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Strife as to who should be Greatest

It is commonplace to find men striving with one another for the pre-eminence. The carnal heart of man revels in seeking self-glory and a place of prominence. Pride is native to fallen nature and urges men on to seek the first place. A lesser place will not do.

To find such a spirit in the world need not surprise us, but how sad it is when the same spirit enters the Church of God. How unprepared we are, then, to find this spirit of self-seeking and self-glorying even among the select company of the disciples of our Lord when He was here among men. Yet it is of these disciples we read: "And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest." On more than one occasion the Saviour had to warn His disciples of this sin. Oh, how searching was His question to them in Capernaum when He asked: "What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way?" He who knew all things knew well the sin of their hearts and lips. How speechless the disciples were. Why? Because, by the way, they had disputed among themselves who should be the greatest.

How tenderly the Lord dealt with them on that occasion when He sat down, and called the twelve, and said unto them, "If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all." How clearly He reinforced this teaching when He took a child and set him in the midst of them and took him up in His arms and said unto them: "Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me; and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me." Again how lovingly He taught them when He said: "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so; but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. For

whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth."

What an example the Lord had given to His disciples of One who was meek and lowly in heart. What lowliness of mind and heart characterised the Saviour from the beginning to the end of His sojourn in this world. That is the example we are called upon to follow. If we are in any measure to be living followers of the meek and lowly Christ Jesus what need there is for putting off that proud, self-exalting spirit which finds such a place in us, and of putting on the grace of true humility. Oh what a noble grace is the grace of true humility! What shining lights do they become in the world who are richly endowed with this grace. Let us seek it for our own souls. Let us remember that the Lord is able to bestow this grace and not only in a limited measure but in great measure also. Has He not done it in the case of His outstanding servants in days past? And was it not this grace that made them great? Is not the Lord who so bestowed His grace in days past able to do it again for those who truly seek His face?

The Resurrection and the Life

by the late Rev. Jonathan R. Anderson, Glasgow.

"I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." John 11:25.

The condition of sinners is very wretched, and their prospect very dismal. The sentence of death has been pronounced upon them by the Judge of the world. It has been partially executed in the death of the soul; it will ere long be extended to the death of the body; and if not reversed in infinite mercy, it will be consummated in the ruin of soul and body in hell. We ought to be thankful that, in the Holy Scriptures, we have a clear revelation of the state into which we have fallen. For we might have been permitted to sleep on in security until overtaken by the surprisals of eternity in the loss of all that is desirable and satisfying.

We ought to do this all the more willingly that we are told of our ruined condition, in view of a suitable and efficacious remedy. But it is very evident we shall pay no regard to the remedy, nor set the least value upon it, unless we are alive to the evil which it is designed to cure. The children of Israel did not care to cry to the Lord for deliverance from Egypt, until their lives were made grievous by hard bondage.

It was when Manasseh was taken among the thorns, and bound with fetters, and carried to Babylon, and "when he was in affliction, that he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers." Chron. 33:12. The sisters of Lazarus did not send for our Lord until their brother fell sick, and was at the point of death. In like manner it is needful that, by the Spirit of God bearing in Divine truth upon their hearts, and disposing them to give to it the place and the influence it demands, men be awakened to the misery into which they have fallen, ere they will be concerned for deliverance.

The Scripture is very full of testimonies to the condition of men as utterly ruined. And surely it becomes us to receive them with all readiness of mind; to treat them as stern yet faithful monitors; and to yield to them the submission which they so justly claim. To reject them is to forsake our own mercies; to explain them away is to wrap ourselves in delusion; to soften them down is to bribe into silence what in the end must speak as with a voice of thunder. Oh sinners, is it not true wisdom to attend to the things which belong to your peace? In a little while the warnings you disregard may cease forever; and judgment without mercy be measured out unto you. "Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not." Prov. 8: 33.

The word of God describes us as by nature "dead in trespasses and sins." Now, the best of all commentators upon this language is to be found in experience. For even if we were to gather the most approved expositions, what, after all, would they profit us, unless, by sovereign grace, we ourselves were brought to know what the Scriptures mean? We might, to be sure, have a mass of words, or, at the most, a heap of notions.

But these would no more alter our condition, than the flowers planted around a grave would disturb the sleep of the dead that lay within. The plan of mercy accordingly provides that men shall become acquainted with that spiritual death into which they are fallen.

In some cases the work of awakening is sudden and powerful; as when Saul was arrested on his way to Damascus; or when the multitudes, on the day of Pentecost, were pricked in their hearts; or, when the jailor at Philippi "came trembling and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" In others it is more calm and gentle, as in that of Lydia, of whom we read, "The Lord opened the heart of Lydia, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul." Acts 14:14. But however different be the manner, the effect is always the same. A principle of life is implanted in the soul: a light from on high penetrates the darkness that is within, and the man discovers what before was hid from his view, that he is guilty and

ready to perish, that he is loathsome and unfit for the presence of God, that he is helpless and undone. He is therefore disposed to say, "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth Thee: wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." Job 42:5, 6.

For he now sees that he is destitute of all spiritual understanding, and has not the knowledge of the Holy One. He attempts to apprehend Him in His being and character, as they shine in His works, but most of all in His word. But there seems to be a thick veil between him and the glory of the living God. He is like a man stricken with blindness: and though he feels after God, if haply he may find Him, his efforts are fruitless, and he sinks down with the doleful cry, "Oh that I knew where I might find Him!" Job 33:3. "Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man." Prov. 30:2.

He feels that he is without any holy affection. He may labour to credit the testimony of God speaking in His word, but it won't do; an evil heart of unbelief prevails to shut out the truth in its evidence and glory. He may try to perceive the Saviour so freely proclaimed in the gospel, but perhaps the only result is, that in his rebellion he says, "I will not have this man to rule over me." He may seek to fear that great and dreadful name, the Lord thy God, but the attempt ends in a conviction that "there is no fear of God before his eyes." Rom. 3:18. He may try to have his soul stirred up to love Him who is Love; but he only learns that it is true of him as of the Jews, "I know you that you have not the love of God in you." John 5:42. He strives to shake himself free from earthly things and rise to those that are heavenly; but the bitter complaint he makes tells that he is carnal, sold under sin: "My soul cleaveth to the dust." Psalm 119:25. By such trials as these does he learn in the school of experience a little of what death in sin is. And all this is aggravated by his felt distance from God — his estrangement from His favour — his ignorance of His word — his opposition to His law — his indifference to His glory — and his destitution of all true peace, and joy, and blessedness. He is ready to cry out in the bitterness of his soul, "Woe is me, for I am undone, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell among a people of unclean lips." Is. 6:5.

In such a crisis it is that the Son of God appears as the Resurrection and the Life. He is unspeakably glorious in Himself — in the majesty of His Deity, and the beauty of His humanity — in the burning brightness of His holiness, and the winning attractions of His mercy — in the stainless purity of His justice, and the overflowing tenderness of His love. "He is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand . . . His mouth is most sweet: yea, He is altogether lovely. Song 5:10, 16.

In virtue of the Father's election, out of His own rich grace, in fulfilment of His covenant engagements, and as the reward of His obedience unto death, He is invested with full power to quicken those that are dead in sin. "He finished transgression, made an end of sins, made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness." Dan. 9:24. "As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou has given Him." John 17:2.

In the dispensation of grace, occasions arise for His putting forth the power with which He is thus invested. Of this, most striking illustrations were afforded in the days of His flesh by the miraculous works which He wrought; and by none perhaps more signally than by raising Lazarus from the dead. For they were all desperate cases in which human skill was of no avail, and in some this had been proved by actual experiment. But just at this point, the Lord Jesus appeared, and gave evidence of His power to save. We may try to help those that are dead in sins; we may attempt to alarm them out of their indifference, to reason them out of their unbelief, to persuade them into the reception of Christ and His great salvation. But spiritual death holds fast its victim, and refuses to let him go; and seems to say to all such physicians, as the evil spirit said to the seven sons of Sceva the Jew, when they called over him the name of the Lord Jesus — "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?" Acts 19:15. We are no doubt required to use the means which had been appointed for the conversion of sinners. We must preach the word, expound the law, proclaim the gospel, sound out threatenings, and give forth invitations. But in all this we do no more than was done by the priests who blew the trumpets of ram's horn around the walls of Jericho; or by the prophet Ezekiel in the valley, when he prophesied to the dry bones and said, "Oh, ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Ezek. 37:4.

The efficacy in our case as in theirs, lies with Him who is wise in heart, and mighty in strength. "He speaks, and it is done; He commands, and it stands fast." Psalm 33:9.

By means of His word and ordinances, and through the life giving power of His Spirit, the Redeemer visits the soul when dead in trespasses and sins, and raises it up to spiritual life. In this marvellous work He manifests His glory as the Resurrection and the Life: "For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom He will." John 5:21. The very title which He bears is sufficient to prove that it is with the dead He has to do; for it is impossible to conceive of a resurrection of any kind where there is not death. We know accordingly that Lazarus was dead; and not only so, but laid in the grave, and given

over to corruption, when, to quiet the apprehensions of his sister, and to assuage her grief, the divine Redeemer assured her he would rise again. She, not apprehending the true import of His words, said, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." John 11:24. To this Jesus replied, "I am the Resurrection and the Life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." John 11:25.

