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Looking Unto Jesus

"Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus." Heb. 12: 1, 2.

Believers are spoken of here as running a race, as elsewhere their life is compared to a warfare or a conflict. The Apostle could say in another epistle: "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 3: 14.) The Christian life is never represented as easy but a life involving a striving, an agonizing, a wrestling, an overcoming. Yet the Christian is not left in the dark as to how he is to persevere in the race which he is to run. He is to run this race looking unto Jesus. His eye must ever, must constantly be on Christ who alone can preserve him from falling and present him faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.

Too often our eye is upon ourselves. How easy it is for us to look to ourselves in pride, self-reliance and self-adulation. Even where there may be the appearance of humility what depths of pride it may cover. How often too, does there lie under a sanctimonious spirit the grossest spiritual pride.

But we may look to ourselves in another way. We may be looking within and seeing so much sin and unbelief, so much worldliness and carnality that it seems an impossibility that grace could dwell in such a heart. How downcast such a soul can feel. No man was ever encouraged by looking within. It can only lead us to the sad but inevitable conclusion that "in me, that is, in my flesh dwelleth no good thing". There is no encouraging prospect there—all looks dark, and bleak, and hopeless. How then is such a soul to be uplifted. The answer is simple. For every look within he must take a thousand looks to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Too often we look to men. Though the Scripture has warned us—"Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?" (Is. 2: 22)—yet we still put our trust in man. Even after many disappointments we again fall into the same mistake. When will we heed the warning voice of God in His Word? There He is saying:

"Trust not in princes, nor man's son,
in whom there is no stay."

The best of men are but men, liable to fall, liable to err. Some, no doubt, are more prone to fall and to err than others but the best of them are little better than shaky reeds. Place no reliance in men, not even in good men—look only to Jesus. You will have no disappointments there. The more you look to Him the more you will be brought to admire him, and the more you admire Him the more you will have to say there is none like Jesus.

You are to run the race looking unto Jesus; looking to Him as the One who has gone before. You are to follow Him in the way—haltingly it may be oftentimes—yet seeking to follow in His footsteps, daily looking to Him in order that you may receive a fresh supply of grace to sustain you in the way. You are to be dependent upon Him for all things constantly realising that without Him you can do nothing. You are to look to Him as the One who trod the winepress of the wrath of God in order that you might never tread it. You are to look to Him as the risen, exalted, glorified Redeemer, as the One who has promised to be with His people always and who will not be in heaven and any of them left out.

Is this how you are running the race? Are you looking unto Jesus? if not, how discouraged you must be. To you the Lord is saying in His Word: "Look up . . . for your redemption draweth nigh." (Luke 21: 28.)

Have you not even begun to run the race? To you the Saviour says: "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." (Is. 45: 22.)

Sermon

by Rev. Aaron Ndebele

(The following sermon was preached by Rev. A. Ndebele at Ingwenya Mission on 23rd April, 1972.)

"And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." Isaiah 35: 10.

This passage talks about the children of Israel in bondage. They were captives in Babylon, given over because of their sins. They had sinned against God and so they were allowed to be captured by their enemies and taken to Babylon. That wicked king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, took captive Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who were thrown into the fiery furnace because they worshipped the true God. They said, "We will not serve the golden image, O Nebuchadnezzar." Because of this the servants were commanded to make the fire seven times hotter so that the Hebrew boys would be thrown into the furnace. There in Babylon the Israelites were subjected to alien gods of silver and gold. This was a sad

place indeed. No wonder that they were unhappy in Babylon; they were not a free people; they had to do what they did not wish to do; they were in slavery in Babylon just as they had been in Egypt.

But, here in our text, we read: "The ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with joy upon their heads."

First of all, those people who are spoken about were the redeemed of the Lord. This implies that they had been in bondage; for to be redeemed you need to be in bondage. But it is promised that they shall return to Zion. Zion was where the temple, the place of worship was after the tabernacle, which was temporary, travelling in the wilderness on to the promised land, had been dissolved. When they had arrived in Canaan, the temple was built in Mount Zion as a permanent place of worship. The prediction here was: "They shall return to Zion."

In the same verse we are told **how** they were to return: "with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads". That was the manner. We are also told the prospect, the blessings that they will reap: "and they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away". This was to be their final destiny.

These people were the redeemed of God. They were in bondage; they came into bondage when they sinned against God. When Adam and Eve sinned against God, man was driven away from that blessed place where God had placed him, where he was happy, where he had no sorrows, only full happiness. But on account of sin he was driven away. He was bound by his own sin; the law of God was against him; he had God's displeasure with the prospect of eternal damnation. "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

What is the consequence of sin? Eternal damnation, temporal death and spiritual death. "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Man rebelled against God; so he is born harnessed by sin. Men, women and children are slaves to sin, led captive to the will of their master, every thought of the mind evil. The sinner goes out to commit evil. He is a slave in his whole personality; his whole being has been enslaved. So his desires, his passions are all slaves to Satan; he goes at Satan's will to commit every sin. A sinner might say: "I am no longer willing to live this life." A drunkard might say: "I realise this life is dangerous to my body and to my family. I am unhappy because of sin." Will he leave his sin? No! He is bound by his sin, a captive chained by his sin. So at the least opportunity he will return again to his sin. There may be a thief just out of prison, determined not to return to that sin again; but you see this man back to prison again, guilty of the same sin. He is back where he was before. So it is with every sin. Men may boast of freedom—just as the Jews were saying, "We were never in bondage to any man." But Jesus said to them: "Ye are of your father the devil." There is no freedom apart from Christ: "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

The broken law cries out: "Pay me what thou owest." The law of God

must be paid to the last farthing. So, whatever freedom you boast of, poor sinner, the law of God demands what you owe. Because man has violated the law of God, he lives in fear because death will meet him and bring him into confrontation with the law of God. The law says, "What about the old sins, the sins of yesterday?" The sinner might say, "Now I'll try to do better." But the law claims, "What about what you already owe me as well?" The person who has been taking goods on account falls into debt. That person might say, "Now, I'll try to do better. Now I'll stop taking on account. I'll pay cash instead." But the shopkeeper may say, "Yes, if you pay me cash that is very good. But what about the goods for which you are already in debt? Pay me that thou owest lest I give you to the police, and the police give you to the judge." You, sinner, are in need on account of God's broken law.

But these are the redeemed of the Lord, returning to Zion. They are redeemed; this implies the need of a Redeemer, one who can pay the debt in full—the goods of last year, of this month, of next month—all covered in this person. So a sinner goes free because his debt has been paid in full, present, past and future; **all** paid to the **full**. This brings before us the Lord Jesus Christ, the only Redeemer of God's elect, who came to earth from heaven, the Holy One of Israel, born of the Holy Spirit. The Virgin Mary could say, "I know not a man." It was an utter impossibility in human nature that she conceive; but not so with Mary. God is speaking, and with God nothing is impossible, working in an extraordinary manner. Jesus Christ came into this world to save sinners, to save sinners from their bondage to the law of God. Their whole righteousness is a pile of filthy rags, rottenness to the core, as a leper rotting and corroding from head to foot, the limbs breaking away in rottenness, until the body is dead and the passers-by say, "Remove this smelling carcase."

Is that not your condition by nature, sinner, with all your obedience? Notwithstanding everything that man can do he falls back into disobedience. So he needs a Redeemer to redeem him from the curse of the law; from the dominion of sin, its power, its corruption—none other than the Lord Jesus Christ by His powerful death on the Cross. When He died on Calvary's Cross He cried out, "Father into Thy hands I commend my spirit". He announced His own death. You never heard of such a combination of power and weakness. He died indeed—yet all power was at His disposal. He bowed the head, and gave up the ghost, but in his dying He announced to the whole world: "Father into Thine hands I commend my spirit." What power!

The veil of the temple was torn asunder from the top to the bottom. What tore the thick, tight cloth? The supernatural power of the death of the Cross. The chains of hell were broken. So now the Holiest of all, which was not seen by men since the building of the temple, was now open to all—showing that there was no barrier. By His blood "He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to

make intercession for them". They are saved for time and for eternity. That is freedom to speak about. Redeemed by His power, they shall return to Zion from Babylon where they could not worship freely; where they were bound by their enemies so that the Psalmist said: "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down. Yea we wept when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. For they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion. How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?"

But they shall return to Zion, to the worship of God. Sinners who have sinned in Adam forget to worship God, but when redeemed they worship God acceptably; they are new creatures in Christ Jesus. In Babylon the Jews were not free. The Lord's people have problems within and without: the influences of this world; the worship of idols; men mixing the worship of God with the worship of the spirits of their ancestors. Jesus said, "No man can serve two masters . . . You cannot serve God and mammon."

They shall return—the redeemed of the Lord shall not be left out. They will return by His grace, drawn by His word and Spirit, awakening them to an awareness of sin. They will return to their homeland, which is Canaan—or Jerusalem—or Mount Zion—where the true worship of God is found. Their hearts will long for the pure worship of Jehovah. They will rejoice in the worship of the Spirit, in worshipping in spirit and in truth.

They shall return with rejoicing. "Thy people shall be willing in a day of Thy power." So they will not return in a half-hearted way, but with joy, with songs in their mouths. What songs? One song will be "Against Thee, Thee only have I sinned and done evil in Thy sight". They are not as dumb devils. They will sing, "Unto Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood." They will sing, "My Lord and my God." They return rejoicing.

