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The Low State of the Church

There are seasons when the spiritual life of the Church of God in the world is at a very low ebb. We judge this to be one of those seasons. At such a time there is little evidence of the work of the Holy Spirit in the awakening of sinners and in building up the people of God in the faith of the Gospel. It is a time of mourning for the true children of God as they feel the absence of the reviving power of God's Spirit and see the continued backsliding of the visible Church in the world. It is then that they begin to cry with Habakkuk: "O Lord, revive Thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy."

No doubt many reasons may be given why the spiritual life of the Church is so low today, but one cause seems to stand out above all others, that is, the increasing worldliness which has crept in among professed followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. How opposite is this worldliness to the spirit of Him who said: "Seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink . . . but rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you." How strange it should appear to us that those whose citizenship is in heaven should be increasingly taken up with the things of earth. The Apostle, in writing to those who were risen with Christ, exhorted them to "seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God," and "to set their affections on things above, not on things on the earth." The Saviour left His followers in no doubt as to the cost of discipleship: "Whosoever will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the gospel's, the same shall find it." Surely there is no place for worldliness in such a call!

If the true Church of God in the world is to be a witnessing Church, then it must be separated from the world lying in the wicked one. It must

be distinct from the world in its ways, its conversation and in its principles. Where worldliness is given place to by the professed people of God they cease to be a witnessing people, witnessing to the power of God's grace in them. It is when they become spiritually minded and heavenly minded and walk in love one toward another that it becomes evident to others that they have been with Jesus and have learned of Him.

Because of the darkness of the day in which our lot is cast, the need for a living and lively Church is all the more urgent. If the holy life of a godly man or woman bears such a solemn witness in the conscience of the ungodly, how much more would the witness of a holy Church rebuke an ungodly age. Is the Church of God in the world to fail then at that point in time when its witness is most needed?

Does all this not call us to self-searching to discover what inroads worldliness has made on our own hearts and lives? We fear that we will not have far to seek. May our sad condition bring us low at the feet of Him who is able to root out of our hearts and lives this sin which has brought us so low. Oh, how good it would be to have our minds and hearts lifted from earthly things and set upon Christ Himself in order that we might be swallowed up in Him who is our wisdom, our righteousness, our sanctification and redemption.

Sermon

by Rev. Donald Cargill

(This sermon was preached on the afternoon, after the sentence of Excommunication was passed at Torwood in Stirlingshire, Sept. 1680).

"For the Lord will not cast off for ever. But though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies."
—Lamentations 3: 31-32.

We know not of any Scripture that the Lord confirms oftener unto us than this. It is often borne in upon us. I say, He will not cast off a remnant: "for the Lord will not cast off for ever." Oh, but it is a sweet word! but alas, there are many sweet words that are hardly believed, because we are lying under much guilt. There is one thing sure, God will not cast off a remnant for ever. And if ye be sure of this, that ye once had Him, we will make you sure of this likewise, that if ye have had Him, ye shall yet have Him. We have a great pledge of His return, but we fear

that if ye have Him not, He will not return. And if He return not, then a soul should not be exercised about this, "If ever He will come again," but rather if ever He shall be theirs. Hath He ever been yours? If He hath been within you, I assure you He will yet be within you. He will yet return, and we shall say this, His absence is but short to some, but to some it is very long. But he that guides best gets Him soonest back again.

Now these words foreshow sad things — a sad condition indeed!

1. It is a sad thing to see a people cast off. Is it not a sad thing to see a wife cast off by her husband, and thrust out of doors?

2. As there is a sad condition shown in these words, so there is a fair hope given, that there will be help given in this condition. We shall say this, The departure of God would be even misery, if there were not hope of His return.

3. We have in the words the rise and spring of His returning. "Yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of His mercies." He shows what is the thing that will bring Him back, "for yet He will have compassion." As for this desertion, blame yourselves; and for His return, give thanks to God — give thanks to Him for His mercy and compassion. And blessed be God, that it is so. If it had not been so, if His bowels of mercy and compassion had not been such, if He had not abundance of bowels in Him, we had sinned Him out long since. Yes; we have sometimes wondered, that after all our sins, provocations and backslidings, there should be one spark, so to speak, of affection in God towards us. Tempt Him not always very sore, though His bowels are very great. But oh, the ingratitude that is in us! Our ingratitude makes such a base return for all His goodness long continued towards us.