We must not suppose by these words He meant to teach that it is by any virtue which the dead possess they are brought to life. For this were to make them, and not Him, the resurrection; and moreover, were to maintain what is self-contradictory. The language used by many would lead one to think there is in fallen nature, if not when placed under the law, as least when brought under the sound of the gospel, some mysterious power by which men are to believe and so to live. But this is a radical mistake, derogatory to the honour of divine grace, and ruinous to the souls of men.

I presume no one will say, that by any act on the part of Lazarus — such as believing, or anything else — he was raised from the dead: it was by the power of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by that alone, he was restored to life. In like manner the Saviour finds His people dead in trespasses and sins. By his renewing grace in the power of the Holy Ghost, and by means of His holy word, he brings them to union — to vital union — with himself through faith. And thus, in the very act of union, and by it, does He display His glory as the Resurrection and the Life. And, oh, what would become of poor sinners were it not so? Are they not in as helpless a case as Lazarus, when already he had been dead four days? May they not say, as Israel said in the days of Ezekiel, "Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts." Ezek. 37:11.

Now, it is to such especially and directly the gospel is to be preached. By such alone will it be hailed as good tidings; for these find themselves in the condition contemplated by the gospel. To them sin is really death, and that of the worst description; and often do they find themselves as though buried alive. They are cast out of His sight, and in "the belly of hell," like Jonah — "led into darkness" and "not into light" like Jeremiah — "free among the dead," like the Psalmist. Now, what is it that will prove a gospel to persons in this state — what will be to them a word in season — what will meet their case? What but this? "Behold, Oh My people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel." Ezek. 37:12.

And that this is actually done, and that, as we have shown, in vital union with Christ by faith, is proved by the words of the Apostle to the

Ephesians: "But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace are ye saved) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Eph. 2:4-6.

He that thus believes, and is united to Christ, lives in returning to God; for he discovers that by his apostacy in Adam, by the deep and active corruptions of his nature, and by the numberless acts of transgression he has committed, he is far from God. In this condition, however, he finds it impossible to remain. The guilt that presses upon his conscience, the depravity that rages in his heart, the vanity that is written on the world, and the endless troubles and sorrows in which he is involved, all compel him to say "I will arise and go to my Father;" he hears His voice saying, "Turn ye, turn ye: why will ye die?" To this he replies, "Behold we come to Thee, for Thou art the Lord our God." Jer. 3:22. He takes with him words, and turns unto the Lord, saying unto Him, "Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously." Hos. 14:2.

He farther lives in reconciliation with God. The Prodigal is welcomed back to Him from whom he had foolishly strayed; because he returns humbled and contrite for sin, accepting the punishment of his iniquity, beholding by faith his guilt laid upon the head of the divine Surety, consenting to the vengeance taken upon it in His sufferings and death, and looking for favour at the hand of God, only through imputed righteousness. The language, accordingly, with which he is met is, "I will love them freely; for Mine anger is turned away from him." Hos. 14:4. A feast is held to celebrate the joyful event: "For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost and is found." Luke 15:24.

Nor is this all; in virtue of his union to Christ by faith, he lives in growing conformity with the image of God. He is made partaker of a divine nature in the day of his new birth. But this gradually develops itself, through faith, as he advances in his career. He becomes more intimately acquainted with the character and ways of God; and especially with the chiefest of His ways — the redemption of sinners by Jesus Christ. He seeks to keep himself in the love of God, delighting in His moral beauty, satisfied with His infinite perfection, pleased with what pleases Him, hating what He hates, rejoicing when He is honoured, and grieved when He is despised. "And that ye put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Eph. 4:24.

The virtue that he draws from Christ enables him to live in the enjoyment of God. He is enlightened in his views, spiritual in his desires, and refined in his tastes. He finds he cannot now live on the husks of

worldly possessions and pleasures with which he was formerly content. He at times "tastes and sees that God is good." He has the peace of God which passes all understanding ruling in his heart. Nay, he is not a stranger to the joy that is unspeakable and full of glory. But his experience here is very variable, though he goes from strength to strength. He has the waters of Marah to drink, the valley of Baca to traverse, the Philistines to encounter, and even the captivity of Babylon to endure. But the time will come when "Christ shall change his vile body and fashion it like unto His own glorious body." Phil. 3:21. And then he shall sit down at the fountain-head of life, and be made most blessed with the light of His countenance for ever. "As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied when I awake with Thy likeness." Psalm 17:15.

A Sense of Divine Things

by Rev. Jonathan Edwards, D.D.

The first instance, that I remember, of that sort of inward, sweet delight in God and divine things, that I have lived much in since, was on reading these words, 1 Tim 1:17, "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen." As I read the words, there came into my soul, and was as it were diffused through it, a sense of the glory of the Divine Being; a new sense, quite different from anything I ever experienced before. Never any words of Scripture seemed to me as these words did. I thought with myself, how excellent a Being that was, and how happy I should be, if I might enjoy that God, and be rapt up to him in heaven; and be as it were swallowed up in him for ever! I kept saying, and as it were singing, over these words of Scripture to myself; and went to pray to God that I might enjoy him; and prayed in a manner quite different from what I used to do, with a new sort of affection. But it never came into my thought, that there was anything spiritual, or of a saving nature, in this.

From about that time I began to have a new kind of apprehensions and ideas of Christ, and the work of redemption, and the glorious way of salvation by him. An inward, sweet sense of these things, at times, came into my heart; and my soul was led away in pleasant views and contemplations of them. And my mind was greatly engaged to spend my time in reading and meditating on Christ, on the beauty and excellency of his person, and the lovely way of salvation by free grace in him. I found no

books so delightful to me, as those that treated of these subjects. Those words, Song of Solomon 2:1, used to be abundantly with me, "I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys." The words seemed to me sweetly to represent the loveliness and beauty of Jesus Christ. The whole book of the Song of Solomon used to be pleasant to me, and I used to be much in reading it, about that time; and found from time to time an inward sweetness, that would carry me away in my contemplations. This I know not how to express otherwise, than by a calm, sweet abstraction of soul from all the concerns of this world; and sometimes a kind of vision, or fixed ideas and imaginations, of being alone in the mountains, or some solitary wilderness, far from all mankind, sweetly conversing with Christ, and wrapt and swallowed up in God. The sense I had of divine things, would often of a sudden kindle up, as it were, a sweet burning in my heart, an ardour of soul, that I know not how to express.

Not long after I first began to experience these things, I gave an account to my father of some things that had passed in my mind. I was pretty much affected by the discourse we had together; and when the discourse was ended, I walked abroad alone, in a solitary place in my father's pasture, for contemplation. And as I was walking there, and looking upon the sky and clouds, there came into my mind so sweet a sense of the glorious majesty and grace of God, as I know not how to express — I seemed to see them both in a sweet conjunction; majesty and meekness found together; it was a sweet, and gentle, and holy majesty; and also a majestic meekness; an awful sweetness; a high, and great, and holy gentleness.

After this my sense of divine things gradually increased, and became more and more lively, and had more of that inward sweetness. The appearance of everything was altered; there seemed to be, as it were, a calm, sweet cast or appearance of divine glory in almost everything. God's excellency, his wisdom, his purity, and love, seemed to appear in everything; in the sun, moon, and stars; in the clouds and blue sky; in the grass, flowers, trees; in the water and all nature; which used greatly to fix my mind. I often used to sit and view the moon for a long time; and in the day, spent much time in viewing the clouds and sky, to behold the sweet glory of God in these things; in the meantime singing forth, with a low voice, my contemplations of the Creator and Redeemer. And scarce anything, among all the works of nature, was so sweet to me as thunder and lightning: formerly nothing had been so terrible to me. Before, I used to be uncommonly terrified with thunder, and to be struck with terror when I saw a thunder storm rising; but now, on the contrary, it rejoiced me. I felt God, if I may so speak at the first appearance of a thunder

storm; and used to take the opportunity, at such times, to fix myself in order to view the clouds, and see the lightnings play, and hear the majestic and awful voice of God's thunders, which oftentimes was exceedingly entertaining, leading me to sweet contemplations of my great and glorious God. While thus engaged, it always seemed natural for me to sing or chant forth my meditations; or, to speak my thoughts in soliloquies with a singing voice.

