to remind us that, then as now, 'of such is the Kingdom of Heaven' (Matt.19.14; 18.1–5).

The rich colours of this north window



are broken up into a variegated pattern, producing a coruscating effect, achieved without any diminution of the light which passes through it. The separate panels are also linked together in a manner reminiscent of Celtic art, while the borders are decorated with charming little Christian symbols. Within each of the panels there is much significant and ingenious detail which repays careful examination. Note, for example: in panels (1) and (2) the purposeful strength of the Good Shepherd with a lamb in his bosom, and of the Sower whose seed is falling among stones and thistles and hungry birds: in (4) the fell scythe of the Angel of Judgment: in (5) the rich colours of the merchant's robe, the quayside flagstones beneath his feet and the ship in the background: in (6) the angry faces of the men who had worked all day and were being paid the same wage as the man hired at the last moment: in (7) the angels carrying poor Lazarus 'to Abraham's bosom' while Dives is in torment below: in (8) the fish in the straining net: in (9) the inn in the distance and the donkey's lovely face, and the Levite passing by: in (10) the ragged clothes of the poor and maimed, and the rich feast within the house that awaits them: in (11) the graceful grouping of the wise bridesmaids: in (12) the contrasted faces of the welcoming father, the humble prodigal and the sulky elder brother: in (14) the look of uncomprehending astonishment on the Pharisee's face: and in (15) the richly coloured dress of the housewife and her splendid besom. At the very top of the window the contrast between the adoring cherub and the athletic modern boy is delightful.

An interesting historical footnote to panel (7): the artist's original cartoon showed dogs licking the beggar's sores but this proved too harrowing for the generous donor's heart and the illustration was therefore altered to the present happier one, Lazarus' reception into heaven!

The name of the artist can be found at the foot in the right-hand corner: with characteristic generosity he has inscribed also the names of the craftsmen who helped him.

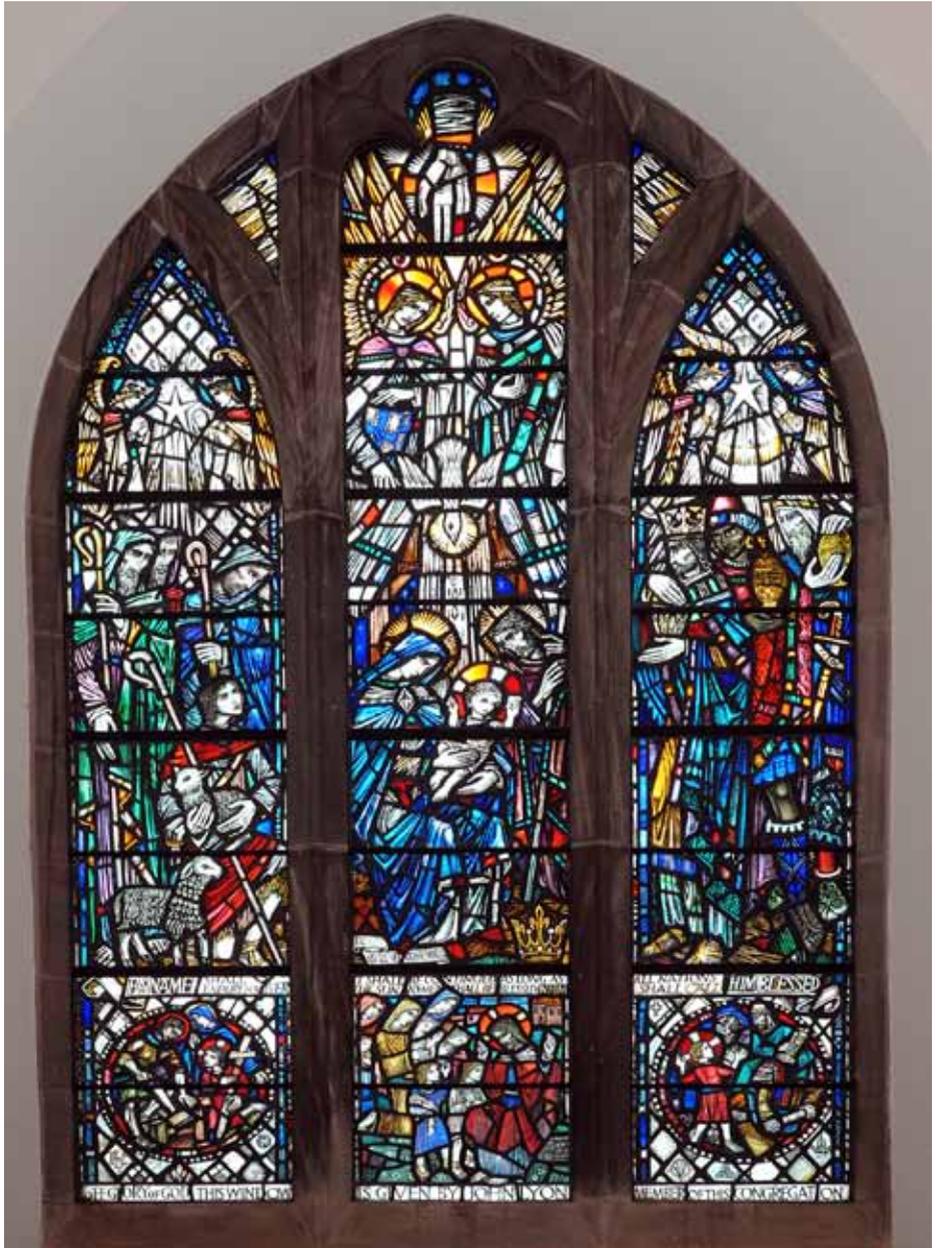
It was said that the window contains over 3,000 pieces of stained glass and 11,000 lead joints — a statistic which reminds us of the many devoted hours of skilled labour which have gone into it.