Now we shall not go through everything in this text. We shall only consider this:—That the more that casting off causeth grief (when the Lord casteth off it causeth grief, but mistrust in grief is sorest), it helpeth us against our grief the more we consider that there is hope that "he will not cast off for ever." But when unbelief is added to grief, and they are both together, it is even like a stream that is carrying away the poor soul — it is like to be overwhelmed. But He stays the stream with this, "For the Lord will not cast off for ever." Oh, but grief with unbelief is sore! We will say this one word, that grief that hath unbelief joined with it should be stopped; for there is no benefit by abiding that case long. Ye may say, "What will stop this grief that is accompanied with unbelief?" In a word, dwell much upon God's part, and be sore upon yourselves. I say, dwell much upon God's part. He hath not done it without cause, and the cause of it is from ourselves. Justify God, and then be much upon His

part; for though we have procured it, He will mind it. We shall say this, that though God cast us off, it shall not be perpetually. Though our sins be great, and though our castings off for our sins be but short (oh! it is His compassion and mercy that make them short), though we provoke Him to cast us off, yet blessed be God who hath done that which will make them that they shall not be perpetual, and this is founded upon His goodness, upon the goodwill of God, upon His mercy and compassion. Our casting off flows from our sins, but this is His goodness and compassion, that He will not cast us off for ever. And besides, there is nothing required as a condition of His engagement, or of the continuance of His engagement, but what He promises freely of Himself. But there are a few things whereby He shows that His casting off will not be perpetual, or for ever.

1. His nature is unchangeable. Ah! It would go farther than casting off! Yes, it would go immediately to consuming. Were He not unchangeable, we would be in a poor case — it would even be consuming. Though we be changeable yet He is unchangeable. And it is not at all in us, but from Him, if we stand or if we be in a state of believing.

2. His faithfulness engageth Him. He hath passed His promise, and what He hath said, He will not recall. What hath He said? He hath said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." What is the Lord like unto in this respect? We will say, He is like a husband that goes out and in, to and fro, about his employment, and afterwards he returns home again, and he never leaves his wife, nor his house, or rather he never breaks wedlock. Oh, the faithfulness of God! If He had dealt with us as we have dealt with Him, what would have come of us ere now? Oh, His faithfulness is strong! If His faithfulness had not been strong, we would have broken and run away from Him, and never returned again. We run from Him and He brings us back again, like Adam when he had sinned. But it was God that brought him back again.

3. As God's unchangeableness and faithfulness are engaged, so the great affection and love that are in God, make the casting off of His people not be perpetual. There is a great love and affection in God towards His people. He will not only exercise His love toward Himself and His own Son; but He will have a creature to exercise His love upon. Oh, wonderful that He should exercise His love on a creature! It is a wonder that we are not saying everyone to another, "I can never love, but when I am loved of Him."

4. As this word imports a casting off, so it imports that there hath been a oneness in the case. Where God hath forsaken them, there His

love hath once been towards them. If His love did not bind them, it would be a dreadful casting off. If ye cannot say that once ye received Him, nothing can follow. Now, this is the foundation; I have once been with God. If ever ye have been resolved here, then it is a marriage indeed, and there is a remarkable feast, for there is never a marriage but there is a feast. He would give us the marriage and the feast, if we would give Him the heart. I would then ask you, "Got ye ever the feast? Had ye ever greater delight in God, than in all other things?" I shall say this one word: If God had been the greatest feast and the greatest delight unto you, ye had oftener feasted. Thus it imports a oneness, and that oneness is the foundation of His return. And it likewise imports casting off, though the Covenant be not broken, and that casting off must have a great fault. And where there is casting off, it is a wonder there is not a longing to see where the fault lies, and what the great fault or faults are — that since casting off hath a cause, what that cause is? There must be a cause, for there is real displeasure of God, though that displeasure be constantly with love, yet according to our carriage He will cast off, or delight in us. And just as we behave we may expect to find Him. There are two things here. There is a real displeasure, and a real cause of displeasure; and therefore God is not to you as before. Then reflect upon the cause. Reflect upon yourselves. The cause is in you. O happy soul, that never goes to God, till it find a fault with itself and what is the cause of His withdrawals, and acknowledge it and so find Him again.