I felt then great satisfaction as to my good estate; but that did not content me. I had vehement longings of soul after God and Christ, and after more holiness, wherewith my heart seemed to be full, and ready to break; which often brought to my mind the words of the Psalmist, Ps. 119:28, "My soul breaketh for the longing it hath." I often felt a mourning and lamenting in my heart, that I had not turned to God sooner, that I might have had more time to grow in grace. My mind was greatly fixed on divine things; almost perpetually in the contemplation of them. I spent most of my time in thinking of divine things, year after year; often walking alone in the woods, and solitary places for meditation, soliloquy and prayer, and converse with God; and it was alway my manner, at such times, to sing forth my contemplations. I was almost constantly in ejaculatory prayer, wherever I was. Prayer seemed to be natural to me, as the breath by which the inward burnings of my heart had vent. The delights which I now felt in the things of religion, were of an exceedingly different kind from those before mentioned, that I had when a boy; and what then I had no more notion of, than one born blind has of pleasant and beautiful colours. They were of a more inward, pure, soul-animating, and refreshing nature. Those former delights never reached the heart; and did not arise from any sight of the divine excellency of the things of God; or any taste of the soul-satisfying and life-giving good there is in them.

My sense of divine things seemed gradually to increase till I went to preach at New York; which was about a year and a half after they began; and while I was there I felt them very sensibly, in a much higher degree than I had done before. My longings after God and holiness were much increased. Pure and humble, holy and heavenly, Christianity appeared exceedingly amiable to me. I felt a burning desire to be, in every thing, a complete Christian; and conformed to the blessed image of Christ; and that I might live, in all things, according to the pure, sweet and blessed rules of the gospel. I had an eager thirsting after progress in these things; which put me upon pursuing and pressing after them.

It was my continual strife, day and night, and constant inquiry, how I should be more holy and live more holily, and more becoming a child of

God, and a disciple of Christ. I now sought an increase of grace and holiness, and a holy life, with much more earnestness than ever I sought grace before I had it. I used to be continually examining myself, and studying and contriving for likely ways and means how I should live holily, with far greater diligence and earnestness than ever I pursued any thing in my life; but yet with too great a dependence on my own strength; which afterwards proved a great damage to me. My experience had not then taught me, as it has done since, my extreme feebleness and impotence, every manner of way; and the bottomless depths of secret corruption and deceit there was in my heart. However, I went on with my eager pursuit after more holiness and conformity to Christ.

The heaven I desired was a heaven of holiness; to be with God, and to spend my eternity in divine love, and holy communion with Christ. My mind was very much taken up with contemplations on heaven, and the enjoyments there; and living there in perfect holiness, humility and love; and it used at that time to appear a great part of the happiness of heaven, that there the saints could express their love to Christ. It appeared to me a great clog and burden, that what I felt within I could not express as I desired. The inward ardour of my soul seemed to be hindered and pent up, and could not freely flame out as it would. I used often to think, how in heaven this principle should freely and fully vent and express itself. Heaven appeared exceedingly delightful, as a world of love; and that all happiness consisted in living in pure, humble, heavenly, divine love.

I remember the thoughts I used then to have of holiness; and said sometimes to myself, "I do certainly know that I love holiness, such as the gospel prescribes." It appeared to me, that there was nothing in it but what was ravishingly lovely; the highest beauty and amiableness — a divine beauty, far purer than anything here upon earth; and that every thing else was like mire and defilement in comparison of it.

Holiness, as I then wrote down some of my contemplations on it, appeared to me to be of a sweet, pleasant, charming, serene, calm nature; which brought an inexpressible purity, brightness, peacefulness and ravishment to the soul. In other words, that it made the soul like a field or garden of God, with all manner of pleasant flowers, enjoying a sweet calm, and the gently vivifying beams of the sun. The soul of a true Christian, as I then wrote my meditations, appeared like such a little white flower as we see in the spring of the year; low and humble on the ground, opening its bosom to receive the pleasant beams of the sun's glory; rejoicing, as it were, in a calm rapture; diffusing around a sweet fragranciness; standing peacefully and lovingly, in the midst of other flowers round about; all in

like manner opening their bosoms to drink in the light of the sun. There was no part of creature-holiness that I had so great a sense of its loveliness, as humility, brokenness of heart, and poverty of spirit; and there was nothing that I so earnestly longed for. My heart panted after this — to lie low before God, as in the dust; that I might be nothing, and that God might be all, that I might become as a little child.

Your Surety

by Rev. F. W. Krummacher, D.D.

A blissful and heart-cheering mystery is here presented before us. If I possess saving faith, I find myself in a peculiar relation to the Sufferer at Gethsemane. For know, that the horrors he there experienced are not his curse but mine. The Holy and the Just submits himself, representatively, to the fate of the guilty and condemned; whilst the latter are forever liberated, and inherit the lot of the holy Son of God. Wonderful and incomparably blissful truth! Our only shield and comfort in life and death!

O ye blessed, who belong to Christ, who can worthily describe the glory of your state? We hail the wondrous exchange which the eternal Son of God has made with you. We glorify the Surety and the Liquidator of your debts. Never forget the midnight arrest of your High Priest. Paint it, in bright and vivid colours, on the walls of your chambers. If you are again reminded of the curse which your sins had brought upon you, accustom yourselves to regard it only in this sacred picture, where you no longer behold it lying upon you, but upon Him, in whose agonies it eternally perished.

Therefore, let not shadows any longer disturb you. There will never be a period in eternity when you will be compelled to say to your enemies and accusers, "Now is your hour and the power of darkness." Your Representative uttered it, once for all, for you; and henceforward only the hour of triumph and delight, which shall never end, awaits you. Peace be with you, therefore, ye who are justified by his righteousness, and for ever perfected by his one offering! No longer dream of imaginary burdens, but know and never forget that your suit is gained to all eternity. Behold Christ yonder bears your fetters; and nothing more is required of you than to love him with all your heart, and embrace him more and more closely who took your entire anathema upon himself, that you might be able eternally to rejoice and exclaim, "Jehovah Zidkenu — the Lord our Righteousness."

Letter

by Mr A. Docter, Holland

My dear friend,

If all's well I hope to cross to Scotland next month, and first intend to go to Plockton communion. Mr Donald Campbell invited me to come to his home.

At present the Sinclairs, London, are staying with us. On Wednesday last we went to the Island of Flakkee which was flooded in the late gale. The dikes have been repaired but oh! what a misery there. We visited a village where 300 people were drowned. The farms have been destroyed, the land is covered with clay — no crops this year. I met an old godly man of over eighty. He and his wife awoke in the night and saw the water in their room. They climbed upstairs wet through and sat down on a bed against the wall. Suddenly, their house was swept away by the roaring waves. Only one wall and a small piece of the floor, on which their bed stood, remained. Here, they saw their neighbours' home being swept away — five were drowned. With death before their eyes, they sat in the open air. The old man said to me: "My heart was as hard as stone, I could not pray, but saw the Lord's anger in the foaming waves. Then it came to me so sweetly 'in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength,' Is. 30, 15. Everything changed within. I said to my wife, 'Be not afraid, for the Lord shall help us through as He did these fifty years in our married life'." They were saved after many hours. We have seen his former home, with the bed still there, a monument of the Lord's power and grace.

Oh! to be found at that Fountain opened to David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness. To be washed in the blood of the Lamb! Oh! that I should meet the Elder Brother in Scotland. Christ will in no way cast out all those who are going to a communion to seek Him.

With kindest regards from both of us,

Yours sincerely,

A. Docter

Let the Word be the sun-dial by which you set your life. What are we the better for having the Scriptures if we do not direct all our speeches and actions according to it? What are we the better for the rule of the Word, if we do not make use of it?

Thomas Walson.

Christian Giving

By Rev. D. B. MacLeod

A paper read at the Theological Conference held at Dingwall in September 1972.

Before beginning this paper I would like to acknowledge my indebtedness to a volume entitled "Gold and the Gospel" containing a series of prize essays on the Scriptural duty of giving in proportion to means and income. I would make special mention of the essay by the Rev. Henry Constable, contained in that book, on the Measure of Christian Liberality.

In this as in all other matters of Christian belief and practice, it is to the Bible we must turn in order to know God's will for us. Once we have established what His will is for us with regard to Christian giving, then our duty ought to be clear, that is, to do as He requires of us. The second part — the doing — may be more difficult than the first part — knowing His will. The natural heart of man can find a thousand compelling reasons why it should not give to the Lord's Cause, or why it should not give so much. What else keeps so many wallets and purses so tightly closed against the strongest entreaties and the most needy causes? Let us rest assured, however, that for every compelling reason for not contributing, or for contributing less, there are a thousand more compelling reasons why we should not only contribute but contribute more. The establishing of the doctrine concerning Christian giving is one thing; the actual practice of Christian giving is another thing. The Bible requires not only the knowing but the doing — "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." (John 13:17).

I shall try to deal with the subject under a variety of different headings which I shall name as I come to them. There may be some overlapping in these sections, but I hope not too much.

1. Christian giving is a duty devolving upon all

Christian giving in its strictest sense is a giving which is a fruit of the Holy Spirit's work in the soul, and consequently in this sense is confined to living believers. Christian liberality is a wonderful grace; one every Christian ought to seek to cultivate. To find oneself delivered even in a little measure from that covetous, grasping spirit which is so natural to us and to have a willing heart and mind to give to the Lord's Cause is rewarding in itself. Christian giving in its broadest sense may be taken to

include all givings for the support of Christ's Cause, for the support of Christian enterprises of one kind or another, and for the relief of the needy.