Have you ever experienced the joy mixed with tears? Ashamed because of your sins but rejoicing over sins forgiven—all my sins, my iniquities against my God, against my own soul. They are rejoicing in the Lord Jesus. Although their sins are so many, so great, yet the blood of Jesus washes them from all sin. Only those perverted by the devil would rejoice if Christ had come for 'the good'. Why? They think that they can stand on their own, that they can pay the debt. But if poor people with no money heard that bags of mealies were to be given out to those who had money, what sadness and tears that would bring them! But if there was to be a free offer to the poor, what joy such news would bring to those who had nothing! They could say, "Now we and our children will be satisfied because we are to be supplied freely." Here they shall hunger no more for those with nothing to pay receive.

The last part of the verse says, "They shall obtain (that is, they shall be given as their property) joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." In this world they are promised tribulation. They shall sing songs

of gladness and of tears, sorrowfully bemoaning their sins in this world. There are also problems which they cannot surmount. One can say, "My problems are more than I can bear." Even the Lord's people, if it were not for the Lord's everlasting arms around them, could even hang themselves as Judas Iscariot did. "Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for thee that they faith fail not." Thanks be to God for the intercession of Christ; otherwise Peter could not be saved. Peter denied the Lord three times, but the Lord's arms were around Peter's soul.

The blessed of the Lord will be given joy and gladness. Sorrow and sighing shall flee away for ever. Finally they shall return to the Zion above. In this world they have many temptations, many trials. They may have concluded, "God has cast me away. How is it, if God be on my side, that I have so much trouble; hatred from my fellow men; false accusations from the enemies of God?" The Lord has allowed it to be so in His holy providence. He allows these things to harass His people, making them weep tears. But in Zion above, all tears shall flee away, as the shadows of night flee away in the morning.

After death Jesus says to them, "Come up hither . . . Thou hast been faithful in small things . . . That they may behold my glory . . . I was dead but am alive again, and alive for evermore and have the keys of hell and of death." He says, "All power in heaven and earth is given unto me." "The redeemed of the Lord shall return to Zion with joy and gladness upon their heads", as if they were crowned with everlasting joy by the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He has crowned them. Who can take away that crown—fixed by the eternal Jehovah, by the blood of the Everlasting Covenant sprinkled on their heads, so that when they appear they shall have no wrinkle or spot or any such thing—free from sin, with joy undisturbed?

In this world when we rejoice with friends, it is only for a moment soon disturbed by sorrow. How much greater is soul sorrow when sin rears up its ugly head once more. But after death they shall have joy and gladness which shall never, to all eternity, flee away. When Adam had sinned he did not rejoice, because he had sinned. He feared God and hid himself.

What does death mean? The presentation of a sinner in the presence of God, where he cannot run away. In America there are some people who dress up dead bodies to deceive the mind that death is not a reality. All this is a hopeless attempt to take away the seriousness of death. Singing and clapping round the body, with people dressed up in uniforms—how foolish it is!

Woe to you if you are not freed by Him who alone is able to free you from the power of death. All other attempts fail. Death is a reality. But the redeemed of the Lord have joy undisturbed because the Lord Jesus Christ died in their room and place, so that death only summons them to the Lord, who is well pleased with them. Why? All their sins and iniquities will

be remembered no more because they will have been washed away in the precious blood of Jesus.

Dear friend, will you be there? My soul, will you be there?

The Lord's Supper*

Christian: "Sir, if it be no interruption to your studies, I would be glad to be resolved of several doubts, that arise in my mind, about receiving the blessed sacrament of the Lord's Supper."

Minister: "I shall be very glad to contribute anything for removing these scruples which may disturb you upon that account: therefore, pray go on."

Christian: "Sir, I have heard many sermons, and read several discourses, which do much urge and declare the necessity of communicating in this blessed ordinance; and yet I durst never presume to join therein."

Minister: "Have you then hitherto lived in the neglect of this important duty?"

Christian: "To speak freely, Sir, I never yet did communicate therein all my life; because I have much questioned, whether I were worthy to receive that blessed and holy seal, to the glory of God, and my own edification and comfort; since I never truly understood the institution, nature, administration, and ends of it, nor the qualifications of those who are to be partakers thereof, according to the appointment of Jesus Christ."

Minister: "Well then, I hope, if these things be plainly opened to you, it may conduce to satisfy your scruples."

Christian: "Sir, I shall receive your instructions with thankfulness, and if my heart deceive me not, shall rejoice in the light and knowledge that I may gain thereby."

Minister: "Let us then, first, enquire into the qualifications of a sincere Christian in general; and secondly, of the qualifications of such Christians as are meet to partake of the Lord's supper; for they are distinct, and sometimes separate."

Christian: "I hope, in doing this, you will much help me to judge of my present state and condition God-ward. And now, in the first place, pray inform me, how I may know if I am a sincere Christian."

Minister: "All true believers, among other graces, have such a knowledge of God in Christ, as works by love, and stirs up in them an earnest study of the will of God, and a sincere endeavour to live in the faith, knowledge, and practice of it."

Christian: "Sir, I cannot boast of my knowledge; yet, by the grace of God shewed to me, those conceptions which I have of God in Christ, have, I

(Flavel's Works, vol. 6)

A Familiar Conference between a Minister and a doubting Christian concerning the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

hope, so far prevailed upon me, that to live in the knowledge, love, and enjoyment of Him, and to have my all devoted to His will and praise, is all the heaven that I desire in this world, and a great part of that which I hope for in the world to come."

Minister: "These are good signs of a real and renewed change in your soul, and so doubtless have wrought good dispositions in you: of which you have had evidence in your heart, and have made it appear in your life and actions."

Christian: "I would be loth to flatter myself; but yet I hope, that I find some delight in the Word of God, both read and preached: and do seriously meditate thereon, that I may 'grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord'. And though I am sometimes tempted with vile and vain thoughts, yet I endeavour to stifle them, and my heart rises against them. I thank God, I strive to resist the first motions to sin, and avoid all occasions of evil; and I am never more uneasy, than when I happen into the company of profane and ill people, having a hatred to lying, obscene and filthy discourses, swearing, cursing, and all dishonourable reflections upon God and godliness. I make conscience of taking up a slander against my neighbour; and to be just, and to do good to all, according to my ability; and 'to walk in all the commandments of the Lord, blameless'."

Minister: "If these be the fruits and effects of your faith, it is not a dead faith; yet we must not rest upon our own works, or righteousness, for justification, merit, or satisfaction; because it will be derogatory to the merits and righteousness of Jesus Christ, and dangerous to our own souls."

Christian: "Sir, I know right well, there is no justification, but by the blood of Jesus; neither dare I trust to my own righteousness, but to His only, for the pardon and remission of my sins. And if by grace I am enabled to bring forth any fruit meet for a gospel faith, repentance, and love; these I bless God for, as a part of my duty and happiness, and desire to look on them as proofs of faith, (if they are worthy to be such) and no otherwise."

Minister: "This is well. But do you find your soul always in a good frame and temper, without haltings, slips or excursions?"

Christian: "Sir, I dare not say that I do: for I must with sorrow acknowledge, that at times my thoughts are polluted, my words are unsavoury without edification, my actions not adorning the doctrine of the gospel of God my Saviour; but such as I fear may prove a grief and snare to others. My spiritual relish of God's Word is very insipid, and its authority not so sensibly powerful; so that I am unready to anything that is good, even like a dead man, as if my religion had no life nor soul in it."

Minister: "Well: but when you thus fall into sin, or fail in your duty, what do you think of yourself and ways? How are you affected therewith?"

Christian: "When I am in this deplorable condition, my soul is much

disturbed, my joy and peace of conscience are gone; but when I am a little roused out of this sinful lethargy, my heart is then melted with sorrow for my folly and miscarriage, and I address myself to God with the greatest fear and shame, humbly imploring Him to renew a right Spirit within me."

Minister: "Well, friend, if your conscience confirms what your tongue has uttered, you have expressed enough to evidence the sincerity of your obedience to God, and that you are a sound believer, and a sincere convert. And I hope you have faith also in Jesus Christ the Mediator; without a due respect to Whom our faith and good affections will not deserve the name of being truly evangelical and saving."

Christian: "Through grace, I desire to acknowledge and embrace the Lord Jesus Christ upon the terms on which He is offered in the gospel; to believe all His doctrines, as my Teacher and Guide; to trust and depend upon Him, as the 'High-priest of our profession, Who makes atonement by His sacrifice and intercession'. And I desire to submit to His government, as Lord and King of His church."

Minister: "These are very considerable attainments, and include the substance of saving faith. But are you sensible how you arrived to this good disposition and frame of mind? Do you imagine it was natural to you, or the result of the improvement of your natural reason, powers, or faculties?"

Christian: "Oh, Sir, I dare by no means ascribe that to nature, which is only the effect of divine grace. If I have any measure of sanctification, it is only by the gift and grace of God; for I have had too much experience, that by nature I am alive to vanity and sin; but dead and lifeless to God, and to all real goodness; that I am darkness; folly possesseth my soul; I am at enmity with God, and altogether unable to will, or to do what is pleasing in His eyes; having a great contrariety in my heart to the way of salvation proposed in the gospel of Christ."