5. The many castings off now say that there is great untenderness, for where there is great untenderness, there are many castings off. If ye would not have Him stay away long, be very circumspect, be more tender; for in effect untenderness in a Christian makes his life differ nothing from that of a heathen. A Christian's untenderness will never keep off crosses, but will keep off a present God. Now then we are sure of this, that frequent casting off flows from great untenderness, and this is the great sin of this nation. We are persuaded, though we never knew, what is within you, that this is the present generation's sin, for it is evident that untenderness can neither enjoy God long nor frequently.

6. It imports this, that if once there be an interest in God, His castings off will not be perpetual. "The Lord will not cast off for ever." There is no creature that hath an interest in Him but He hath reserved hope for it, so that though there be a casting off, yet there will be a return. I say, there are none that have their foundation sure, but He will return unto them. Is your foundation sure? Have ye His tokens? Have ye, I say, got His tokens? Have ye His earnest? Have ye His seal? have ye the

sealing of the Spirit? I fear ye have yet all these to seek. And without these, ye can have but small comfort when cast off. But if ye have these, I assure you, He will not "cast off for ever. But though he cause grief, yet he will have compassion, according to the multitude of his tender mercies."

1. We see that when God casteth off, there must be grief; because the cause of our casting off is from ourselves.

2. It causeth great grief because there is much time lost, much time runs over, and we do no good. We never do a right turn. I think everyone should say with Joshua, "O Sun, stand thou still," until I get God again. We should weary of our time, when He is away.

3. A thing that not only adds to our grief, and makes it not only great but desperate, is want of the assurance of His returning. The greatest grief and misery are when there is no hope of His returning. This makes grief not only great, but desperate. I say, it makes the grief great, because the cause is from ourselves. It would quiet our minds somewhat if we were not the procuring cause of it ourselves, but how can I be quiet, when it is procured by myself? In this case, there is no good done, and much time ill-spent, for all evils are present.

4. This casting off brings not only grief, but is desperate without an interest in Christ. But where there is an interest in Him, this casting off will not be perpetual. But ye may say, "When will He return?" His returning will be according to our diligence. If ye can want Him, He will tarry the longer. Yes, indeed He will tarry the longer, if ye can want Him. When He is absent, ye never go a right step till He come again. When He is away, all good departs, and all ills come. Oh, how poor and wretched art thou that canst want Him! How greatly is it your interest to get Him, and, when got, to endeavour to keep Him; for when He is gone your wisdom is gone; your strength is gone; you are laid open to all your enemies, and made a prey of by them. You cannot do anything without Him, but sin.

USE.—Here we might make several uses of these things, but we shall only speak to this one, which is even here for comfort to them that are smitten with any casting off and forsaken: "Yet He will have compassion." He hath cast the Church of God long off, and He hath cast His people long off, which is very sad. But I trow the people of God have more ground to hope for His return to themselves than they have to hope for His return to all the Church. For it is now alike with all nations. We have no token of restricting Him to our nation. He was never restricted to any nation after the Jews, yet we are far from discouraging any from

believing His return again unto this land. We acknowledge this indeed, that there is more to press down our hearts, than to hold them up. But we yield this also for your encouragement, that He hath showed as great a love to this nation, and as strange mercies, as ever He hath done to any. But they will force him away out of despite, and He will have them once overturned, and then He will rise up against their will. But if He return, see that ye be not away, when He comes. Oh, that woful bonding and cess paying! O this shire! This shire! I know not a place in Scotland like it. Woe to them when God comes back! Ye will neither get favour nor pleasure. He will be a terror to you. But when He comes, He will be to the afflicted their desire and the answer of their prayers. Have ye kept His bed chaste? If ye have kept His bed chaste, He will come again, and He will thank you, so to speak, for so doing.

Now what say the words more? They say this: "I will turn the wheel upon the wicked." He will turn again and see who is wrong and who is right. There will be many complaints given in unto Him. Be ready, Sirs, with all your complaints, with all the wrongs done to the work of God, and to His honour. This one thing I will say, He will turn the wheel upon the wicked, and He will have His people up again, though He give them away for a while. Though He cast down, He will take up again. He will reckon with them for all their wrongs. Now, when He comes, enemies will not get one foot-breadth of ground. Though He cause grief, "He will not cast off for ever." There the thing is His compassion and mercy. If His compassion do it not, it is impossible that He should return. If His bowels of mercy make Him not return, it is impossible that He will return again. There is nothing that will make us sure of His return, but His compassion and mercy.