That Christian giving is a duty should hardly need to be established. The Scripture teaching on this matter is so plain that he may run that reads it. "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35) is an affirmation of Scripture recurring over and over again in varied forms. The teaching of that portion of Scripture "Honour the Lord with thy substance and with the first-fruits of all thine increase" (Prov. 3:9, 10) makes crystal clear the duty of Christians in this matter. Exhortations to Christian giving appear once and again in the Truth and are binding upon the Christian conscience. "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom," (Luke 6:38) is but one exhortation out of many. Often as he is closing his Epistles, the Apostle Paul includes in the practical advice and teaching he gives there exhortations to Christian giving. For example, in Galatians Chapter 6 he says: "Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity let us do good to all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." (Gal. 6:9, 10). In Hebrews Chapter 13 he writes: "But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." (Hebrews 13:16).

It is not only by precept but by a variety of examples that this duty is set before us in the Scriptures of Truth. These examples are brought before us for our learning, and in order that we may emulate the Scripture examples in this grace also. If Christian giving, then, is a duty devolving upon all, the very last who may opt out of it are those who have received out of the rich grace of God in Christ Jesus. To such the exhortation of the Saviour to His disciples applies: "Freely ye have received, freely give." (Matth. 10:8).

2. Christian Giving is a giving to the Lord

A Scripture already quoted exhorts us: "Honour the Lord with thy substance." Christian giving is an honouring of the Lord by giving to Him a proportion of our substance. It is not to man we are giving but to the Lord. It is not to a needy person, a church, a congregation, or a minister we are giving primarily in Christian giving but to the Lord. The money is therefore the Lord's, not the Deacon's Court's, nor the congregation's, but the Lord's. Until we view our giving in this light we have not really begun to give aright. If we do not see past men and organisations

in our giving it will be little wonder if we are straitened in our giving. Even in giving for the relief of the poor we have the same idea of giving to the Lord brought before us: "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord." (Prov. 19:17). We need, then, to keep this constantly before our minds, and say to ourselves in giving — "This is for the Lord." And we have to add to that — "of Thine own have we given Thee." (1 Chron. 29:14). To Him we are indebted for all, for "it is He that giveth thee power to get wealth," as Moses reminded the children of Israel. (Deut. 8:18). All our property and wealth is given to us in trust by the Lord, and He requires of us a wise stewardship over all He has given us, and will require an account of our stewardship at the end of the day.

3. Christian Giving in the Old and New Testaments

It is very clear that in Old Testament times the people were required to provide for the worship of God in their midst. They were also exhorted never to forget the poor, the stranger, the widow and the orphan. This could not be done without considerable expenditure on their part on these objects. The tabernacle and both temples in Old Testament times were erected in consequence of liberal givings by the princes and people. The service of the sanctuary and temple was maintained by the offerings of the people. The people provided also for the Levites and priests who had a right to tithes instead of a division of the land of Caanan.

In the New Testament we read of the women who ministered to the Lord of their substance (Luke 8:3), the widow who cast into the treasury all that she had, and the early Christians who sold all that they had and brought it and laid it at the Apostles feet. So, too, do we have the divinely appointed provision of deacons in the church of God (Acts Chapter 6) to take special care of the needs of the poor.

The Apostle Paul, on his part, has occasion once and again to commend those churches which had ministered to his necessities. To the church at Philippi the Apostle says: "even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again to my necessity." (Philip. 4:16). He did not count it beneath his dignity as an Apostle, but an honour to be the bearer of their offerings to the poor saints at Jerusalem. "The fellowship of ministering to the saints," he calls it. (2 Cor. 8:4). Clearly, Christian giving under the Old and New Testament economies was a recognised and readily assumed duty.

4. Objects of Christian Giving

As we have seen, in Old Testament times the burden of providing for the maintenance of the worship of God, as well as for the relief of the

needy, fell upon the people. As these objects are as necessary, and as needful of being maintained, in New Testament times it is to be expected that it is still the duty of the people to provide for these ends. We have already referred to Paul's acknowledgment of the provision made for his temporal needs. Also in writing to the Corinthians he says: "I robbed other churches, taking wages of them, to do you service;" (2 Cor. 11:8), which shows that he was supported in his work at Corinth by the givings of other churches. In his first Epistle to the Corinthians he establishes from the precept in the law of Moses — "Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn," (1 Cor. 9:9-11) — the right of the ministers of the gospel to temporal support. After stating what was written in the law of Moses, he asks, "Doth God take care for oxen? Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope." He enforces the principle by saying: "If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?" Again in the same chapter of that Epistle, he arrives at the same conclusion, arguing from what took place in Old Testament times: "Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar. Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel." (1 Cor. 9:13, 14). The Saviour, in appointing other seventy also and sending them two and two before His face into every city and place whither He Himself would come, gave them specific directions how they were to act, not going from house to house but remaining in the same house eating and drinking such things as they were given. In giving them these directions He goes on to lay down the principle that "the labourer is worthy of his hire." (Luke 10:7). From all the foregoing Scriptural directives it is clear that the cost of the maintenance of the ministry is a legitimate charge upon the people.

Ministering to the saints was a duty in which some of the early churches excelled and for which they were commended. To the Corinthians the Apostle Paul writes: "For as touching the ministering to the saints it is superfluous for me to write to you: for I know the forwardness of your mind, for which I boast of you to them of Macedonia, that Achaia was ready a year ago: and your zeal hath provoked very many." When James, Cephas and John gave the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas and Paul that they should go to the heathen while they themselves went to the circumcision, Paul tells that they charged them

that they should remember the poor, and Paul adds: "the same which I was also forward to do." (Gal. 2:9). We have referred to the appointment of deacons. The neglect of the widows in the daily ministration had to be rectified as this was a proper charge upon the church. Yet the Apostles themselves could not leave the ministering of the Word to serve tables. Men were appointed for this work.

In Knox's Book of Discipline we find this duty of relieving the poor referred to. "We are not patrons" he says, "for stubborn and idle beggars, who running from place to place, make a craft of their begging, whom the Civil Magistrate ought to punish; but for the widow and fatherless, the aged, impotent, or laimed, who neither can nor may run: for their sustentation, we say, that God commandeth His people to be careful; and therefore, for such, as also for persons of honesty, falling into decay or penury, ought such provision be made, that of our abundance should their indigence be relieved." It has always been, and it will always be, a mark of a good man that "he hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor." (Psalm 112:9). "The righteous sheweth mercy, and giveth." (Psalm 37:21).

5. Manner of Christian Giving

A series of quotations from the word of God should suffice to establish that it is ungrudging, cheerful, whole-hearted, liberal giving that is required; not with ostentatious display like the Pharisees, but not letting your left hand know what your right hand doeth. (Matth 6:3). "Now therefore" says the Apostle to the Corinthians in writing on this subject, "perform the doing of it; that as there was a readiness of will, so there may be a performance also out of that which ye have. For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath and not according to that he hath not." (2 Cor. 8:11, 12). Again in the same Epistle: "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver." (2 Cor. 9:7). Again in the previous chapter: "Therefore as ye abound in every thing, in faith, in utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also," that is, in the grace of Christian liberality. Worthy objects require liberal support. The Saviour taught in his sermon on the Mount: "When thou doest thine alms do not sound a trumpet before thee." (Matth. 6:2). The alms were to be done in secret.

While we are still on this matter of the manner of giving, and before we come to the question of the amount of giving, we would like to mention what has been coming before our mind in this connection. It is this. It

may well be that the spirit of giving may be of far greater importance than the amount. We are more ready to concentrate our attention on the question of how much we should give rather than on the spirit in which it is given. It may be that much that is given to the Cause of Christ from a wrong motive is of little benefit to the real advancement of the Lord's Cause. The question I am raising is this — and I am sure the brethren will have considered it and have an answer to it in their own minds — whether the Lord accepts and uses in connection with His Cause money which is given from a wrong motive or given grudgingly.

(To be continued)

Gathan Gloir na Diadhachd

Lies an Urr. Eideard Pearce

(Air a leanntuinn bho t.d.)