The window was given by Mrs T.D. Dobson 'in ever loving memory of Thomas Douglas Dobson', her late husband. It was dedicated on Palm Sunday, 11th April, 1954.

THE NATIVITY WINDOW

William Wilson, OBE, RSA, RSW (1905–1972)

1957 – North Aisle



This might be sub-titled ‘The Children’s Window’ as it was a bequest from a man who had taken a great interest in the children of the congregation, and whose pew was right beside it.

Beneath a large triptych of the main characters in the Birth Story, the artist has placed three delightful cameos depicting scenes of the childhood of Jesus and His love for children.



Youthful Shepherd

In the central panel of the triptych, the Infant Christ is seen cradled in his mother’s arms, his little hands raised in blessing. Mother Mary looks down upon him in adoration, while faithful Joseph watches over them in anxious care. At Mary’s feet there is a crown, and beside this on a scroll the words (in Latin) of old Simeon’s blessing: “A light to lighten the Gentiles...” (Luke 2.32). To the left of the Holy Family stand the Shepherds, a youthful one carrying a lamb in his arms, while the Star of Bethlehem shines out overhead amid the angelic choir (Luke 2.8–17). To the right are the Wise Men richly clad: traditionally these are named Melchior, Balthazar (who is dark-skinned) and Caspar, and they bring their gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh. The star which led them shines brightly overhead, and angels guard them on their journey (Matt. 2.1–12).

Bethlehem shines out overhead amid the angelic choir (Luke 2.8–17). To the right are the Wise Men richly clad: traditionally these are named Melchior, Balthazar (who is dark-skinned) and Caspar, and they bring their gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh. The star which led them shines brightly overhead, and angels guard them on their journey (Matt. 2.1–12).

At the top of the central light, the Divine Hand points down in the Messianic blessing which is carried earthwards by the Dove of the Holy Spirit (Isa. 49.6: cf. Matt. 3.17) to the Infant Christ while the angels stand guard above.