Remarks on the Torwood Excommunication

By John Howie

As this action hath been very much cried out against, not only by highflyers, but by our modern Presbyterians both before and since the Revolution (which perhaps may yet be the case on its publication at present), it might therefore be no ways unnecessary to offer a few things here by way of vindication. But as somewhat of that nature hath at different times dropped from more able pens, I shall only in this place further add, or observe:—

1st, That unless we shall suppose kings and great men to be above the

limits of Church discipline, I see no plausible objection that can be here made, except that it was done by one minister, and without some of the formalities used by the Church in like cases. These however may be easily accounted for from the history of these times; the greater part of the ministers of the Presbyterian persuasion had then accepted of the indulgence, whereby they became the king's vassals so that Mr Cargill could expect no consent of concurrence from them in that matter. And for the more faithful, they were either killed, or had absconded. It is said, however, that he consulted six or seven of his brethren in the business, who gave their consent to it. And for the formalities, the crimes were open and avowed, and when all door of access was shut against complaints or redress of grievance, there could be no possibility of citing those persons legally before one whom they had declared unjustly to have forfeited both life and fortune; and besides, it is a received maxim in this Church, "That in cases extraordinary, some things extraordinary may be done."

2ndly, He had His Master's mind and divine approbation therein as the event declared. Hear a few of His own words on the Sabbath following at the Fallowhill. In the preface he said, "I know I am and will be condemned by many for what I have done in excommunicating these wicked men; but condemn me who will I know I am approven of God, and am persuaded that what I have done on earth is ratified in heaven; for if ever I knew the mind of God, and was clear in my call to any piece of my generation work, it was in that transaction. I shall give you two signs whereby ye may know that I am in no delusion:—(1.) If some of these men do not find this sentence binding upon them ere they go off the stage, and be not obliged to confess it from their terror to the affrightment of others; (2.) If these men die the ordinary death of men, then God never sent me nor spake by me" — which came to pass, for King Charles was poisoned, the Duke of York died a fugitive in France, Monmouth was executed, Lauderdale turned belly-god, and died upon the chamber-box, Rothes died under the dreadful terror and sense of that sentence binding upon him, so that he made the very bed shake under him; McKenzie died at London, all the passages of his body running blood, and Dalziel died in perfect health, with a glass of wine at his mouth. It was observed, too, that these wicked men in their life, grew still worse and worse; and it was thought that they died, all except Monmouth and Rothes, obstinately insensible. And if a person, or persons, deserve the highest censure of the Church, and it be lawfully and legally inflicted upon them — if they live and die obstinate and

insensible, either of the aggravation of the crime or justness of the sentence, we cannot set limits to divine mercy; but I can see nothing to evade the binding force of Christ's own words in that text, "And whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven, both here and hereafter."

Christ is All

By Dean Henry Law

13. THE SCAPE-GOAT

"Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for the Scape-goat." Lev. xvi. 8.

There is great power in words. A written page imprints distinct ideas. But when the pencil adds its skill, then objects stand in bolder shape. Forms seem to live. The canvass almost moves. So too the tongue may ably tell the wheels and works of a complex machine. But let a moving model play: then intricacies open out: obscurities are clear. The eye stamps every part upon the tablets of the mind.

Transfer these thoughts to Gospel truth. Doubtless each statement there is a pellucid stream: each doctrine is a cloudless sunbeam. The blindness, which discerns not, is the blindness of the lost. But when types pass in long and varied train: when living semblances appear: then deep impressions gain a deeper root.

Reader, such is the teaching of God's glorious book. All modes are used, to manifest Christ Jesus. To see Him is eternal life — to see Him not is ruin's lowest depths. Hence words state facts: and types are joined to words: and images bring in their help. The Bible is a lesson for each class of mental grade. It is a text-book for each mode of thought. Is proof required? Israel's Atonement-day most graphically gives it. What prophets sang: and what apostles preached: and what the Saviour did, here take a shape, and through the eye impress the soul. Faith looks, and at each moment sees a pictured Saviour. Each sight gives being to some text.