Thugaibh fodh'n ear ciod a thà sibh, thà mi ciallachadh a thaobh 'ur nàduir agus cho truailidh 's a thà e. Tha sibh 'n ar fìor mheall de pheacaidhean. Naimhdean, seadh, thà naimhdeas air fhaireachadh an aghaidh Dhé agus Chrìosd, Rom. viii.7, thà 'ur crìdheachan na'm fìor shlochd, na'n tobar, na'n slochd gu'n ghrùnnd de pheacadh agus de dh'aingidheachd an aghaidh Dhé. "Tha'n crìdhe cealgach thar na'n uile nithean." Cha'n urrain ach Dia amharc a dh'ionnsuidh grùnnd a pheacaidh sin, an aingidheachd agus a cheilg a thà ann a'do chridhe, Ier. xvii. 9. Oh! an lànachd de pheacadh a thà ri bhi air fhaotainn anns a chuid is fearr againn! Oh! an t-uamhar, a chorrùich, an talmhaidheachd, an fheol-mhorachd, an neo-ghloin, an t-eascreidimh, a chealgaireachd, an t-àicheadh, an cion sùim do Dhia, am fuathachadh gach uile mhaith, a thà gabhail comhnuidh, ag oibreachadh, a cogadh, agus gu bitheanta a toirt buaidh, agus a lionadh crìdheachan na naoimh is fearr am feadh 's a thà iad an so! Oh na h-at an de pheacadh agus Oh! an lànachd do dh'aingidheachd, a thà ri bhi air fhaoitinn 'n ar measg.

2. Thugaibh fodh'n ear ciod a rinn sibh agus cia mar a ghiulain sibh sibh fein a thaobh Dhé. Ma thà sibh gu sòlaimte a toirt fodh'n ear na nithean sin, gheibh sibh, thà eagal orm, nach d'rinn sibh gus an latha'n duigh, a bheag ach peacadh an aghaidh Dhé. Chuir sibh an dlmeas a mhaitheas, mhl-ghnàthaich sibh a ghràdh, bhris sibh a laghanan, shaltair sibh ùghdarras, chuir sibh doilgheas air a Spìoad, leoin sibh a Mhac, dhorachaich sibh a Ghlòir, agus gu bitheanta bhuail sibh eadhon a

dhearbh Chrùn agus a bhith; seadh, agus b'e so do dhòigh bho t-oige (mar a chuir Dia as an leith-san bho shean, Ier.xxii.21.) cha'n eil an latha sin, na theagaibh an uair, anns nach do pheacaich sibh, na tha sibh a peacachadh an aghaidh Dhé: bitheanta thug sibh Air seirbhais a dheanamh maille ri bhur lochdan, agus sgìthich sibh E le bhur 'n aingidheachd mar a rinn iadsan a tha air an ainmeachadh ann an Isaiah xlii.24. Bha 'ur beatha na beatha peacach air son a chuid is motha an aghaidh Dhé.

3. Thugaibh fodh'n ear ciod e cho dubh agus cho gràineil antromaichte 's a tha 'ur peacaidhean air an cùntas Leis. Nach eil 'ur peacaidhean, a luchd mo ghràidh, de dhath sgarlaid agus corcur? Nach eil iad air an àrdachadh le iomadh antromachadh dubh agus gràineil? Nach eil iad, gu h-àraidh cuid dhiubh, air an gnìomhachadh an aghaidh gràdh mòr, mòran soluis, mòran tròcair, mòran ghluasaidean an Spioraid, mòran bacadh coguis, mòran cheanglaichean agus cur mar fhiachabh gu dleasdanas, mòran foillsichidhean air Dia dhoibh, agus air ar son-ne iomadh blas agus seulachadh air a ghràdh dhuinn agus an leithidean sin? Ciod a their mi? Mar sin, anns gach rathad, thà ar peacaidhean, seadh peacaidhean a chuid is fearr again, air a leithid de dhòigh 's nach urrain sinn amharc a dh'ionnsuidh an taobh chùil aca. Co 's urrain a sheacharain a thuigsinn? (tha Daidhbhi naomh ag ràdh) Salm xix.12. Bu duine naomh a bha ann an Daibhidh, duine a reir cridhe Dhé, agus gidheadh thà e gladhaich a mach, Co thuigeas uile sheacharain? Bha a pheacaidhean taobh thall rannsachadh na tuigsinn; agus ma bha pheacaidhean-sa mar sin, ciod e mu dheidhinn ar peacaidhean-ne? Gu fìrinneach, a luchd mo ghràidh, thà ar peacaidhean-ne ann an àireamh, nàdur, agus antromachaidhean taobh thall ar comas air a bhi ruigheachd oirre, agus mar sinn maille ris-san a gladhaich a mach, Co thuigeas uile sheacharain?

4. Thugaibh fodh'n ear ciod e'n t-olc agus an cion airidheachd neo-chriochnach a thà anns a h-uile peacadh, eadhon am peacadh is lugha? Bho na thà sibh ciontach dhe na h-urrad de pheacadh, agus 'ur peacaidhean, agus mòran dhe 'ur peacaidhean air an còmhachadh, mòran diubh, le iomadh antromachadh, mar sin feumaidh sibh fhios a bhi agaibh gu'm olc gu leoir anns an aon is lugha gu bhi dha'r damanadh gu sìorruidh na'n cuireadh Dia toillteanas a pheacaidh sin ri 'ur cùntas: "S e tuarasdal a pheacaidh am bàs," tha'n t-Abstol ag ràdh ann an Rom. vi.23. Gabh beachd, thà e labhairt gu'n a bhi sònrachadh a h-uile peacadh, am peacadh is lugha, agus tha e'g ràdh, tuarasdal a pheacaidh is lugha is e'm bàs. Thà gach peacadh na oilbheum an aghaidh Dhé. Tha e gu neo-chriochnach an aghaidh fìor-ghloine agus a naomhachd, an aghaidh a thoil agus a ghlòir, an aghaidh a bheatha agus a bhith, tha e gu

neo-chriochnach na aghaidh, agus mar sin feumaidh e bhi 'n olc do-tuigsinn anns am bheil do thoillteanas. Thà gach oilbheum (tha duine foghlomaichte ag ràdh) an aghaidh a mhaith is àirde, agus thà e toilltean am peanas is motha, eadhon sgrios siorruidh a chreutair. Oh! fhearaibh, 's beag a smuainticheas sinn an t-olc a tha ann an smuaint dhiamhain, focal diamhain, gnìomh mì-naomh agus neo-chùmta. 'S beag a smuainticheas sinn an t-olc a tha'm peacadh is lugha a giullain leis.

(R'a leanntuinn)

Book Reviews

The Reformed Faith by Robert Shaw. Christian Focus Publications, 118 Academy Street, Inverness. £1.50.

This book is a republication of Robert Shaw's "Exposition of the Westminster Confession of Faith." It was first published in 1845. This reprint, under the title of "The Reformed Faith," is published by the Christian Focus Publications Trust, whose Chairman is Rev. J. W. Ross, Lochcarron. As a publicity leaflet is promised regarding the Trust and its expected publications, it is needless here to refer much to the aims of the Trust, beyond indicating, that it has in view publishing books of evangelical value and spiritual benefit. This publication of The Westminster Confession of Faith, with the exposition of Robert Shaw, is an excellent and timely piece of work. The text of the Confession is in an excellent form of print, and the print of the expositions, though not so bold, is exceedingly good for general purposes. Below each section of the Confession are proof-texts from the Bible. The body of truth set forth in the Confession has its basis in the Bible, and Shaw's work is useful in seeking to know prayerfully and devotionally what these doctrines mean. The following extracts may illustrate how he unfolds the meaning of these Confessional doctrines.

Chap. II, Sect. 1: "God is infinitely powerful . . . How great must be that power which produced the beautiful fabric of the universe out of nothing! 'By the word of the Lord were the heavens made and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.' 'For he spake, and it was done, he commanded, and it stood fast.' Ps. 33:6, 9. His power is still exerted in the preservation of the world; for he upholds all creatures in their being and operations by the word of his power. It appears conspicuously in the moral government of the world — especially in restraining wicked men from their purposes;

for 'he stilleth the noise of the waves, and the raging of the people.' But it is most eminently displayed in the work of redemption by Jesus Christ, in the formation of his human nature in the womb of the Virgin; in supporting his human nature under the load of wrath which was due to us for our transgressions; and in raising him from the dead. It is also displayed in the production of that wonderful change which takes place in the conversion of a sinner, which in Scripture is termed a new creation; in the preservation of believers in a state of grace; in enabling them to resist and overcome strong temptations, to perform arduous duties, and to bear heavy trials with patience and joyfulness; and it will be signally manifested in raising up their bodies, glorious and immortal at the last day."

Chap. V. Section 4. "... (God) being most holy and righteous, neither is nor can be the author or approver of sin." ... "The most atrocious crime ever perpetrated by human hands was the crucifixion of the Lord of glory; yet it is expressly affirmed that God delivered him into those wicked hands which were imbrued in his sacred blood: 'Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.' — Acts 2:23. At the same time, it is indisputable that God cannot be the author nor approver of sin. To solve the difficulty connected with this point, theologians distinguish between an action and its quality. The action, abstractly considered, is from God, for no action can be performed without the concurrence of Providence; but the sinfulness of the action proceeds entirely from the creature. As to the manner in which the providence of God is concerned about the sinful actions of creatures, it is usually stated, that God permits them, that he limits them, and that he overrules them for the accomplishment of his own holy ends. But the full elucidation of this abstruse subject, so as to remove every difficulty surpasses the human faculties. We are certain that God is concerned in all the actions of his creatures; we are equally certain that God cannot be the author of sin; and here we ought to rest."