Minister: "And have you taken up strong resolutions, that, by the help of God, and the assistance of His blessed Spirit, you will endeavour to persevere in the faith and practice which you have now declared, to your life's end?"

Christian: "Sir, there is nothing that I more dread than apostatising, or relaxing in my duty and profession, and that I should have a backsliding heart from the Lord; and I earnestly watch and pray against every symptom and degree thereof."

Minister: "Do you think, that by your own strength and ability, you have power to persevere and continue in the faith and obedience of the gospel, against the many temptations and corruptions that assault us, and the lamentable miscarriages of those who seemed pillars in the house of God?"

Christian: "I have no confidence in my own ability, Sir, I assure you; but do wholly rely on the Rock that is higher than I; even upon Him Who hath

promised, that He will perfect a good work begun to the day of Christ. I rest upon Him, Who is the Author and Finisher of our faith; I beg His Holy Spirit, to instruct, guide, assist, and comfort me. And I earnestly desire and purpose, (by the grace of God) to expect those aids, in a constant and universal attendance upon God in His ordinances, with an honest, humble, and believing heart."

Minister: "These are all plain evidences of the saving grace of God: which I beseech the Lord may always continue, and grow in your heart; that so you may have a full assurance of His love, Who hath dealt so graciously with you."

Christian: "The Lord grant, that in the sense of His love to my soul, that I may walk worthy of His grace. And now, Sir, by what has been said, do you think I may presume to feed on Jesus Christ at His table, and receive that blessed seal of my Redeemer's love?"

Minister: "You know that I told you, that a man may be a true Christian, and yet may not be fit to partake of this holy ordinance: because he may believe unto salvation, and yet be so ignorant of this mystery, as not to be able to make a due application of it to his own soul."

Christian: "Ah, Sir, I would willingly be informed, what is necessary to be done by a sound believer, in order to the partaking of this blessed ordinance?"

Minister: "First, He must consider, that the elements of and matter of this ordinance, are not common bread and wine after consecration, but set apart to a holy use, and so to be received with an holy understanding and fear. And therefore the Corinthians were blamed by the Apostle, for their ignorance and irreverence, 1 Cor. 11. Again, that these elements, so blessed and set apart by Christ's appointment, do represent a crucified Redeemer; and we are to partake of them with love, as a memorial of His death; and with faith, as the seal of the promise, and the means appointed by God, to convey the benefits of Christ crucified to the soul."

Christian: "Sir, these considerations raise up my desire to come to the Lord's table, which I hope to be a partaker of, with the same sentiments that you have now laid before me; and that I shall feast mine eyes on that lovely object, which is so full of love; and that my eye will so deeply affect my heart toward my holy Redeemer, that I may meet with my blessed Lord in all the ways of His appointment."

Minister: "Again; you ought to set your soul upon self-examination, that so you may be sensible of your wants and defects, and come to Christ for a supply of the graces of His Holy Spirit; that you may exercise faith, love, repentance, and all other graces, with such warmth and vigour, that Jesus Christ may delight in you, and you in Him; and there may be a mutual and joyful renewing of your covenant of love and obedience to your blessed Saviour."

Christian: "Sir, we cannot suppose that there should be the actings and exercises of grace, where the habits are wanting, no more than there can

be motion without life: but it is usually said, that the holy Sacrament is a quickening, cherishing, comforting, and confirming ordinance."

Minister: "No doubt but the worthy prepared receivers of this blessed banquet, have by a due participation found their love inflamed, their faith strengthened, their obedience confirmed, their humility increased; so that they have appeared vile in their own sight, and have had an utter detestation of all sin, and an earnest expectation and desire after the glorious appearance of their blessed Lord and Redeemer."

Christian: "Sir, since the benefits and blessings are so great, it makes me the more earnestly long to be a communicant in these sacred mysteries."

David Livingstone I

Probably we have all realised that this is the centenary of David Livingstone's death. We have all also pondered the tremendous changes that have swept across the "dark continent" since he laid its centre bare before the world.

As Christians we ought to be interested in Livingstone. In practical Christianity he was a giant. This is what led Stanley to say, after living in the closest proximity to Livingstone for over four months: "I was converted by him, although he had not tried to do it."

As missionary-minded Christians we ought to be especially interested in Livingstone. The narrow-minded of his day could not appreciate him, but that was the inevitable result of the greatness of his soul. He was too big for them, and they could not take him in. For ourselves we feel we must approach the subject with humility. Studying his life in that spirit, it may be that something of lasting value will transfer itself to us.

We as a church, of course, have a greater reason than many to follow with interest the steps of the pioneer from Blantyre. Mark his trail around Rhodesia and wait for a few decades after his death. There you will see arising the mission of the Free Presbyterian Church.

The following articles are not offered as a substitute for the close study of Livingstone's life. Rather, if they serve to spur readers to search in the surer guide of the missionary's own writings, they will have achieved their purpose. Recipients of the "Young People's Magazine" will notice that a series is being run there which describes some of the incidents and personalities which coloured Livingstone's eventful life. Intended primarily for the young, that series may yet be found by older readers a good complement to this.

About his early days Livingstone is reticent. However we have all heard how his boyhood years were filled with honest labour. At ten years of age he went to the local factory at Blantyre, and with his first week's wage bought "Rudiments of Latin". His daily routine at this tender age thus became: work at the factory from 6 a.m. till 8 p.m., Night School from 8

p.m. till 10 p.m., homework from 10 p.m. till midnight or later. Today men go on strike to have their working week reduced to less than half that which Livingstone worked at the age of ten.

Livingstone is also quiet about his conversion and subsequent spiritual experiences. However he does tell us that in his youth he had a spiritual experience comparable to the cure of colour blindness, if such could be effected. He had been acquainted in theory with all the doctrines of Christianity from childhood: now he saw their application to himself.

Having felt the love of God in his heart, Livingstone soon resolved to devote his life "to the alleviation of human misery". His thoughts travelled to China, and his heart was affected by the misery that must reside in a vast empire lying in darkness and the shadow of death. So he decided to become a doctor in preparation for the work of a pioneer missionary in China. Now that he had a distinct objective in view, he attacked his studies with renewed zeal, and brought his books with him to the factory. His spinning jenny became also his reading desk, and as he passed back and fore at his work he also trained himself to absorb his text books, sentence by sentence.

His heavy work as a cotton spinner was sufficiently paid to enable him to attend medical and Greek classes in winter, and divinity classes in summer. Thus he would have been able to prepare himself independently for going to China, but he was drawn to join the London Missionary Society "on account of its unsectarian character" sending, as was reputed, "neither episcopacy, nor presbyterianism, nor independency, but the gospel of Christ to the heathen".

By the time Livingstone had finished his training, an obstacle had come between him and going to China. The opium war was now raging, and it was thought unsafe for him to go. The problem of the missionary novice was solved by the appearance of the veteran from South Africa, Robert Moffat. So it was decided: to Africa Livingstone would go.

For Livingstone, the night of November 16th, 1840, was a memorable one. It was the last that he ever spent at home with his father. David proposed to stay up all night with his family, but his mother, who had often taken books from her son in the small hours and sent him off to bed, said 'no'. As it was, the father and son talked long and earnestly around the fire about the prospects of Christian missions. At five the next morning the whole family was astir. The others said goodbye at Blantyre, but his father walked with him to catch the Liverpool steamer at Glasgow. Watching David sail down the Broomielaw, his father saw him for the last time on this earth.

On the 20th of November Livingstone was ordained in England, and on the 8th of December he sailed for Algoa Bay. Travelling by ox-cart he eventually arrived at Kuruman, seven hundred miles north of the Cape. This was the head station established by Moffat, but Livingstone did not wait here long. He left for the North as soon as the oxen had been rested,

and began investigating the possibility of opening another station in that direction. The tribe he now visited were called Bakwains—a branch of that large group of natives called Bechuanas. The trip North was not a prolonged one, and soon Livingstone was back at Kuruman. The missionary who accompanied him may not have had the same determination as Livingstone, and perhaps this explains their early return. At any rate Livingstone himself was set on becoming personally acquainted with the language and habits of the Bakwains, so he set out once again for the North after a three months' rest at Kuruman. The insights which he gained in this six month ordeal, when he never saw a white face, were to stand him in good stead in the years to come.

Coming back to Kuruman, Livingstone prepared to move bag and baggage to his chosen sphere of labour. However, here he met the first of the many disappointments and frustrations which were to meet him in his work. Tribal warfare broke out in the North, and the Bakwains left the station which Livingstone had begun to establish among them. There was nothing for it: he had to think of somewhere else, and this time he selected the beautiful valley of Mabotsa. Here he settled in 1843, the year when his homeland was agog with the debates surrounding the Disruption. For Livingstone personally the next year held the opposite of a disruption when he "screwed up courage to put a question beneath one of the fruit trees" to Moffat's oldest daughter, Mary.

These years had been spent in "preparatory labours" between Kuruman and Mabotsa. In 1845 Mr and Mrs Livingstone set up house at Chonuane, residence of Sechele, chief of the Bakwains. But again trouble seemed to stalk Livingstone, and a severe drought made life in Chonuane impossible. After some months there they decided to shift to Kolobeng where was a stream which would make irrigation possible. Fortunately Chief Sechele and his people were now sufficiently under Livingstone's influence to follow him in this removal of forty miles.