Beneath the Nativity scene, there are the three small panels at a height



The Holy Family

where they can easily be seen by children. To the left, we see the boy Jesus helping Joseph in the carpenter's shop: Mary is watching as Joseph plies a sharp saw: Jesus holds pieces of wood, significantly in the form of a cross. To the right, the child Jesus is seen in the Temple (Luke 2.46), asking and answering questions of the rabbis who stand by with scrolls of the Law. In the central panel, Jesus welcomes the little children who have been brought to him by their mothers from the nearby village (Mark 10.13–16). One little girl offers him a posy of flowers. Jesus raises his hands over the little ones and blesses them.

Across the window above these panels, there is inscribed (at the donor's desire) the 17th verse of Psalm 72: "His name shall endure for ever: it shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed".

The artist's name (with a crown-spire like St. Giles' above it to signify Edinburgh) and the date can be found in the bottom right-hand corner.

The window was given to the congregation in a bequest by Mr John Lyon of Greenbank Lane who was for many years a member. It was dedicated on Sunday, 31st March, 1957.



Lower left panel



Lower right panel

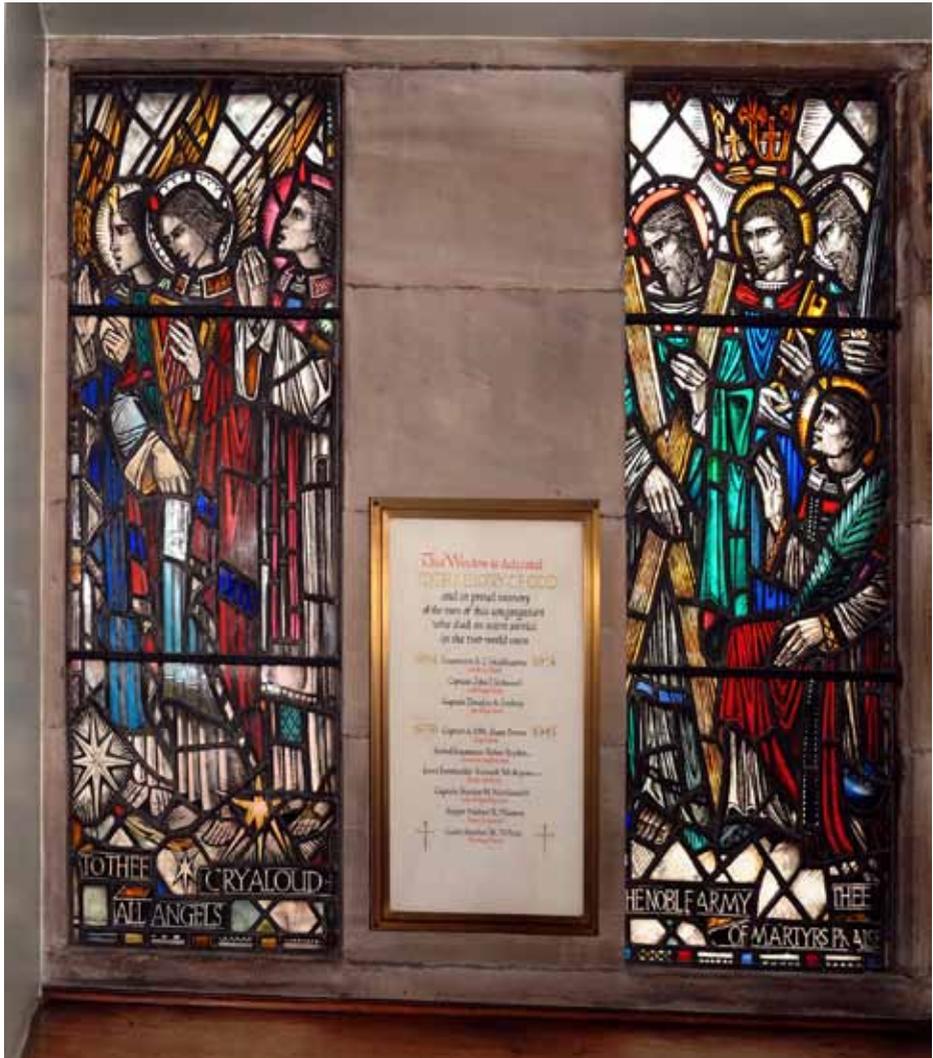


Lower central panel

THE WAR MEMORIAL WINDOW

William Wilson, OBE, RSA, RSW (1905–1972)

1950 – Vestibule



This is the congregation's Memorial to the men who gave their lives in the service of their country in *both* World Wars. (The present church was not built until 1927.)