Chapter XIV. Of Saving Faith. Sect. 1 " ... 'The faith of God's elect' differs from every other sort of faith. Saving faith is supernatural — the act of a renewed soul — a living principle, which purifies the heart, works by love, and overcomes the world; it must, therefore, be widely different from a natural, a dead, or a common faith. It is denominated 'precious faith,' 'faith unfeigned,' 'the faith of the operation of God', and that faith to which the Scripture applies so many discriminating epithets must surely possess some quality peculiar to itself. Accordingly, we read in Scripture of many who believed and yet did not possess saving faith. ... Faith is declared to be 'the gift of God' — to be of 'the operation of God' — and to

require the exertion of 'mighty power, like that which wrought in Christ when God raised him from the dead.' Eph. 1:19, 2:8; Col. 2:12. Sect. 3: Writing on assurance he quotes Dr. McCrie: "Assurance is of two kinds, which have been designed the assurance of faith, and the assurance of sense. The former is direct, the latter indirect. The former is founded on the testimony of God; the latter, on experience. The object of the former is entirely without us; the object of the latter is chiefly within us. 'God hath spoken in his holiness, I will rejoice,' is the language of the former; 'We are his workmanship, created anew in Christ Jesus,' is the language of the latter. When a man gives me his promissary note, I have the assurance of faith; when he gives me a pledge, or pays the interest regularly, I have the assurance of sense. They are perfectly consistent with one another, may exist in the soul at the same time, and their combination carries assurance to the highest point . . . There are various degrees of assurance, and in some genuine believers it may be scarcely perceptible. He who is the author and finisher of our faith, was careful not to break the bruised reed, or quench the smoking flax. While he rebuked the unbelief and unreasonable doubts of his disciples, he never called in question the reality of their faith. He received the man who said, 'Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief.' While he said to Peter, 'O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?' he took him by the hand and lifted him out of the water. Grant that doubting is sinful; is there a just man on earth that doeth good and sinneth not? . . ."

May readers beseech the Lord that they may have from the Saviour, the same spirit of faith, which the Psalmist had in Psalm 116, "I believed, and therefore have I spoken." Paul and the believing Corinthians had the same spirit of faith, "We also believe, and therefore speak." 2 Cor. 4, 13. The truth which they received and cherished is treasure which moth cannot corrupt nor thief break through to steal.

D. A. Macf.

Life in the Spirit in Marriage, Home and Work by D. M. Lloyd Jones. Banner of Truth Trust. £2.50.

In the present age, confused and erroneous views on the Person and Work of the Holy Spirit are widespread, the validity of marriage as a Divine institution is being called in question, parental control is in most cases reduced to a minimum and the problems between employers and employees are crippling the economy of the nation. In the light of these

sad facts this volume should make a special appeal to the Christian and rouse the interest of others.

The definite polemical ring by which the book is characterised should commend itself to the godly. We are pleased with the manner in which the author proves the heretical and dangerous nature of the charismatic movement, and exposes the common but deceitful superficiality of the application of Christian ethics as the panacea for all our modern problems. There are several statements however, which in our view, call for clarification; but much more serious is the expression of the author's lax views on the sanctity of the Lord's Day. To these we take strong objection. The writer fails to recognise that in these times of indiscipline it is only too easy and too fashionable to use any specious argument to justify unnecessary work on the Lord's Day. Sad indeed it is, to find Dr. Lloyd-Jones tilting the scales in favour of such a trend. If we have taken the Doctor's "pulse" correctly his argumentation appears to encourage Christians to pacify their consciences by saying of a corrupt system, which has no regard for the sanctity or morality of the Sabbath — "The shadow thereof is good." The subsequent qualifying remarks regarding loyalty to our relationship to God may well have apologetic undertones, but they are illogical and misleading. Surely true loyalty must include respect for all the commandments of God, and such total allegiance definitely falls within the category of 'that which affects our relationship to God and the Lord Jesus Christ.' If the Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath it clearly follows that the Christian 'must make an absolute stand' for the sanctity of the Lord's Day whatever the consequences may be.

F.M.

The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume I. Banner of Truth Trust. Price £4.50.

The Banner of Truth Trust have lately reprinted the first volumes of the 1834 two volume edition of Jonathan Edwards' complete works. Volume II was due to be reprinted in March. The Trust are to be congratulated on making Edwards' Works available in these two massive volumes (Volume I contains 691 pages) and we trust that they will have a wide circulation, particularly among ministers of the Gospel. Although the price of £4.50 may seem too much to spend on one volume, yet purchasers of Edwards' Works can be sure that they are getting more than their money's worth.

Edwards' Works need no recommendation from us. Jonathan Edwards has been recognised on all hands as a master in Israel, and a spiritual and

intellectual giant. His was sanctified brilliance, his intellect being laid at the feet of the Master to be used in His service. By divine grace he performed no mean service for the Church of God and left on record in the various treatises he wrote material for the edification of the Church and the defence of the faith in subsequent ages.

It was not as a professor in a theological seminary that Edwards produced his contributions to theological learning but, like Thomas Boston of Ettrick, in comparative obscurity, while filling pastorates in Northampton and Stockbridge in Massachusetts. His call to become President of Princeton College in 1757 came only a few months before he died of a smallpox vaccination at the age of 54.

Edwards was privileged during his pastorate at Northampton to experience on two occasions a revival in the congregation, the second occasion being connected with the visit of Whitefield to that part of the American colonies. Many of the writings of Edwards — e.g. in this first volume his treatise on Religious Affections, a Narrative of Surprising Conversions and Thoughts on the Revival of Religion in New England — reflect the deep exercise of mind these divine visitations produced in the pastor of the congregation and his great concern lest any of his people should rest short of a saving interest in Christ.

Other writings in this first volume include his treatise on the Freedom of the Will, a Defence of the Great Christian Doctrine of Original Sin, his History of the Work of Redemption, and an Inquiry concerning qualifications for Communion. The mention of the last of these writings is a reminder to us of the severe trial through which Edwards was called to pass. Because of his efforts to maintain Scriptural discipline and exclude unbelievers from the Lord's Table, opposition was raised to him in the congregation and his ministry of 23 years in Northampton was brought to an end. What can we say of the Lord's dealings with His servant in allowing this calamity to befall him in the very congregation in which he had granted him notable times of revival? All we can say is:

"Thy way is in the sea, and in
the waters great thy path;
Yet are thy footsteps hid, O Lord;
none knowledge thereof hath."

On the fly-leaf of this first volume Dr. J. I. Packer says: "Jonathan Edwards . . . was among the noblest and ablest Christians of his age, and can now be seen, two centuries after, as one of the greatest theologians ever given by God to his Church. As saint and scholar, evangelist and educationist, pastor and teacher, missionary and metaphysician (all of

which he was, and with distinction), he showed a grasp of the grandeur of God's sovereignty and the glory of divine grace equalled only by men of the calibre of John Owen and John Calvin." Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones' comment on Edwards' Works is: "If I had the power I would make these two volumes compulsory reading for all ministers! Edwards seems to satisfy all round; he really was an amazing man."

Once again we would warmly recommend this valuable volume of Edwards' Works to readers and hope that many will avail themselves of the opportunity to purchase it.

D.B.M.

Notes and Comments

Abortion

A Private Member's Bill to amend the Abortion Act has been introduced in Parliament and has received its Second Reading in the Commons. Instead of now going to a Standing Committee, the Bill is to be dealt with by a Select Committee as this will permit a wider study of the subject and also allow for evidence from experts. Mr James White, Labour MP for Pollok, Glasgow, who sponsored the new Bill said that abuses under the 1967 Act had become a public scandal.

So far as it goes the Bill is welcome but we fear it will not undo all the evils for which the Abortion Act of 1967 is responsible. The figure for abortions has risen since the Act was passed to the colossal number of 166,000 in 1973. In 1974 for the first time since abortion became 'legal,' the figure fell by 3,000 to 163,000. Yet over against this has to be put the fact that in England and Wales alone the number of abortions on girls under 16 rose to 3,243 in 1974, an increase of 150 on the 1973 figures. It is reckoned too, that 54,000 foreign women had abortions in this country.

What a sad reflection these figures are on the spiritual and moral standing of our nation. Britain has given the lead in this nefarious traffic and other nations are beginning to amend their laws to come into line with the practice in this country. May the Lord, in His mercy, speedily open the eyes of the leaders of the nation to see the awful nature of these evil practices.

Film Censorship

An attempt to abolish its film censorship powers for adults over 18 was defeated in the Greater London Council by 50 votes to 44. It is heartening to know that the Greater London Council came to this decision even although it was by a relatively narrow majority. Even with the measure of censorship which is still retained many of the films which do pass the censor are wholly unfit for public display. No doubt other attempts will be made to abolish censorship. Even already it is reported that a group of Labour MPs have begun a campaign to press the Government to introduce a Bill which would effectively abolish film censorship by local authorities.