The drought, however, continued. This brought Livingstone face to face with the superstition of the African doctors that they could make rain, and he found them very astute in defending their belief. They did not maintain that their medicines produced rain by magic, but rather that God had given them the means by which to approach Him, when seeking rain. *They* respected the many gifts which God had given in love to the white man. Why, the doctors asked, should the white man not acknowledge the simple gift of rain-making which God had given to the black man?

It must have been most trying for Livingstone to see the rain fall often on the hills ten miles away, and never come near Kolobeng. One day Chief Sechele's uncle enforced the point: "We like you," he said, "as well as if you had been born among us; you are the only white man we can become familiar with; but we wish you to give up that everlasting preaching and praying; we cannot become familiar with that at all. You see we never get rain, while those tribes who never pray as we do obtain abundance."

And there were other trials, too, which Livingstone felt, as he indicated in a letter to his father about this time:

"We have a difficult, difficult field to cultivate here. All I can say is that I think knowledge is increasing. But for the belief that the Holy Spirit works and will work for us, I should give up in despair. Remember us in your prayers, that we grow not weary in well-doing. It is hard to work for years with pure motives, and all the time be looked on by most of those to whom our lives are devoted, as having some sinister object in view. Disinterested labour—benevolence—is so out of their line of thought that many look upon us as having some ulterior object in view. But He who died for us, and whom we ought to copy, did more for us than we can do for any one else. He endured the contradiction of sinners. May we have grace to follow in His steps!"

The house which Livingstone erected at Kolobeng was the third that he had built with his own hands since arriving in the Africa. Here, despite the troubles attendant on the continuing drought, he lived happily with his wife. They were very much cast on their own resources for the most elementary of home comforts, but Livingstone denied that there was much hardship involved, and said that "married life is all the sweeter when so many comforts emanate directly from the thrifty housewife's hands." (The comforts referred to were candles, soap and such like.)

Their daily routine was as follows. Family worship and breakfast had taken place before seven in the morning. School then lasted till eleven o'clock, attended by men, women and children. Livingstone then engaged in some manual work until dinner, which was followed by an hour's rest. Mary then held either an infant school or a sewing class, both of which were attended by about a hundred pupils. In the evening Livingstone went to the village to talk with the natives. On three nights of the week he held a service, and on another evening he held a class of practical instruction on some useful subject. Apart from this he also attended the sick, and did what he could to help feed the poor. He held absolutely to the principle that a missionary must show love in a practical way to the people—love to all and at all times. Surely here above everything else is the secret of his extraordinary influence over the natives, and of the unrivalled esteem in which he was held.

Livingstone, however, was never a man to rest on what he had done. His eyes were always on the horizon, wondering what lay beyond. Twice during his stay at Kolobeng he undertook journeys of three hundred miles to the East, seeking to help the tribes oppressed by the Boers. Then in June, 1849, he was ready to start another trip to the North. This time he did not travel on his own, but in the company of two white hunters, and their presence was the occasion of some debate among the natives. Livingstone's motives were clear to them, but why did these other men leave their homes and endure the privations of desert travel just to kill wild animals? Had they no meat at home? When Livingstone, in defence of his fellow-

countrymen, tried to explain the motivation of a sportsman, the Africans had a good laugh. Whatever Oswell and Murray thought they were doing, chasing over the sweltering plains of the Kalahari after game, the natives proudly reflected that they themselves had "turned to good account the folly of an itinerant butcher".

It was on the 1st of August that European eyes first gazed over the waters of Lake Ngami. Oswell and Murray doubtless indulged the wonder of it to the full, but Livingstone was now so preoccupied with thoughts about regions beyond, that the Lake itself meant little to him. Coming up the Zouga, which flows out of Lake Ngami, they had encountered another river, which joined the Zouga from the North. Enquiring where it came from, Livingstone had been told, "Oh, from a country full of rivers—so many no one can tell their numbers." It was the thought of this, and of the possibility of penetrating the heart of Africa by rivers connected in this way, that had overshadowed for Livingstone the discovery of Lake Ngami. Until this time western belief had been that the centre of Africa consisted of a "large sandy plateau". Livingstone now knew this to be wrong, and was determined to demonstrate it. He also knew that if the centre of Africa were well watered, it would be fertile, and that if it were fertile it must support countless thousands of human beings. To open up the way for the gospel to reach them became particularly the obsession of his soul.

J.T.

Obituary

The Late Mrs Annie MacAskill, Strathy Point.

Many church friends in the north regretted the passing away last year at the age of eighty-two, of this worthy woman, Mrs Annie MacAskill, a sister of the late Mrs Gillies, Stornoway.

Her father Mr Alex. MacKay and her mother lived and died at Strathy Point. Her father was devoted to the Church and frequently attended the Communion in Wick as long as he was able. Her mother, Janet MacKay, was a warm-hearted and lively, god-fearing woman. They were well acquainted with the godly men and women in the north at the beginning of the church, and were well acquainted with Mr Murdo MacKay, the missionary for many years in Strathy, and with his sister Miss Charlotte MacKay, and Mr Hugh Munro and Mr Alex. MacDonald and others. Mrs MacAskill herself knew these outstanding witnesses for Christ.

Her husband, William, who was precentor in the Strathy Congregation died in June, 1947, leaving her a widow with a family of eight, to whom she always set a Christian example although not a professing Christian at that time. For many years she was esteemed to be a woman who knew and loved the Lord Jesus Christ, His gospel and His people. Her kindness and hospitality in her home to the Lord's people at communion seasons and

other times was well-known and greatly appreciated. Others also received a warm welcome from her when they came to her house.

It was only when one entered into a conversation with her about the things of the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus, that it was evident that she not only knew her Bible, as we would expect, but that her reading extended to a variety of the most edifying books of a Christian character.

As has been said of others, Mrs MacAskill's place in the house of God was never empty, except for some very good reason. Many a Sabbath Day she walked from Strathy Point to the church at Strathy in all weathers. A little over a week before she died she was in church—a rebuke to many young persons, and others, who despise the tabernacles of God's grace today. Truly, some are seen to walk upon the narrow way that leads to life eternal in its fullness in heaven; and others upon the broad way that leads to destruction in a lost eternity.

Mrs MacAskill ultimately became a member in full communion in September, 1963. This was something the Kirk Session were looking for, for years, and it gave them great satisfaction and encouragement to receive her: and see her witness publicly to her faith and love toward her Redeemer, at the Lord's Table.

She suffered from a shock and in less than a week's time passed from this world, where she was not without her trials, to enter the better country, even an heavenly, to be with Jesus, and to enjoy the rest that remaineth to the people of God.

May the Lord of grace and glory touch the hearts of each member of her family with His power and mercy, and bring them to be all followers of their Mother's Saviour.

The writer and others extend to the bereaved family sincere sympathy; and in a special manner to her son Hugh, who lived with his Mother and showed the greatest affection and devotion to her, to the end.

R.R.S.

Gathan de Ghloir na Diadhachd

(*Air a leantuin bho t.d. 246*)

Leis an Urr. Eideard Pearce

CAIB. II

Ann's am bheil dearbhadh coitcheann a thaobh neo-chaochlaidheachd he.

Tha na creutairean, seadh, na creutairean is fearr, annta fein, buailtach do chaochladh; ach tha Dia anns gach doigh, agus anns na h-uile adh neo-chaochlaidheach; tha Dia fein ann an so (mar a chi sibh) gu nraichte a cur an ceill a neo-chaochlaidheachd. Is mise Iehobhah, cha chaochail mi, agus tha e bitheanta air a chur an ceill ann an aitean eile;