Sited at the main door, it is a constant silent reminder to all who enter of the sacrifice that was made on their behalf.

The theme is taken from the Te Deum, with the words

TO THEE ALL ANGELS CRY ALOUD:...
THE NOBLE ARMY OF MARTYRS PRAISE THEE

shown at the foot of the two windows. As the figures are moving in the direction of the Sanctuary, an invitation to worship is suggested. They depict, in the first window, Angels in attitudes of praise, one carrying a harp, with stars at their feet, and tongues of flame on their foreheads. Following these, in the second window, are the Apostles and Martyrs. Andrew, patron saint of Scotland with the Saltire Cross is leading, followed by Peter carrying the Key and Paul, carrying the sword by which, according to tradition, he was beheaded. In front, kneeling in adoration, is Stephen, the first of the martyrs. Above them is the Crown of Victory. The contrast between the innocent joy of the faces of the angels and the lined suffering on the faces of the martyrs is very striking.

The Inscription, written on vellum in black, gold and red and framed in bronze, is by Miss Kathleen Balderston, Glasgow and is a very fine example of the craft of illuminated writing. It reads:

**This Window is dedicated
TO THE GLORY OF GOD
and in proud memory
of the men of this congregation
who died on active service
in the two world wars**

The names of the Fallen are inscribed beneath.

• The Artists •

James Ballantine, Jr., FSA (Scot.) (1878–1940)

James Ballantine, Jr., who designed our “Ministry of Music” window, was the grandson of James Ballantine, Sr. (1808–1877), a well-known Edinburgh citizen in the earlier half of the nineteenth century, who had founded a successful glass merchant’s business at 40 George Street. As a development of this he opened a stained glass studio in Rose Street Lane and was one of the pioneers in Scotland of the rediscovery of the art of stained glass after the Reformation.

Ballantine Senior was already well-known in the city for his literary gifts. He had published in 1844 a book of poems under the titles “The Miller of Deanhaugh” and “The Gaberlunzie’s Wallet” and had written several Scots songs. He was also the founder of the Edinburgh Burns Club.

His son Alexander (1841–1906) succeeded him as a gifted stained glass artist, and the firm, James Ballantine & Co., continued to make many windows all over the country, e.g. the Montrose Window in St. Giles’, Edinburgh, the Rose Window in St. Magnus, Kirkwall, and also in the old House of Lords (destroyed in the blitz during World War II). Generally speaking, these follow the older static representational style of oil paintings, as can be seen in the Greenbank window. Most of the glass used was imported from Germany.

By the time Alexander’s son, James Ballantine, Jr., was in charge of the studio it was also exporting windows to other parts of the world, e.g. Canada, Bermuda and South Africa. James, Jr., the artist of our window, was born on 21st August, 1878 in Colinton and appears to have spent his working life in his grandfather’s and then his father’s business.

In 1907 he married Daisy Dewar, the daughter of an Edinburgh doctor, and continued to make and erect windows from his studio until his death on 23rd November, 1940, aged 62. Sadly he was killed by an accidental fall from a moving railway carriage in the Calton tunnel while returning from Edinburgh to his home in North Berwick. Soon after his death, the firm went out of existence.

Alexander Strachan (1878–1954)

Alexander Strachan (pronounced Strön) was born on 28th June, 1878 in Aberdeen. He and his elder brother Douglas were the sons of Hercules Strachan who was cashier in a local firm. Both boys were educated at Robert Gordon's College.