Failure of Church Unity Talks

Talks have been going on over a long period of time between the Church of Scotland, the Episcopal Church of Scotland, the Methodists, the Congregationalists, the United Free Church and the Churches of Christ aimed at uniting these Churches into one large denomination. The talks failed because an attempt to integrate the Episcopal Church into the Church of Scotland as an independent Synod (but with bishops having no ruling voice over the General Assembly) was not acceptable to the Episcopalians (Daily Express 6/2/75). To the Episcopalians, bishops are regarded as an essential part of their structure which they will on no account abandon. Consequently any attempt at union with a Church holding Presbyterian principles is doomed to failure from the very start. It appeared at one time that the Church of Scotland would succumb to the temptation to sanction the re-introduction of bishops for the sake of unity but in recent times has moved away from this stance and is strongly opposed to any attempt to foist bishops upon her.

Northern Ireland

Mr Merlyn Rees, Secretary for Northern Ireland, declared a short time ago that a new mood is abroad in Northern Ireland and people want an end to violence. His aim, he said, is to establish a Government in Northern Ireland which will have widespread acceptance.

Mr Rees has an unenviable task in trying to bring lasting peace to that war-torn Province. So far it is largely the IRA terrorists who have called

the tune, arranging a cease-fire when they felt it was in their interests to do so, and resuming violence when it pleased them. The durability of the cease-fire arranged in February will largely hang on the concessions granted to the Romanists in any permanent settlement arranged between the two sides in Ulster. Negotiations, then, are bound to be carried on under a threat, or an implied threat, of a resumption of violence. How a just and equitable solution of Northern Ireland's problems can be worked out in such an atmosphere it is difficult to see. One thing is certain: the Protestants of Northern Ireland are not prepared to have an unjust settlement imposed upon them.

The prospect before the people of Northern Ireland seems to be one of continual threat from enemies within and without. In these dangers to its very existence as a nation, the Roman Catholic Church plays no mean part. The price which the people of Ulster will have to pay to preserve their dearly-bought civil and religious liberties is that of perpetual vigilance. The real settlement of the Irish problem will only come when the Lord is pleased to pour out His Spirit on the whole of Ireland. Then — and only then — will the eyes of the oppressed Romanists be opened, and the nation joined in one spirit and one mind so as to live in Gospel harmony and peace.

Church Notes

Dumbarton Congregation — Manse Appeal

The Dumbarton Congregation have been successful in the kind providence of the Lord in purchasing a Manse at 30 Barloan Crescent, Dumbarton, for the sum of £12,000. The Manse is considered to be suitable in every way and the date of entry is 16th April 1975 (DV).

The congregation is in the position of being able to pay £5,000 of the purchase price and have also secured a loan of £7,000 from another source. This loan it has undertaken to repay, if at all possible, within seven years.

The congregation has been steadily building up over the past number of years and the prospect of being in a position to call a minister will certainly stimulate interest. At the same time, it is felt that help will need to come from friends throughout the Church in order to meet the obligation of repaying the loan.

The Deacons' Court would appeal to all friends to give such help as the Lord may enable them to do. Donations should be sent to the Congregational Treasurer, Mr A. E. Alexander, 38 Bonhill Road, Dumbarton.

Glasgow 18th February 1975. The Southern Presbytery heartily endorse this appeal.

Malcolm Macsween,
Moderator.
Donald Maclean,
Clerk.

Daviot Communion

The Kirk-Session decided that the communion in Daviot is to be changed this year from the third Sabbath in July to the first Sabbath in June.

New Church in Glasgow

Although a definite date cannot yet be given for the opening of the new church to be occupied by the St Judes Congregation, it is anticipated that the opening will take place in the month of May D.V. A more complete notice will appear in next month's magazine.

Presbytery Meetings (DV)

Northern: At Dingwall on 8th April at 6 p.m.

Outer Isles: At Stornoway on 29th April at 3.30 p.m.

Committee Meetings (DV)

The following Committees will meet in the Free Presbyterian Church, Inverness on 1st and 2nd April (DV):

Tuesday 1st April: 10-11.30 a.m. Church Magazines Committee. 11.30-1300 Church Extension Committee. 1430-1630 Finance Committee. 1630-1730 Dominions and Overseas Committee. 1900-2100 Jewish and Foreign Missions Committee. 2100-2200 Home of Rest Committee.

Wednesday 2nd April: 1000 Church Interest Committee. 1400-1500 Training of the Ministry Committee.

FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SCOTLAND: SPECIAL CONTRIBUTIONS — YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 1974

Places	Ministers and Missionaries	Sustentation Fund	Home Mission Fund	Jewish and Foreign Mission Fund	Aged and Infirm Ministers', etc. Fund	College and Library Fund	Organisation Fund	General Building Fund	Dominions and Overseas Fund	Total
NORTHERN PRESBYTERY										
Aberdeen	Rev. E. A. Rayner	£1,005.00	80.00	110.00	30.00	30.00	25.00	40.00	30.00	1,350.00
Bonar Bridge		500.00	40.00	16.00	40.00	19.30	11.30	14.10	14.50	655.20
Lairg	Rev. D. B. MacLeod	600.00	70.12	51.85	60.00	25.00	19.50	23.98	26.00	876.45
Beauly		616.57	137.24	235.72	39.30	31.00	34.00	—	50.65	1,144.48
Dingwall		768.54	283.44	198.75	45.32	50.86	75.00	46.22	44.38	1,512.51
Dornoch		136.50	126.00	60.00	8.25	11.00	9.61	9.05	10.55	370.96
Rogart	Mr. D. MacLennan	50.00	40.00	17.00	6.00	6.50	6.00	5.40	7.50	138.40
Fearn		600.00	71.89	77.30	26.51	26.97	32.28	36.45	30.64	902.04
Tain	Rev. J. Nicolson	700.00	99.29	48.29	146.00	30.00	32.14	23.14	15.00	1,093.86
Halkirk		1,601.41	116.85	130.00	36.60	33.00	31.00	34.00	45.00	2,027.86
Helmsdale	Rev. D. A. MacLean	200.00	21.50	13.00	8.00	7.00	—	5.50	7.50	262.50
Inverness	Rev. A. F. MacKay	4,456.42	555.06	503.81	739.02	271.03	218.15	255.42	240.56	7,239.47
Kinlochbervie		390.50	215.00	211.00	35.00	38.35	39.60	54.00	47.00	1,030.45
Scourie	Rev. J. M. Tallach	118.00	66.00	41.00	21.00	21.25	25.70	25.55	22.00	340.50
Daviot		550.00	108.50	87.85	32.59	38.50	28.00	38.52	37.99	921.95
Tomatin	Rev. A. MacPherson	464.77	86.00	44.50	39.00	38.00	31.00	21.50	32.50	757.27
Stratherrick		350.00	54.88	36.78	21.13	30.03	26.38	24.08	27.76	571.04
Strathay	Mr. J. MacLeod	110.50	107.50	54.00	17.60	26.15	19.65	19.65	24.00	379.05
Thurso		181.69	15.00	15.00	—	—	—	—	—	211.69
Wick	Rev. R. R. Sinclair	1,300.00	175.00	200.00	73.00	70.00	62.00	93.00	64.00	2,037.00
		£14,699.90	2,469.27	2,151.85	1,424.32	803.94	726.31	769.56	777.53	23,822.68
SOUTHERN PRESBYTERY										
Dumbarton		£577.02	39.29	43.78	26.50	20.50	19.50	21.50	20.50	768.59
Edinburgh	Rev. D. Campbell	1,770.00	210.00	210.00	77.47	76.21	63.68	64.17	102.55	2,574.08
Fort William	Rev. J. A. MacDonald	1,242.12	190.26	137.57	53.93	51.11	57.22	50.92	49.96	1,833.09
St. Jude's, Glasgow	Rev. D. MacLean	3,651.49	581.54	635.07	199.05	269.90	185.12	214.04	209.49	5,945.70
Dunoon		10.00	4.00	20.00	—	—	—	—	5.00	39.00
Greenock	Rev. L. MacLeod	700.00	70.00	54.00	36.00	48.00	30.00	37.00	35.00	1,010.00
Kames	Rev. D. A. MacDonald	520.00	20.70	43.80	20.20	27.30	19.70	22.50	19.75	693.95
London	Rev. M. MacInnes	1,093.90	133.83	221.86	79.41	44.38	40.08	62.48	48.29	1,724.23
Oban	Rev. M. MacSween	900.00	65.75	92.56	19.64	49.41	31.94	30.37	30.30	1,219.97
Stirling		46.00	20.50	33.00	10.50	7.00	7.00	20.50	12.00	156.50
Dundee	Rev. I. R. Tallach	2.00	44.00	25.00	19.00	11.00	17.00	15.00	12.00	145.00
Perth		41.32	53.94	38.44	—	8.50	1.00	—	13.50	156.70
Vancouver, Canada		—	—	—	86.86	—	—	—	194.34	281.20
		£10,553.85	1,433.81	1,555.08	628.56	613.31	472.24	538.48	752.68	16,548.01
OUTER ISLES PRESBYTERY										
Achmore		142.00	35.00	35.00	25.00	15.00	—	20.00	—	272.00
Stornoway	Rev. J. MacLeod	2,005.98	257.08	175.60	106.59	132.82	112.05	115.18	124.91	3,030.21