“Tha gach uile dheagh thabhartas, agus gach uile thiodhlac iomlan o’n airde, a teachd a nuas o Athair na soillse, maille ris nach eil atharrachadh, na sgaile tionndaidh.” Seumas 1: 17. Tha Dia ann an so air a ghairm Athair na soillse. Tha E mar an ceudna air a ghairm *solus* fein, I Eoin 1: 5. Is solus Dia. Leis am bheil (mar a tha duine ionnsaichte dha chur) e cur an ceill dhuinn Morachd, Naomhachd, agus Beannachdan iomlan Dhe; agus ann an so tha E air a ghairm, Athair na soillse. Gu bhi cur an ceill gu’m bheil na h-uile solus, na h-uile Ghloir, na h-uile naomhachd agus bheannachd a gabhail comhnuidh Ann-san. Agus ge b’e tha na creutairean sin a cophartachadh ann, tha e tighinn bh’uaithe-san mar fhior thobar agus fhuaran. Nis, a thaobh Athair na soillse so cha’n eil (tha’n t-Abstol ag radh) atharrachadh na sgaile tionndaidh; tha’m focal anns a Greuguis a ciallachadh ni a tha air a thoirt bho na nithibh neamhaidh a tha fulung iomadh caochladh agus atharrachadh; tha na soluis neamhaidh a fulung iomadh atharrachadh, tha aca an dol a mugha agus a meudachadh; ach maille ri Dia Athair na soillse, cha’n eil a leithid de ni, tha E ghnath a dealrachadh leis an aon soillseachadh, dealradh, agus gloir, maille ris nach eil atharrachadh na sgaile tionndaidh; ’s e sin, tha e gu’n atharrachadh na’n samhldh is lugha de chaochladh; cha’n eil ni a tha coltach ri caochladh air fhaotainn maille Ris: is e tha ann an Dia ach grian nach luidh agus nach eirich, nach bi gu brath fodh dhubhar na fodh sgaile. Mar so mar an ceudna tha Salm 102: 24, 25, 26, 27. “Thubhairt mi, Mo Dhia, na tabhair air falbh mi ann a’ meadhon mo laithean: tha do bhliadhnan-sa air feadh nan uile linn. O chainn leag thu bunaitean na talmhuinn; agus is iad na neamhan obair do lamh. Theid as daibh-san, ach mairidh tusa; fasaidd iadsan uile sean mar aodach: mar thrusgan caochlaidh tu iad, agus bithidh iad air an caochladh. Ach is tusa an Ti Ceudna, agus cha chrìochnaichear do Bhliadhnan.” Thugaibh fa’n ear, ’s e na neamhan a chuid is fìor-ghloine de’n chruthachadh, gidheadh, tha’n Salmadair ag innse dhuinn gu’n teid iad thairis, agus bithidh iad air an atharrachadh, ach tha e’g radh ri Dia, tha thusa a ni ceudna, agus cha bhi crìoch air do bhliadhnan; cha’n eil thu’g atharrachadh, ach a’ ni a bha thu tha thu, agus bithidh tu gu sìorruidh. Tha na neamhan, agus mar sin na h-uile creutair, cha’n e mhain a fas sean agus ag atharrachadh, ach thoir fa’n ear, tha iad a fas sean agus ag atharrachadh mar thruagan. Tha aodach, a lion beag ’us beag a grodadh agus air itheadh le leomain, ach tha trusgan air a chosg agus air a chaitheamh gach latha; tha gach latha a toirt atharrachadh air na creutairean, ni’s motha na ni’s lugha, ach cha’n atharraich Dia, tha E fantainn a ni ceudna gu brath; bho bhithbhuan-tachd is E Dia mar a th’agaibh ann an Salm 90: 2. ’S e sin, tha E gu neo-chaochlaidheach an aon Chuspair a tha gu neo-chrìochnach naomh agus an Ti beannaichte. Dia (tha aon dhe na h-aosmhor ag radh) a tha’g atharrachadh na h-uile nithean a tha anns an t-saoghal, tha E Fein neo-chaochlaidheach, cha robh E riamh ur, cha robh E riamh sean. Mar sin chi sibh gu’m bheil Dia neo-chaochlaidheach. Nis ma dh’fheoraicheas

sibh dhìom cìod e an neo-chaochlaidheachd so aig Dia? Freagraidh mi, gu'r e sin a bhuadh sin aig Dia, leis am bheil E saor bho thruaillidheachd agus bho atharrachadh, tha E'n comhnaidh mar E Fein; air chor 'us nach urrain E sgur a bhi a ni a tha E; na toiseachadh a bhi a' ni nach robh E; agus leis a so tha E gu neo-chrìochnach eadar-dhealaichte ri chreutairean ann an iomlanachd agus ann an glòir: tha iad uile buailteach do thruaillidheachd agus do chaochladh, co-dhuibh na'n nadur fein tha iad mar sin, mar a h-eil na'n suidheachadh; faodaidh iad sgur a bhi a' ni a tha iad, agus toiseachadh a bhi a' ni nach robh iad faodaidh iad a bhi call a ni a bh'aca, agus ruigheachd air ni nach robh aca roimhe; eadhon na dearbh aingil iad fein, tha iad annta fein caochlaidheach; mar a dh'dhaodas a bhi bi's soilleir air a nochdadh an deigh so. Ach a nis maille ri Dia, cha'n eil a leithid de ni, tha E saor bho gach uile sheorsatruthaillidheachd agus caochladh; tha E ghnath an ni ceudna, cha mhotha 's urrain e sgur a ni a tha E, na toiseachadh a bhi an ni nach eil E. Ach gu'm bheil Dia neo-chaochlaidheach, agus mar an ceudna cìod e a neo-chaochlaidheachd, bidh sin air a nochdadh leis na bhios a ris air a thoirt fa'n ear.

(R'i a leantuinn)

Italian Mission News

News about our mission in Italy is best presented by Publishing parts of a letter received from our people there. The first part is written by Emilia's mother, and the second part by Emilia herself.

"It has given me great pleasure to know that a good man from your congregation has thought of us, sending us a tape recorder, as you, minister, explain in your letter. I heartily thank you and the Lord, because it seems to me a thing inspired by the good God, because I cannot read as much as I used to when I had good eyesight. Therefore the gift has greatly rejoiced me.

"... With Emilia I have read so many times the sermon from you, sent in the previous letter. One time it was read with Claudio, but for the present I do not discern interest in him. Certainly to live among people and relations of a different religion is difficult, but with the help of the Lord we will overcome every obstacle. Sometimes I have tried to speak of that little that I know of the faith, but to go against the current is to make ourselves enemies. I think again of the word of the Lord which says 'Cast not your pearls before swine'.

Yours in the Lord,
Irene."

"When I received the precious sermon I was most happy and thought I would reply immediately to thank you. But I did not succeed in doing so; I humbly ask you to excuse me, and I assure you that I think of you even if I

delay in replying.

The sermon is most precious, especially the last part. I hope that the Lord will have mercy on my soul, and will help me to find spiritual water to quench my thirst, and that it will not happen to me that I die of thirst as will come to those who do not accept His word.

"Thank you for your thought of us, also for the tape recorder which you have thought of sending us. It is impossible for us to make repayment, but the reward which you have from the Lord is more important, of that I am sure.

I have given the sermon to Ermete to read. Do not be concerned, minister, if you have not written them. We understand, and I ask you not to worry, because I will give every sermon that you send to Ermete to read. Tomorrow, D.V., I will send the sermon to the lady in Spianate. I am sorry you did not find the address of the old man in Barga; I hope that you will be able to find it.

"Renzo, Dario and Simonetta have been successful in school and are pleased to be on holiday.

Affectionate good wishes from us all,
Emilia."

Reference was made already in the article printed in the March magazine to the various people referred to in these letters. Claudio is Emilia's husband, and the three names mentioned at the end are those of her children. Ermete is her brother who, with his wife, was at some of the services we held in Emilia's home. Our contacts with the old man at Barga and the lady at Spianate were mentioned in the March article. As Emilia indicated, we lost the old man's address, but we posted the sermon to him, addressing it as best we could, and hope that he receives it.

It is very touching to find such gratitude expressed in these letters, when we think of how little they receive. The sermon was only a few typed pages on I Timothy 1: 15, but it seems to have meant something to them. How much it meant is indicative of how impoverished they are of the word of God, and how great are our privileges here in Scotland.

The tape recorder was referred to at the Synod in May: where it came from is explained in the first letter. As Emilia mentions, those who give to the cause of Christ in this way will never lose their reward. I have now recorded two sermons, one of each side of the tape, and have posted the recorder to Italy. We hope that it will arrive safely, and that it will be a means of blessing when it does. Even the novelty of hearing a sermon on tape may arrest the interest of the children, and we pray that they and their father may yet be made like their mother.

May the Lord Himself give to his people a spirit of true prayer for the Italian mission. The numbers are so tiny, but if He Himself would be among them, then they would be strengthened by His grace. May others be brought in as well. Especially we pray that a man may be raised up to be a leader among them.

J.T.

Rhodesian Mission News

by Mission Staff

By the time you read this we hope that the new members of staff who were due to join us two weeks ago will have got the necessary visas for entry into this country, which at present are being delayed. We need another Graduate teacher by the end of this year, so as to allow those teachers who are due leave to get home.

The new church at Zenka is now near completion. We hope that a pastor will be provided for that large area which has not so many religious denominational bodies as the area around Ingwenya.

There is still no word of encouragement in obtaining a church site in Bulawayo. We should like you to pray that the responsible bodies would grant this, and that a suitable minister for the work there would be provided. "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest."

There was a very pleasant time of Communion services held at the end of July at Somankantana, part of the area under Rev. Mzamo which is very isolated. There is an annual Communion held there. There were good congregations packed into the small mud-brick classroom where the services were held, with quite a number of young men present. Three new women members were accepted. Services are held regularly there and in the surrounding districts by two or three preachers who belong to that area.

We would desire you to pray to the Lord that He would provide African teachers who are Christians for our Secondary School at Ingwenya. In 1974 we expect to have six African teachers on the staff, so their interest in keeping up a definite Christian standard is vital. We are thankful to have James Mpofu, a son of the late Alexander Mpofu, who is a fine Christian and an excellent influence among the staff.

K.M.

Sanctuary Sins

The following is a brief catalogue of some of the sins peculiar to attendance at God's house. Are you guilty of any of these sins?

1. Irregular Attendance at Church

Occasional absence from church, or even regular half-day hearing, is counted a small thing by many. A wet Sabbath, or even a shower, will keep them away. A headache, a little extra fatigue on the Saturday, or perhaps the prospect of hard work on Monday, are counted good reasons for absence by many. And if there be any slight ailment through the week, Sabbath is selected as the day for taking medicine, as it can be spared without any pecuniary loss.