The elder brother, Dr. Douglas Strachan (1875–1950) had thereafter a very distinguished artistic career, first as a portrait and mural painter, and then as a pioneer in the art of stained-glass in Scotland. He moved in 1912 from Aberdeen to Edinburgh and with his brother Alexander was instrumental in founding the stained-glass studio in the Edinburgh College of Art which gave the city recognition as a centre for glass. The quotation from Leslie J. Macfarlane in the Introduction to this Guide will give an indication of the importance of the new ideas which he brought to the art of stained-glass in Scotland. Notable examples of his work here may be seen in many churches, e.g. King's College Chapel and East of St. Nicholas Aberdeen, St. John's Kirk of Perth, Paisley Abbey, Holy Rude Stirling, and locally in Edinburgh in Murrayfield, St. Andrew's and St. George's and Salisbury.

Although the younger brother's windows are not so numerous and well-known, Alexander Strachan also had a distinguished career as a stained glass artist, teaching the art for several years in the Edinburgh College of Art. While there are very naturally some resemblances in style between the windows of the two brothers, each has his own distinctive talent. The titles of Alexander Strachan's windows reveal his originality in the choice of themes, e.g. "Children of Different Races", "The Window of Love", "Courage and Humility", "Scottish Regimental Badges" and our Greenbank ones, "Revelation" and "The Pilgrim's Progress". His studio was in nearby Balcarres Street, and it was there that our windows were made. Beautiful examples of groups of his windows may be seen in St. Fillan's Church, Aberdour and Rosehall Church, Dalkeith Road, Edinburgh. He appears to have been a very careful artist who studied his themes and their sources with meticulous care. Thus the intricate symbolic detail of the difficult Book of Revelation and the diverse characters and incidents of The Pilgrim's Progress are all faithfully and imaginatively portrayed. In our chancel window he is (like his brother) not afraid to break with tradition and spread his design across the five lights, maintaining the artistic unity by confining the figures of the

glorified Redeemer and the sacred Lamb to the central panel.

Alexander Strachan was married to Marie E. Fraser, herself an artist and daughter of William Fraser, a sculptor. He died at his house, 5 Glenisla Gardens, Edinburgh, on 25th March, 1954, aged 75.

William Wilson, OBE, RSA, RSW (1905–1972)

William Wilson (“Willie Wilson” to his friends) was born in Edinburgh on 21st July, 1905, the son of a watchmaker and jeweller in the Slateford district. He came, it is said, of a brilliant family, his uncle Thomas Wilson being a landscape painter who was responsible for the stained glass windows in the Café Royal.

William was educated at Sciennes School and Boroughmuir High School. He left school early and after a brief period in Messrs. Bartholomew as a cartographer began work at the age of 15 in the stained glass studio of James Ballantine & Sons in 1920. In the evenings he attended classes in the Edinburgh College of Art, distinguishing himself especially as a student of etching, on which he concentrated.

He won the R.S.A. Carnegie Scholarship and this enabled him to travel to Spain where he made a series of drawings from many of which he later made engravings and etchings. Some of these can be seen in the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art which regards him as one of our finest modern graphic artists.

Subsequently he was awarded a fellowship of the College of Art, and he employed the two-year period in studying for a year at the London College of Art and then travelling extensively on the Continent, especially in Italy. On coming back to Edinburgh after his travels, he decided to return to his first love, stained glass, and carried out several commissions before the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939. Judged medically unfit for war service, he enlisted in the Auxiliary Fire Service, in which he served throughout the war.

When hostilities ended, he set up his own stained glass studio, first in Frederick Street, and then from 1947 in Belford Mews, where he was to remain for the next twenty years. His partner in this venture was William Blair, who had also been in the A.F.S., and who had previously been

trained in Cunningham & Co. as a worker in glass and leading. (This firm, incidentally had fitted all the plain leaded windows in Greenbank Church when it was built in 1927.) Together they recruited an enthusiastic and gifted team of young artists and craftsmen, David Saunders and his brother James, Carrick Whalen and later Jock Blythe who was Wilson's cartoonist when his eyesight began to fail.