Brasclete		152.00	51.60	40.00	11.75	22.00	10.70	12.00	17.00	317.05
North Tolsta	Rev. D. MacLean	1,963.40	212.50	222.62	49.35	80.00	75.90	71.05	74.00	2,748.82
North Harris	Rev. A. MacKay	1,170.09	349.82	141.40	44.79	61.80	54.32	67.40	57.39	1,947.01
SOUTH HARRIS										
Northton	Rev. A. M. Cattanach	435.71	144.29	80.58	44.42	33.64	31.00	25.00	30.00	824.64
Strond		222.50	70.20	40.00	20.00	20.00	25.00	26.00	—	423.70
Finsbay		413.35	77.40	44.00	20.00	15.80	16.00	14.20	14.10	614.85
Seilabost		135.00	43.50	15.00	7.50	10.00	10.00	—	9.00	230.00
Ness, Lewis		711.80	55.60	105.59	12.00	12.00	12.00	12.00	12.00	932.99
Uig, Lewis		800.00	62.00	50.00	30.00	30.00	25.00	—	23.00	1,020.00

£9,016.83	1,474.49	1,008.29	397.15	464.91	404.04	398.93	393.77	13,558.41
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WESTERN PRESBYTERY

Applecross	Rev. A. Murray	730.00	135.50	87.50	21.50	21.00	22.00	26.50	20.00	1,064.00
Gairloch	Rev. A. MacDonald	1,510.00	278.61	194.50	109.15	58.87	60.18	61.45	70.00	2,342.76
Laide		544.00	121.20	78.00	24.35	30.00	27.00	21.70	32.15	878.40
Kyle of Lochalsh	Rev. D. Beattie	570.50	41.26	26.00	16.27	14.82	14.25	24.85	13.57	721.52
Plockton		157.90	10.62	6.79	5.83	5.69	6.25	13.65	8.15	214.88
Loch Broom		1,308.32	221.04	171.24	45.00	60.00	45.00	79.43	64.00	1,994.03
Lochcarron	Rev. J. W. Ross	500.00	50.00	—	14.50	—	8.75	40.66	—	613.91
Lochinver	Rev. A. MacAskill	946.65	128.97	132.38	30.76	40.91	32.76	32.76	37.31	1,382.50
Stoer and Drumbeg		625.91	182.95	152.95	45.99	47.99	45.99	45.99	40.98	1,188.75
Shieldaig		289.00	63.00	51.00	20.00	17.00	28.40	23.00	22.32	513.72

£7,182.28	1,233.15	900.36	333.35	296.28	290.58	369.99	308.48	10,914.47
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SKYE PRESBYTERY

Bracadale	Rev. D. J. MacDonald	1,032.70	45.30	51.20	37.80	42.40	32.45	29.70	74.20	1,345.75
Strath	Rev. S. F. Tallach	1,014.77	133.56	98.36	21.58	25.68	29.69	21.35	24.27	1,369.26
Flashadder	Mr. D. MacKay	165.00	100.00	20.00	11.80	11.00	10.40	10.00	12.40	340.60
Glendale		521.30	108.82	15.50	23.10	32.90	30.55	37.50	30.75	800.42
Vatten		285.40	118.55	54.20	11.40	16.92	7.64	16.60	12.30	523.01
Waturnish		90.00	66.00	15.00	14.00	15.00	15.00	25.00	10.00	250.00
Portree	Rev. F. MacDonald	2,423.85	494.82	432.69	90.05	147.09	101.54	108.48	116.96	3,915.48
Raasay	Rev. D. Nicolson	1,310.34	173.66	87.65	51.30	63.15	51.90	57.70	67.70	1,863.40
Staffin	Rev. J. MacDonald	1,160.43	116.23	75.81	32.40	38.60	37.01	43.90	39.57	1,543.95

£8,003.79	1,356.94	850.41	293.43	392.74	316.18	350.23	388.15	11,951.87
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AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND PRESBYTERY

Grafton, Australia	Rev. Wm. MacLean	—	—	163.11	25.62	—	—	—	44.83	233.56
Sydney, Australia		—	—	100.00	—	—	—	—	—	100.00
Gisborne, New Zealand	Rev. J. Vandorp	—	—	—	50.00	50.00	—	—	100.00	200.00
Auckland, New Zealand	Rev. D. M. MacLeod	—	—	120.25	59.19	—	—	—	70.66	250.10

£ —	—	383.36	134.81	50.00	—	—	—	215.49	783.66
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SUMMARY

Northern Presbytery	£14,699.90	2,469.27	2,151.85	1,424.32	803.94	726.31	769.56	777.53	23,822.68
Southern Presbytery	10,553.85	1,433.81	1,555.08	628.56	613.31	472.24	538.48	752.68	16,548.01
Outer Isles Presbytery	9,016.83	1,474.49	1,008.29	397.15	464.91	404.04	398.93	393.77	13,558.41
Western Presbytery	7,182.28	1,233.15	900.36	333.35	296.28	290.58	369.99	308.48	10,914.47
Skye Presbytery	8,003.79	1,356.94	850.41	293.43	392.74	316.18	350.23	388.15	11,951.87
Australia and N.Z. Presbytery	—	—	383.36	134.81	50.00	—	—	215.49	783.66

£49,456.65	7,967.66	6,849.35	3,211.62	2,621.18	2,209.35	2,427.19	2,836.10	77,579.10
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Acknowledgment of Donations

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

Sustentation Fund: N.N., £10.

Home Mission Fund: N.N., £3.

Foreign Mission Fund: Anon., Miavaig Postmark, £10; N.N., £3; Mr & Mrs B.A.R., Luton, £5, per Rev. D.B.M.

Aged and Infirm Ministers' Fund: N.N., £3.

College and Library Fund: N.N., £2.

General Building Fund: N.N., £2.

Dominions and Overseas Fund: N.N., £2, in memory of the late Mrs R.S. MacKenzie, Grosse Ile, per Mrs Campbell, Michigan, £50.

Trinitarian Bible Society: Lochinver, Stoer and Drumbeg congregation, £52; Auckland congregation, £69.49.

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

Welfare of Youth Fund: Anon, Rhiconich per D. J. McD. for Prizes for Scripture and Catechism Exercises.

Free Distribution Fund: A Gairloch Friend £1.

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

Aberdeen: B.P. London £20; An Old Friend, Fearn £5, both for Manse Fund; A Friend of the Cause £5 for Sustentation Fund, last three per R.W.M.M.; A.F. by Falkirk £25 for Manse Fund per W.H.M.M.

Fearn: 2 Friends per Rev. J.N. £10; Anon, Vancouver per Rev. J.N. £21, both for Manse Fund.

Lochinver: Anon (Sutherland Postmark), Matthew 6:3, 4 £20 for Sustentation Fund.

North Harris: Friend, Tarbert £2; Friend, Tarbert £5, both for minister's car expenses; Friend, Tarbert £5 (£3 for church and manse property and £2 for minister's car expenses); Friend, Kyles-Scalpay £2; Friend, Leacklee £1, both for minister's car expenses; two friends, Leacklee, Stockinish £10 (£5 for church and manse property and £5 for minister's car expenses); Friend, Stockinish £5 (£3 for minister's car expenses and £2 for manse and church property); Friend, Leacklee, Stockinish £10 (£5 for church and manse property and £5 for minister's car expenses); Friend, Scrote, Stockinish £4, all per Rev. A. McK; (late) Mrs MacMillan, Stockinish 50p for Aged and Infirm Ministers etc. Fund.

North Tolsta: Friend, North Tolsta £2.50 for Central Heating; Friend, North Tolsta £2.50; Friend, North Tolsta £5; Friend, North Tolsta £5; Friend, in memory of beloved husband £3, all for minister's car expenses and all per Rev. D. Maclean.

Plockton/Kyle: Envelope in plate £2 for Kyle Church Sustentation Fund; Envelope in plate £3; A Friend in memory of the 1893 stand £2; A Friend of the Cause £1 per Miss MacKay; A Friend £1.10, all for Building Fund.

Sheldalg: Envelope in plate £5 for Sustentation Fund.

Stornoway: Anon £10 for Congregational Purposes per Dr. H. D. M. Gillies; A Friend £20 for Communion Expenses per Rev. J. Macleod.

Strath, Skye: Anon £5 for church; Anon £5 for Aged and Infirm Ministers etc Fund, both in Collection plate.

Watnish: M.N. £3; Anon, £10; A Friend £2, all for Church Funds.

Wick: Anon £30 for Congregational Fund; £20 in memory of Rev. D. Beaton per Rev. R.R. Sinclair.