2. Late Attendance at Church

There are some people who make a point of being late. They get up late on Sabbath morning; they breakfast late; so that the bells are ringing ere they have finished their last cup of tea. They hurry out, and they hurry along, and they hurry into church after the service is begun. They see no sin in losing part of divine worship themselves, nor in disturbing the worship of others.

3. Sleeping in Church

There was some excuse for Eutychus falling asleep, for "Paul was long preaching," and it was midnight. But there is no excuse for our modern sleepers; especially as some of these are not occasional, but regular sleepers, who seem not to feel the shame or the sin of the practice. Few things are more unpleasant to a minister than to see eyes closed and heads nodding, in this pew or that other pew. If he were to stop and name the individuals before the congregation he would do well. But what offence it would give! What a noise it would make! Sleepers in church! Beware, it is Satan who is rocking you to sleep. And those who make a profession of religion ought to guard themselves against this habit. How disgraceful would it appear to see an elder sleeping in the lateran or a minister in the pulpit!

4. Staring in Church

One does not like to mention smiling or laughing in church, for it seems such an outrage on decency and a mockery of devotion. But there are many who won't laugh in a church, who do not hesitate to look about, to turn this way or the other way, staring at strangers, or occupied with their neighbour's dresses. If a person happens to come in late, they turn round to see who he is. Starers in church! learn to keep your eyes as well as your mind from wandering.

5. Restlessness in Church

Some people seem to sit on nails or nettles, their body is so constantly in motion. Others take out their watches, and count the length of sentences in the sermon, twirling or twisting their watch-chain or ribbon all the while. Others seem as if taking the census of the congregation, or counting the number of panes in the window. They are drinking in everything but the sermon, and seem as if relieved from the stocks when the service is over.

6. Transacting Business in Church

I don't mean that they actually move about buying and selling; but their minds are occupied with business not with worship. Many sums are added up, and much mental arithmetic is practised in church; not the heavenly arithmetic of "numbering our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom," but the arithmetic of common business. The farmer ploughs his

fields; the merchant drives his bargains; the shopkeeper sells his goods or takes stock; the lawyer threads his way through a client's case; the politician speculates on parliamentary tactics or sketches a reform bill; the sailor takes the helm, and lays his vessel to the wind; the soldier forms squares or deploys into line; the mechanic plies the loom, or the needle, or the trowel, or the hammer. Thus men who come together to worship the great God of heaven and earth, mock Him in His own house.

"Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear than to give the sacrifice of fools" (Eccles. 5:1). On which passage Matthew Henry weightily says, "Religious exercises are not vain things; but if we mismanage them, they become vain to us." — Selected.

Communion Table Address

by Rev. Arch. Cook

Well, you are now at the Lord's table seeking Jesus who was crucified. Do not be ashamed of His name. You that received something that made you forsake your idols, will not be ashamed to confess Him before an assembled world. The Lord loveth the broken heart for sin. It was sin that made Christ go through the ocean of God's wrath that He might redeem the objects of His love. Sin is the only thing in the world that the Lord hates. On that night on which he was betrayed He took bread. That night will never be forgotten. It has sent forth a savour that will never pass away through eternity. He will come again and finish His work. He finished a great part of it upon the Cross, but He has a great deal yet to do. A good woman said, "If ever I get to heaven, He has much yet to do in my soul. If I would be taken to heaven in my sins I would turn a serpent and would sting the Lord of Glory." Mary washed His feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head. That was the fruit of pardon. The Lord never gives a token of the pardon of sin, but He gives a token of the sanctification of the soul.

My friends, if ever you get a drop of grace, when you come to Jordan, you will see that you had need of every cross and every trail to draw the soul from its idols. Remember, poor sinner, that one vain thought will do more harm to your soul than all the devils in hell. Poor creature, do they call you a hypocrite? What will they say when the Lord will acknowledge you to be His own before an assembled world.

Many poor sinners are contented with the form of godliness. But there is nothing in the world one should be so much afraid of as starving one's soul. There is nothing so near the Lord as the death of His Son. It is the death of the Saviour that lifted the glory and cause of God in the world.

We read that the Lord's eyes are as a flame of fire. This means that His secret eye observes the actings of the souls of men. "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth." For my part, I

would prefer one spiritual thought to a million of prayers. The secret eye will pierce through the soul. Don't look about you at the Lord's table. You don't know how near you are to consuming fire.

My friends, a person might go so far in religion that the Lord's people, and even the angels and saints in heaven might think he was a gracious person, when the secret eye sees in him nothing but emptiness to the very bottom. Did you ever see the mercy of God? Did you see it in the death of the Saviour? If not, you never tasted of the mercy of God. O what love shall be seen, when He will say concerning some, "Behold me and the children whom thou hast given me." The Lord will not break one of your bones, He will not give you one stroke, but what you will bless Him for through eternity. O poor worldling, you will yet see all the world burning. All that took away your heart from God you will see in flames, and you will then say, "O that I had thought more of the world to come." One said in speaking of Jacob, "It is written, fear not, thou worm Jacob, for I am thy God. "When Jacob was a worm he thrashed the mountains, but when he was a mountain the worms thrashed him."

An old divine once said, that man was a ring which dropped from the finger of God into hell, and the Second Person of the Godhead stooped down into hell and lifted the ring, and put it on the hand of God. I hope there are none here whose soul never kept them five minutes from the world. If there are, they are miserable creatures. If the greatest sinner here should get a drop of repentance he would be eternally saved, but it is not every late repentance that ends in glory. It is an awful thing to see a sinner going to eternity without repentance, like the very beasts that perish.

"Do this in remembrance of Me." He asked no more from the objects of His love than to remember Him. When He had supped, He gave the bread and wine to His disciples as I now give them to you, in the name of a Triune God, on condition that you will be His through time and through all eternity.

To one who asked him the secret of his service, George Miller said, "There was a day when I died, utterly died," and as he spoke, he bent lower and lower until he almost touched the floor—"died to George Miller, his opinions, preferences, tastes and will,—died to the world, its approval or censure, died to the approval or blame, even of my brethren and friends, and since then I have studied only to show myself approved unto God."

From "Life of George Miller" by A.T. Pierson.

Book Reviews

Bible Doctrine, Book 1, by Dorothy Partington Anderson. Banner of Truth Trust; price 60p

This is a Workbook similar in format to Mark's Sketchbook of Christ, and is a very commendable attempt to explain the truths contained in the first 20 questions of the Shorter Catechism. The author's questions compel the reader to think, and to search the Scriptures for answers which unfold the meaning of the Catechism statements. The illustrations are helpful too and are used to good effect in the very interesting chapters on creation and man. Perhaps the least successful chapter is the last which deals with God's gracious provision for sin. The authoress holds the two covenant views, namely, that there is a covenant of redemption between God the Father and the Son, and a covenant of grace between God and the elect. There is then mentioned a distinction between the Old Covenant and the New without adequate explanation of what the terms stand for.

In our view, the truth regarding the divine covenants is best presented by contrasting the covenant of works made between God and man with that of grace made between God the Father and God the Son. It is when Christ by his Spirit and Word applies the benefits of his redemptive work to the sinners for whom He died, that they obtain an interest in the covenant of grace. They can then look on it as made with themselves as represented in Christ. It is then a simple matter to point out that the covenant of grace now so clearly revealed in the New Testament, was also in operation throughout the Old Testament Period, only administered in a less clear manner through typical and symbolic ordinances.

There is a poem at the beginning, "Richard Cory", and an imaginary situation on page 96 which would have been better left out and whose teaching we feel could have been equally well imparted by means less likely to stimulate unhealthy ideas in young minds. The "shock" technique so much employed in literature and all the arts today has its dangers.

A.McP.

Commentary on the Gospel of John by George Hutcheson. Banner of Truth Reprint.

We cordially recommend the perusal of this Commentary of the Gospel of John by George Hutcheson. Written over three centuries ago, one could hardly expect the appeal of its contemporary orthodox counterpart either in language or in form. For all this, this work possesses real and solid merit.

A sample of the author's ability to explain and expound the great and unfathomable doctrines of the Deity and humanity of Christ may be obtained by reading his comments in the first chapter of this gospel. The sublime and ineffable statements of the Holy Spirit in the opening verses

of John's Gospel are handled with rare clarity, humility and simplicity. While avoiding a shallow and superficial treatment of the great mysteries relative to the Person of Christ—His pre-existent glory and His manifestation in the flesh, he never allows himself to go beyond his depth and refused to be lured into the dangerous metaphysical and philosophical deeps where so many have floundered and foundered. No ordinary measure of prudence and caution characterises every page of this work.

The pattern set at the outset, namely, a synopsis of the subject matter followed by a statement of the several doctrines contained in each portion is strictly adhered to throughout the volume. In an age when the preaching of the gospel has largely lost its doctrinal basis and content, this volume with its strong, clear emphasis on doctrine is particularly welcome.

The following remarks of the author on verse 2 of chapter 1, while commending and indicating his humble and devotional approach to the great verities of the faith, are also calculated to whet the discerning reader's appetite:— "The knowledge of Christ as God is a truth to be much inculcated upon believers and which they ought to study again and again and dwell upon as having more in it, than will be seen at first view; and when they have found most in it yet there is infinitely more to be found in that inexhaustible fountain; for so much also doth this repetition teach."