Willie Wilson had an open and generous nature and took great pleasure in encouraging young artists in his craft. Blest with a rich quiet sense of humour, he was wont to say that although he was not a regular churchgoer, he spent more time in churches than most ministers. When dining late with his friends, he would sometimes excuse himself, saying: "I've left an angel in the oven, and he should be ready by now!"

After the war, there was an immense amount of work to be done because of bomb damage, and many commissions were received for memorial windows from regiments and relatives. Wilson, however, was a very fast worker, and possessed not only the basic technical skill, but also a highly creative artistic imagination and talent, backed by an extensive knowledge of the history of Christian Art. As a result, during the twenty years which followed he created with the help of his team the remarkable total of over 170 splendid windows (some of them very large) not only in Scotland and England but also abroad, as far away as New Zealand, Africa, and America. Most of these are in churches, but some also in schools and commercial buildings. These include: Canterbury Cathedral (Warrior's Chapel), Glasgow Cathedral (5 windows, 1951–1960), Liverpool Cathedral (Bishop's Window), St. Andrew's — St. Salvator's Chapel, Brechin Cathedral (several windows), St. John's Kirk of Perth, Dornoch Cathedral, St. Giles' Cathedral (clerestory), Dunedin (N.Z.) Knox and Christchurch College, Malawi Livingstonia, Kenya Nairobi St. Andrew's, Princeton (U.S.A.) Trinity, South Africa Hermanus. Of local interest are his windows in Morningside United (1951), Fairmilehead (1957), Colinton (1960), Cluny (1962), St. Peter's R.C. (1962), the British Linen Bank, St. Andrew's Square, Edinburgh Synagogue, Royal High School (1949; now in the new building), Liberton School, Scottish Life Assurance (1949) and Rosslyn Chapel (1951).

The source of Wilson's inspiration was the early Gothic glass of the thirteenth century in Chartres, Paris, Canterbury and York. The rich luminosity and balance of colours in the glass, the use of lead in forming

patterns, and the siting of the particular windows were all vitally important to him. He developed in his etching of figures and symbols on the glass a clearly recognisable style of his own — and yet every window is different and there is no repetition. His drawing of the faces, hands and feet deserve special study, though he also rejoiced in the challenge presented by heraldic emblems and regimental badges.

The appreciation of his work recorded by the R.S.A. at the time of his death reads thus: “Willie was capable of intense concentration. Fertile in imagination, a rapid worker, his use of glass was highly personal; his designs were always expressive, significant in their symbolism, of rich pattern and glowing colour”.

Complementary to the making of windows, he continued to draw, etch and paint and was elected, first an Associate of the Academy in 1939 and an Academician in 1949. In 1946 he was also made an R.S.W., and in 1961 the honour of O.B.E. was conferred on him for his many and varied services to Art.

Increasingly he suffered from the hereditary disease of diabetes, and his eyesight began to fail so that by 1960 he had, very sadly, become almost totally blind. He faced this calamity with great courage, and with the help of his loyal and gifted team continued to make windows. Finally his studio had to be closed and, being unmarried, he moved south to his sister’s home in Manchester in 1970, where he died on 16th March 1972, aged 66, having lost his eyesight, his studio, his home and the company of his friends. But his work remains — “A many-sided man was Willie — the world is immeasurably the poorer without him.” (*Liverpool Cathedral Bulletin*, 1972).

• Acknowledgments (1st Edition) •

The writer wishes to acknowledge gratefully the valuable help given by Mr Sax Shaw, formerly Head of the Stained Glass Department of the Edinburgh College of Art, and by Mr Leslie J. Macfarlane of the Department of History, King's College, Aberdeen.

Descriptions of the windows by Alexander Strachan were printed in the Greenbank congregational magazine, *The Leaflet*, at the time when the windows were erected. These were written by the fluent pen of our former minister, the Rev. Dr T. Ratcliffe Barnett, and have been invaluable in the interpretation of the symbolism.

Warm thanks are also expressed to Mr Maurice Berrill for his advice and help in the preparation of the booklet for publication, to Dr David Wilson and Mr John Forgie for the photographs, and to Mr William Blair (Willie Wilson's head craftsman) for his personal memories of the artist.