On this day many victims died. The stream of blood flowed deep. Each holy altar and each holy place received the reconciling sign. This visible display attests, that death is the dread curse of sin. Each sacrifice proclaims, that substituted sufferings avail. Sounding this truth, they are

as heralds, who precede the Lord. If such be not their mind, they only puzzle and perplex. But year by year these shadowy rites recurred. Their note was to predict. They were as morning stars of a far brighter sun. Effectual aid was not in their premonitory show. They now have vanished. The cross has dug their grave. Their need is past. Christ, their full truth, has once laid down His life. That once is all-sufficient for all the sins of all His happy flock. That once fills to the full the cup of satisfaction. That once seats all the ransomed on the high rock of everlasting pardon. Who then are blind as they, who now renew the sacrifice — once and for ever passed? A bloodless offering is an awful cheat. It robs the cross of its consummate glory. It feigns to re-act what has been done for ever. Mock repetition nullifies the finished work. Judaic rites are Christ foreshown. Romaic mass is Christ denied.

But in the service of the atoning day, one part stands singularly forth, and singularly asks survey. Two goats are brought for a sin-offering. The priest receives them at the tabernacle door. Then lots are cast. Man's mind may not select. Some unseen hand takes one for death, and bids the other live as the Scape-goat.

Reader, this scene reveals the council of eternal love.—Before the worlds, God's will called Jesus to the saving work. Each portion of the scheme was pre-resolved. Each was consigned to His receiving hands. This truth is precious comfort. They, who feel sin, need much to win their trust. They will not grasp a straw. Without credentials, Christ seeks their heart in vain. But when the Father ushers in the Son — when His voice seals the chosen Lamb — then pyramids of doubt sink low. He, whom God sends, is able for God's work. This rock is raised by God. It is enough. It must stand firm. What sinner can ask more?

The sentenced goat then died. Now mark, my soul, the uses of its blood. With this the high-priest ventures within the mystic veil. The mercy-seat receives the drops. The holy tent is also strewn throughout. Seven times the golden altar's horns are touched.

How fearful, yet how comforting, this sight! There is an universal need. There is a co-extensive cure. Man cannot move, but sin moves with him. Man cannot move, where reconciliation cannot come. There is wide remedy for the wide malady. But further mark the Gospel of this blood-red scene. Blood is our purchase-price. Justice had claims. The law 'as dues. Our debts are countless. Every moment swells the amount. How can we buy our souls from wrath? Our best is only sin. But let all creditors bring forth their books. Christ sprinkles every page. The dreadful writing disappears. Let heaven suspend its scales. Sin's load is

an exceeding weight. But here is blood divine. Therefore it out-weighs.

Blood is our peace. Sin seen in its true light — sin felt in its strong power — is misery's misery, and anguish more than scorpion's sting. The broken heart is one abode of woe. The wounded conscience writhes, and cannot rest. But when the Spirit shows the blood, all dread forebodings cease. It proves, that peace is signed in heaven. It waves an olive-branch throughout the soul. It places pardon in the happy hand.

The blood has a sin-killing power. Sin is a weed with many roots. They widely spread, and ever strive to rise. But touch them with the blood. Let the heart feel, that sin slew Christ, and nailed the God-man to the accursed tree. How can that now be loved, which pierced that brow, those hands — those feet — that side? A holy feeling shudders at the thought. It clasps the Saviour, and treads down His foe.

The blood drives Satan back. There is no place impervious to his tread. There is no moment free from his approach. No palace, and no hut exclude. He has a key for every chamber — every pew. No busy hours are too full for him: no stillness is too still. Nothing can daunt him, but this blood. The messengers of wrath passed not the lintels marked from the paschal lamb. So when this ensign is displayed, temptation starts and flees.

The blood bars hell. Those cells cannot admit a Christ-washed soul. If it be possible, let such approach. The chains refuse to touch. The fires curl back abashed. The gnawing worm can find no prey. The jailor drops his keys. My soul, see to it, that this blood is yours. It is sure safeguard against hell-pains.

The blood removes the hindrances to heaven. Behold the countless multitudes before the throne. All nations — kindreds — peoples — tongues, swell the vast throng. But every robe is white, and every hand uplifts a palm. The question has been put, "Whence came they?" The answer tarried not. "They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." My soul, is not your one desire to join this company, and share their joy? See to it, that this blood is yours. No other cleansing can remove the heaven-expelling guilt.

The blood fills heaven with songs. The ransomed fall before the Lamb. This is the substance of their mighty song. "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood." Angels swell the strain, "Worthy is the Lamb, that was slain." My soul, is time fast bearing you to raise this chorus higher? It is so, if this blood is yours. They cannot sing above, who have not washed on earth.