F.M.

Some Aspects of the Spiritual Life of John Knox

This little monograph by Mr Geoffrey Williams, Librarian of the Evangelical Library, first appeared as articles in the *English Churchman*. It deals with a much neglected side of the great Reformer's life, though it is in effect the most important part of his life, and the side from which all his other work flowed. The spiritual life of Knox is worthy of much more extended treatment than it receives in a brief monograph like this but, as the writer says, if it should lead readers to study the writings from greater pens it will not prove to have been written entirely in vain. Copies at 5p can be obtained from the Author, c/o The Evangelical Library, 78a Chiltern Street, London.

D.B.M.

Let Conscience Speak by David Fountain. 15p

This small book of 32 pages gives a timely call to the necessity of recognising the Bible fact that man has a conscience—a distinct faculty of soul which passes judgment on the person. The author calls on preachers especially that they should direct their message to the conscience.

In so small a booklet it could hardly be expected that a full treatment could be given to the matter of 'the evil conscience'. There appears to be a serious omission of the fact that it is the work of the Holy Spirit to apply the blood of Christ to the soul, thereby delivering the soul from an evil conscience.

Christians are called upon to give studious endeavour to keep their consciences void of offence to God and to man. The result held out in page 31 that the believer who thus attains to a tender conscience will be satisfied that he is walking in well pleasing to God, may very well be questioned, for the result may be the reverse, where, the more of sin is discovered the more the believer will mourn—"a joyous weeping and a weeping joy". It is this spirit of blessed mourning that characterised many Christians of a past generation, and, instead of feeling like smiling at their consciences (as the writer seems to allow) we would do well to cry out to the Lord, "Why hast Thou hardened our hearts from Thy fear?"

There seems to be a typographical error on page 27—"link" should read 'think'.

A.E.W.M.

Notes and Comments

The Clayson Report

The Clayson Report on the Licensing Laws in Scotland has now been published. Longer hours for selling liquor on Sabbath and weekday and abolishment of the Veto Poll are among the recommendations of this Report. Had the Committee consisted of the brewers themselves they could hardly have done more to further their interests.

We ask—But what of the law of the Sabbath? What of the broken and shattered homes in the land where mothers and children are exposed to ill-treatment and shame all through the evil influence of drink? What of the homes where children are exposed to neglect and cruelty because not only one but both parents have fallen a prey to drink? Can these unfortunates no longer look to the Government of the land to give a little alleviation to their suffering by limiting the opportunities for drinking? What of the young of the land growing up amidst numerous moral dangers? Must they be exposed to further temptations in order that they may be ensnared in this terrible vice and end up in an alcoholic's grave? It is good to know that there are individuals and societies who actively engage in the relief of those enslaved by drink and their dependents. But our priorities must be right. Prevention is better than cure. One factor in that prevention is undoubtedly the limiting of the hours for the supply of intoxicating liquors. This report, sad to say, does the very opposite.

Church Notes

Letter to Princess Anne

Your Royal Highness,

We have noted with deep regret intimation in the public press of the Royal European Film Premiere of "Jesus Christ Superstar" in aid of the "Save the Children Fund" which your Royal Highness has agreed to favour with your gracious presence.

We recognise the worthy object for which this Royal European Film Premiere is intended—that is, support for the "Save the Children Fund"—and we are gratified that Your Royal Highness is ready to give your patronage to such a worthy cause.

We deeply regret, however, that the name of our beloved Royal Family should be associated with, and that any member of the Royal Family should countenance with their Presence the daringly blasphemous film "Jesus Christ Superstar".

We humbly plead with Your Royal Highness to reconsider this matter in the light of the great dishonour to the Lord Jesus Christ which Your Royal Highness's action would involve.

May God grant Your Royal Highness wisdom and light from on High, a view by faith of the real Lord Jesus Christ, and everlasting salvation through His Name.

On behalf of the Committee, etc.,
(Rev.) John MacLeod.

Conference at Kilravock

Kilravock Castle, steeped as it is in religious history, was opened to the public as a Christian Guest House in 1967. The castle is situated near Inverness, and a more suitable centre for a Youth Conference could not be dreamed of. It was in these magnificent grounds that young people from as far apart as Wick and Greenock gathered on the afternoon of Tuesday, 24th July.

Before dinner we were welcomed by Rev. M MacInnes, Conference Secretary, in the new conference hall recently opened in the castle grounds. After dinner he introduced the Rev. R.R. Sinclair, who gave the first paper on "Search the Scriptures". There followed a short break, then discussion of the subject began. The speaker had asked for free, even provocative comment, and the discussion proved that the request had not fallen on deaf ears. After worship, the family of thirty odd returned to the castle for supper, then retired to most comfortable rooms to sleep.

The first paper on Wednesday morning was on "Free Presbyterian Church Principles", again given by Mr Sinclair. This paper and the discussion which followed were most useful, providing a clear and reasoned statement of the Church's position, especially from an historical point of view.

The afternoon was free, but some took advantage of an offer from Miss Rose—"Kilravock the Twenty-fifth"—to show us round the castle. Especially interesting were details of how the castle had provided a refuge for Covenanters, sheltering under the Christian kindness of Miss Rose's ancestors. In the evening we heard an interesting paper from Mr MacInnes on "The Doctrine of Creation". The ensuing discussion provided young people with the opportunity to express some of the difficulties they encountered in school and at university in studies related to this subject.

The final paper, for which Mr Sinclair once more took the platform, outlined some answers to the question "Who is my neighbour?" Again discussion was lively, and ranged over many different aspects of the subject. After lunch we gathered in the lounge for an informal discussion about the conference itself, and the decision was unanimous: it has been a real success.

Gratitude was expressed at the close of the conference to those who had expended so much effort to ensure its success. But it would not exaggerate our indebtedness to them, to express our thanks here again.

J.F.

Day of Prayer

In view of the general ungodliness pervading the land, and our own need to confess our sins and to plead the promise "When the enemy cometh in like a flood the Spirit of the Lord shall raise up a standard against him", the Synod agreed that a day of prayer be appointed to be held on Wednesday, 17th October, or Thursday, 18th October 1973 (D.V.).

Meeting of Synod

At the meeting of Synod at Inverness in May it was agreed that the Synod adjourn to meet again (D.V.) on Tuesday, 4th September 1973, in the Inverness Church at 11 a.m. in private, and at 6 p.m. in public.

We crave the prayers of the Lord's people throughout the Church that the Synod may be guided by the Lord in all its deliberations and that all that is done may be to His glory and for the advancement of His Cause.

Divinity Classes

The classes in Systematic Theology and Apologetics commence on 11th September 1973 in Glasgow (D.V.). Messrs D MacLennan and J. Brentnall, B.A., are expected to take these classes. The prayers of the Lord's people for Tutor and Students are desired so that the blessing of the Lord would rest upon them.

Services in Winnipeg, Canada

The Dominions and Overseas Committee regret that for reasons beyond their control, the services in Winnipeg have to be discontinued meantime. It is hoped that this situation will be a temporary one. As soon as

circumstances permit a Deputy will be sent and timely notice given of a resumption of services (D.V.).

D. Campbell, Convener.

Death of Miss Grant, Grafton

Miss Grant, the oldest member in the Grafton congregation, took a stroke on Sabbath evening 15th July and passed away a week later. She was 86 years of age and had been a member since the age of 16 during Rev. Walter Scott's ministry in Grafton. An obituary of this worthy lady will appear (D.V.) in a future issue of the Magazine.

Ordination and Induction at Gisborne, New Zealand

The Australia and New Zealand Presbytery was to hold its first meeting on 21st August. It was due to meet again on Thursday, 23rd August, for the ordination and induction of Rev. J.A.T. Van Dorp to the pastoral charge of Gisborne, New Zealand.

Call to London

The Southern Presbytery at its meeting at London on 3rd July sustained a call by the London Congregation to Rev. MacInnes, M.A., Ullapool. At its meeting at Kyle of Lochalsh on 24th July the Western Presbytery agreed to Mr MacInnes' translation. The date of the Induction has yet to be fixed by the Southern Presbytery.

Committee Meetings (D.V.)

The following Committees will meet in the Free Presbyterian Church, Inverness:—

Tuesday, 2nd October 1973

10.00—11.30 a.m.	Publication.
11.30—13.00	Religion and Morals
14.30—16.30	Finance
16.30—17.30	Dominions and Overseas
19.00—21.00	Jewish and Foreign Missions
21.00—22.00	Home of Rest

Wednesday, 3rd October 1973

11.30—12.30	Church Magazines
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Concerted Prayer

In connection with the proposals for concerted prayer, adopted by the Synod in May 1972, we would commend to the prayerful consideration of the Lord's people the Overseas part of our Church, particularly the congregations in Canada, Australia and New Zealand. These congregations have a special claim on our prayerful support, separated as they are by many thousands of miles from the Church at home. Satan would dearly like to see the witness of our Church quenched altogether at home and

abroad or marred in some way or other. Consequently he will be particularly active in trying to discourage the hearts of the Lord's servants and people in those distant parts. May we, then, be instant in prayer on their behalf that the Lord may protect His Cause at home and abroad from the machinations of the Evil One.

Presbytery Meetings (D.V.)

Southern: At Glasgow on Tuesday, 18th September at 6 p.m.