But seek again the ritual scene. It changes. The other goat appears.

With anxious eye the multitude intently gaze. It is a moment big with results. The high-priest comes. His outstretched hands are pressed upon its head. This attitude is token of transmitted guilt. He then tells out the fearful catalogue of Israel's sins. In sign the substitute receives the mass. What a deep feeling would pervade the camp! How many lightened hearts would say, My burden leaves me. The Scape-goat takes it, and I am relieved.

The laden victim is then led away. It is borne beyond the camp — beyond all sight — beyond the track of man — to the far borders of a desert wild. Released, it disappears in rocks and thickets of an untrod waste. Unseen, unknown, forgotten, it departs from mortal view. It is now buried in oblivion's land.

There is no brighter picture of the full pardon of all sin in Christ. Faith knows this Scape-goat well. Daily it uses the relief. It hides no sin. It cloaks no guilt. It tells out all upon the head of Christ. Thus have I done. Such is my wretched state. But I cast all on one, who waits to bear, and bears it far away. Christ hastes away with the accursed load, and God's all-searching eye can no more find.

Oh precious tidings! Oh heart-cheering truth. The spirit wills, that this full comfort should most largely flow, and hence by frequent testimony He confirms the truth. Is the east distant from the west? Can we move through the intervening space? As we advance the horizon still recedes. Infinite separation infinitely separates. Thus far our Scape-goat bears our guilt away. Ps. ciii. 12.

Can we recover what the ocean buries? No line can reach to the unmeasured depths. It has sunk downward, never to arise. Deep waters hide it, and it must be hid. Such is the grave of sin. Our Scape-goat drowns it in a fathomless abyss. The word is sure. "Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." Mic.vii. 19.

Can that be seen, from which the eye is turned? Are objects visible, when the front shuns them? Our Scape-goat hides transgression in the distant rear. Is it not said, "Thou hast cast all my sins behind Thy back?" Is. xxxviii. 17.

Who has not seen a mass of blackening clouds? They threaten to wrap all the skies in one vast pall of night. But suddenly the rays of sun dart forth. The darkness melts — the sable mantle becomes thin — and soon, how soon the gathered mists are gone, and one clear robe of lucid blue decks the pure arch of heaven! Thus when Christ shines upon the mountains of our guilt, they vanish, and no sight can more behold. It is so. Hear the Spirit's voice, "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy

transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins." Is. xlv. 22.

The tender Shepherd seeks each straying sheep. He never rests, till all be found. But no search finds His people's sins.

A land of infinite forgetfulness conceals them. Mark well the word, "In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found, for I will pardon them, whom I reserve." Jer. l. 20.

The covenant of grace has precious articles. They are all wonder, wisdom, love. The Father draws them:—the blood of Jesus seals:—the Spirit is the witness. This code declares, "I will remember their sin no more." Jer. xxxi. 34. The Scape-goat ordinance confirms the truth. Heaven is holy work remembered — unholy deeds forgotten.

Believer, you need comfort. Drink deeply of this stream of joy. Live pondering this ordinance. Lie down in pastures of delight. Your sins, so many, vile, and hateful, pass to your Scape-goat, and so pass away. Faith thus transfers them. Christ thus removes them. God sees you in the glories of His Son, and thus sees no defect.

Reader, have your hands touched the Scape-goat's head? If not, your loathsome load remains. Christ, and Christ only can relieve. But Christ neglected is all sin retained. And sin retained is filth and shame. What if death find you so? What! Oh! learn not the reply in hell.

Franco Maggiotto

Franco Maggiotto is a converted priest. I met him during a recent visit to Italy, and had an opportunity to discuss his past experiences, and the evangelistic work in which he is now engaged. Next month I will D.V. give more details about that work as well as about our own people whom I was glad to see again at Fornaci di Barga. For the present I give the substance of Franco's spiritual history, as told by himself on a tape which I took back with me some weeks ago. The English is left largely unchanged, for fear of spoiling its freshness.

'I was born in the Roman Catholic Church, and I was always, since I was a young man, giving myself completely to the Church. I was a vice-president of my section of Catholic Action. I was all the time thinking about God and I was all the time faithful to the Church.

When I was a young student of philosophy I had a religious crisis: I wanted really to know God; I wanted to find out the living and true God

in a personal way. So I went to my spiritual father, to my parish priest, and explained to him the situation. They told me that if I wanted to see God, if I wanted to have a more personal relationship with Him, I had to give up everything. I had to kill my sin within myself, which was the obstacle between me and meeting God. So I wondered about a way of life to destroy my sin and I went to a Hermitage. I became a hermit in a Hermitage near Rome. There one lives by oneself, never talking with others. They have just one meal a day, never meat nor milk, and they chastise themselves twice a week. They eat sitting barefoot on the floor. They rise up during the night to sing and they do many other things just to kill every appetite in the soul. and to try to find out God by killing the flesh.

But doing everything I could, I could not get out of my situation. Always I had the feeling that nothing I was able to do could satisfy the perfect God, the living God, and I never met Him. I never had the joy of feeling in my heart and in my mind His love and His mercy toward me. Then I became weak in my health and the doctor told me that I was in danger if I was to live there any longer. So the General Father told me that they were very happy to have me there but it would be better for me to come back when I was much older.

So I went to a seminary in Albenga where I became a prefect of discipline. I was very hard with myself and I was very hard with the others. Then I became a priest and went to a small town under a parish priest who was eighty years old. There I tried to do everything I could to help my people. I was giving away my money and helping the poor. But I came to understand that I was not able really to make people go to God. They were coming to me, they were coming to the Church, but they never became Christians. And I myself did not know God, and my sin was still in myself. One day I thought I would finish with preaching just political things, social things, and I wanted to know in a deep sense what the gospel was. So a group of students, undergraduates of whom I was in charge, met with me, and we started to read the gospels and to translate them. In doing this work I understood that there was a big gap between what the Church was teaching, what I was preaching, and what the gospel was. Basically, I saw immediately that the gospel was throwing men in front of God, and we were attracting men towards the Church, making people concentrate on themselves, on their own efforts to go to God. But God was telling that every power was in his hand — the power of salvation and the power of death. So I saw in that time the attitude of

Christ was to throw men on their knees in front of God, begging God to give them salvation in Christ.

But even if I saw this gap, there was a passage in the Scripture which made me very worried. It was Luke 10:16: 'He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me'. So I said, There is a gap: but if I don't preach as the hierarchy say I will despise God, because God sent them to interpret the Scripture. So I had to think over these things. One day I understood something more clearly. That was the verse in Matthew 28:20: '. . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you'. Of course Jesus said to the apostles, 'He that heareth you heareth me', but never did Jesus say to the apostles, 'Go and preach whatever you like, or whatever the people like'. Never did Jesus say, 'Go and preach what you think the people will enjoy, and who hears you hears me, and who despises you despises me.' But he said, '. . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you'. So, if you teach whatever I have commanded you, and they despise you, they don't despise you, they despise me, because you are telling what I commanded you.' So that made me to think very hard, and to understand that God never gave authority to the apostles to say whatever they wanted. Rather, the apostles had authority only when they were saying exactly what Jesus told them to proclaim.

So I went back again to preach the Scripture and many people were coming to me and I was called to preach in big churches and my bishop and others were telling me that I was an effective preacher, but I was doing something very wrong. I was giving much more emphasis to the objective truth than to the traditions. And so I went back to the same preaching, and the people were not very attentive to me when I went back. But I had always in my heart this kind of trouble. What have I to say — what Jesus says, or what the Church says? Where is the truth to be found — in men, in the Church; or in God and in His revelation, that is Jesus Christ? So I was really in trouble at that time.

I went to a very big parish. I became parish priest. I became arch priest afterward, but always I had this trouble in my heart. One day when I was really in trouble the Lord helped me with the Scripture. I was going on with Galatians with my students, and in Galatians 1:8 I saw something which struck me very much. I saw that Paul was saying, '. . . though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed'. Paul was saying that if even we or an angel, not from hell, but from heaven, preach any other

gospel, let him be accursed. So Paul was saying that if even we, who gave up our lives for you, come to you saying something different from what the gospel of God is, throw us out. Because what is important is not me, not the angel from heaven; what is important is the word of God. So here I saw very clearly that the Apostle received light from the word of God, not vice-versa, as it is in the Catholic Church where the gospel receives light from the preachers. It is the preachers who receive light from the gospel. So that became very clear for me. If any come preaching any other gospel I have to throw him away, I have to accurse him, because what we have in our hands is the very word of God. So that really broke me with tradition and gave me the assurance in my heart and mind that truth is not to be found in the hierarchy but in the revelation of God in Christ, the incarnate Word of God.'