Northern: At Dingwall on Tuesday, 30th October at 2.30 p.m.

Western: At Kyle of Lochalsh on Tuesday, 6th November at 11 a.m.

London Communion

Owing to the uncertainty of the date of the induction of Rev. M. MacInnes to the London congregation and the possibility that it may take place in mid-October, the London Kirk Session has decided to defer the Communion from the third Sabbath of October to a later date. Intimation will be given of the new date in a later issue of the magazine (D.V.).

Rev. D. A. MacFarlane Resigns

At a meeting of the Northern Presbytery on 21st August in Dingwall the minister of the Dingwall and Beauly congregation tendered his resignation from his charge to the Presbytery on the grounds of continuing and increasing ill-health. Thus in the northern part of the Church the eminently spiritual and gracious ministry of one of our best known ministers who laboured in this part of the vineyard for more than 43 years came to an end. Mr MacFarlane was in the 60th year of his ministry in the Church which included the pastorate of the large combined congregation of Creich, Bonar, Dornoch and Rogart, where his ministry began in 1914, and a further 8 years at Oban before coming to Dingwall in May 1930. The Moderator, Rev. R. R. Sinclair, spoke feelingly of their years of association in the bonds of the Gospel and in the work of the Church Courts, and declared that Mr MacFarlane had set before his brethren an inspiring and note-worthy example of what a godly minister of Christ should be. The Dingwall elder reported that the congregation with great reluctance had acquiesced in the severance of the pastoral tie with their beloved pastor, as it was becoming obvious that Mr MacFarlane would no longer be able adequately to attend to the congregation's needs. The medical certificate also confirmed this belief.

The Clerk then read the Presbytery's Tribute which seemed to sum up in short compass the reasons for the esteem in which our worthy friend is held by his brethren in the ministry:

"The Presbytery received with sincere regret the resignation of Rev. D. A. MacFarlane from the charge of Dingwall & Beauly, made necessary by deteriorating health and wish to enter into their records this appreciation

of the character and the many valued services that Mr MacFarlane was able to give over the long period of about 60 years to the Cause of the Redeemer among us.

The varied positions in the Church in which he was called to serve, as pastor, teacher of our students and member of the Church's committees, he filled with distinction. This court in particular has reason to recall with gratitude his services, for her counsels were enriched by the sage and weighty contributions which in the Lord's providence he was able to make in the difficult matters which often came before the court.

Mr MacFarlane's kindly and self-effacing bearing, his patience and invariable courtesy towards his brethren and his prayerful love and zeal for the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom were among the many qualities which endeared him to the Lord's people. The Dingwall manse, where Mrs MacFarlane presided with simple dignity, was throughout his ministry the well known centre of hospitality which was enjoyed so often by members of this Presbytery and by our people at large.

As he goes into retirement, the Presbytery offer Mr MacFarlane and his like-minded partner in life their good wishes and pray that both may be spared to enjoy well earned leisure from the more active labours of the Lord's vineyard."

The moderator then presented Mr MacFarlane with a nest of tables in walnut of traditional design, the gift of his brethren in the Presbytery. He took also the opportunity to include Mrs MacFarlane in the good wishes and prayers which accompanied the gift, for it is no exaggeration to say that the Dingwall manse has enjoyed a deserved reputation as being a home where unsparing hospitality was dispensed in rich measure to the Lord's people and others. Mr MacFarlane in acknowledging the gift confessed how much he had been touched by the Moderator's opening prayer when reference was made to the sad occasion of his departing from their midst. He turned for a little in reminiscent mood to incidents of the past, and made in characteristic fashion depreciating remarks about himself and his services. Finally, the Moderator called on Mr MacFarlane to pray when he gave expression to his fullness of heart and poured out in the Lord's presence his gratitude for the preservation granted him in the Lord's merciful care over him through long years in the Master's service.

We learn that Mr & Mrs MacFarlane intend to spend their retirement in Inverness which is not too far away for an occasional visit to the old congregation where once again their former pastor may declare to them, as opportunity offers, the glad tidings of salvation. It is hoped that Mr MacFarlane will not completely sever his official connection with the Church or end his relations with his brethren, but that he may still, as strength permits, take his seat on Presbytery and Synod. May the years of retirement bring much needed quiet and rest and may our friends enjoy much of the Lord's presence in the years ahead which in the Lord's kindness may be granted to them.

A.F.M., Clerk

Acknowledgment of Donations

The General Treasurer, Mr Wm. D. Fraser, F.C.M.A., 20 Daleview Avenue, Glasgow G12 0HE, acknowledges the following donations with sincere thanks:—

Sustentation Fund: D.F., £40; Mrs Robertson, Leven, £4.

Home Mission Fund: D.F., £30.

Jewish and Foreign Mission Fund: Rev. G. Hill, ££2.10 per Rev. D.B. MacL.; Anon., Argyll, £12; D.F., £30; Ullapool Friend, £20; Tain Friend, £100 for Mission Schools per Rev. J.N.

The Publications Treasurer, Mr R.W.M. MacKenzie, C.A., Hilton of Cadboll, Fearn, acknowledges with sincere thanks the following donations:—

Free Distribution Fund: T.Y. Clark, Contin, 50p; N. MacDonald, Stockinish, £1.60; Mrs Ross, Lairg, £2 per Rev. D.B. MacL.; A Friend, Ontario, in memory of my dear mother, £4.

Welfare of Youth Fund: T.Y. Clark, Contin, 50p.

The Treasurers of the following congregations acknowledge with sincere thanks the following donations:—

Applecross: Mrs and Mrs MacCuish, Glasgow, £2 for motor cycle fund per Rev. A. Murray; Murdo Macrae, Camustiel, £10 for congregational purposes; In loving Memory of Mrs MacIver and Mary, £20 for Sustentation Fund; last two per C. Gillies.

Beauly: Anon., £2.50 per Mr I. Graham; Mrs Macdonald Lochcarron, £1 per Mrs MacFarlane; Mr W. Macdonald, Balintore, £5 per Mr D. Kelly; Tomatin Friend, £5; Beauly Friend, £5; Friends, £100; all for Church Building Fund.

Glasgow: Mrs Walker, £1. Anon., £1. Miss Matthew, £2, all for bus expenses. Mrs McK., £5 and Anon., £2, both for St Jude's Development Fund per Rev. D.M. A Friend, Harris, £3 for Sustentation Fund per Rev. D.M.

Greenock: Two Friends, Portree, £5. Friend, £5, both for minister's new car per I. MacLeod.

North Harris: Friend, Kyles-Scalpay, £5. Friend, Kyles-Scalpay, £5, both for minister's car expenses. Friend Tarbert, £5 (£3 for manse kitchenette and £2 for minister's car expenses); Friend, Stockinish, £3 (£2 for manse kitchenette and £1 for minister's car expenses); Friend, Stockinish, £2 (£1 for manse kitchenette and £1 for minister's car expenses); Friend, Kyles-Scalpay, £2 for minister's car expenses. Friend, Stockinish, £2 (£1 for manse kitchenette and £1 for minister's car expenses); Friend, £5 (in collection plate, tarbert), (£3 for manse kitchenette and £2 for minister's car expenses); Friend, Stockinish, £2 (£1 for manse kitchenette and £1 for minister's car expenses); Friend, Stockinish, £1 for minister's car expenses; Mr Angus Macleod, Leacklae, Stockinish, £5 for manse kitchenette; Mr and Mrs A. Macleod, Meavag, £5 for manse kitchenette; all per Rev. A. McK.

North Tolsta: Friends, North Tolsta, £5; Friends, North Tolsta, £5, both for minister's car expenses per Rev. D. Maclean; Canadian Friends, £10 for manse central heating per A. Nicolson.

Plockton/Kyle: M.L., Lochcarron, £5; "With all my heart", Isle of Harris, £1; D. and M. Macleod, "Loggie", Loch Broom, £5; all per Rev. D. Beattie, C.A. MacL., Portree, £5; Mackenzie, Inverasdale, £3; Corrary, Glenelg, £5; Mr and Mrs A. Macleod, Bayhead, Harris, £5; "Enlarge your boundaries", North Tolsta, £4 Wellwisher, Invergordon, £3; all per treasurer, Mrs Gordon, Ullapool, £3 per H. Campbell. All these donations for manse building. Mr and Mrs M. McLeod, 17 Heathmount, Kyle, £4 for Communion expenses per treasurer.

Portree: Greenock Friends, £5 for congregational purposes per F.M. Mrs M.C. Walker, Braeside, Portree, £5 in church plate for church decoration.

Raasay: A. MacLennan, Glasgow, £5; A Friend, Inverarish, £3; P.A.S. Raasay, £3. Raasay Friend in Portree, £1, all per J.M. MacLeod; Friend, Shieldaig, £1 per treasurer; all for manse extension. D. MacLennan, Inverness, £3 for Sustentation Fund per J.M. MacLeod.

Shieldaig: Friend, Shieldaig, £100 for congregational funds; Anon., £10 for manse repairs per Mr MacLennan.

Tain and Fearn: Anon., £5; Anon., £5; both for manse fund.

Wick: Mrs MacKenzie, £10 per J. Martin; Mr A. MacLeod, London, £5 per Rev. R.R. Sinclair; both for reserve fund.