The next part of Franco's experience is unfortunately missing as the tape recorder did not function at this stage. The tape picks up his story at the climax of his experience.

I was in charge of mass and there was a young man, a student, reading from the Bible. The passage that he read was in Hebrews chapter 10. He came on to read, 'By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices which can never take away sins: But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God.' These words 'By the which will' broke me. If it had depended on my own will I would never have been sure of salvation. But there I learned that it depended on the will of God. I said to myself, Everything is finished, now Christ is sitting down. And the young man went on reading till he came to 'And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.' At that moment at the altar I did not know if I had to cry or to rejoice. I was crying and laughing at the same time. I was like a man going out of his mind.

So I said to the two priests that were assisting me during the mass, 'Christ died really, and Christ resurrected. He died to pay for us. We don't have to pay any more.' So I was rejoicing and I couldn't go on with the mass. I went upstairs and all my life started, a new life, where I knew that God sent His Son, very God and very man, to pay for me. And now a new life started, a life of friendship with God.

Of course I passed through many difficulties, but the joy that I had in my heart was so great that everything that happened to me I looked on as a gift of God: because the happiness was so great that even the worst

thing that could happen, it appeared to me as a beautiful thing. Because such is the happiness that I am waiting from God to go and see Him face to face that this happiness will repay every sorrow and every pain that I have to endure in my life. God is doing in my heart and producing in my heart, the will and the doing to transform me slowly into the image of Christ, as it is in His plan. So that is a little bit of my testimony.'

J.T.

Canadian Report

by Rev. Donald Campbell, M.A., Edinburgh

COMMUNIONS IN ONTARIO, CANADA

This, my second visit to Canada within a year was in response to an invitation from the Kirk Sessions of Toronto and Chesley to dispense the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in these congregations. Communion seasons in Ontario under the auspices of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, were, to many, a new experience but to those present at the services a very pleasant one. For many years the Chesley congregation while part of the Church, had regular communion seasons until contention deprived the people of their happy relationship with the church of their fathers. During the time they were separated from the Church some among them longed for the day when normal relationships would be restored and the Church would once more function in their Province. A few were spared to see that accomplished when on Sabbath, 13th July, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was dispensed in the Orange Hall, Chesley. The cynics would sneer at calling the occasion historic but to those who contended for the restoration of the Church's witness in that place, it was the Lord's doing and wonderful in their eyes.

The services during the solemn season, which comprised the usual days of humiliation, examination, preparation and thanksgiving were well attended by attentive audiences, particularly at the Fellowship Meeting and the Communion service. Among the strangers present from Toronto were Mr and Mrs Scambler and Mr and Mrs Vanderwall, Ann and Peter, and from Detroit, Mr and Mrs Lawson. Their presence greatly encouraged both congregation and preacher. We hope they found a blessing for their souls. A good percentage of young people attended and indicated an interest in the things they saw and heard. Our prayer is that the revival of the Communion seasons in Chesley will prove the beginning of better days for the Cause of Christ in that part of the vineyard. The friends of the Church there are due its thanks for their loyalty and

diligence. A pastor is needed to help the Elder, Mr Schuit, in his praiseworthy endeavour to organise the Congregation. Our prayer is that one of our ministers will be constrained to take the charge of the Chesley congregation. Meantime steps are being taken to procure a manse and such is the enthusiasm behind this project that a house should be available soon. Needless to say, financial help in achieving this would be much appreciated.

On Monday evening after the service, we returned to Toronto with Mr Fraser, his daughter, Caroline and sister-in-law Annie Graham who had motored out earlier in the day. The Communion in Toronto, on 27th July, was the first in that city under the auspices of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland and on the admission of the friends present it was a time of blessing. The services which extended from Thursday to Monday were well attended having regard to the time of year when several of the congregation were on holiday. The Fellowship Meeting was a new development in the Toronto church but to the Lord's people present, a welcome and refreshing devotional exercise, which impressed all.

Present at the Lord's Table was one, Mrs R. Fraser, who could remember Communion Seasons in Scotland in the early years of the Church when large numbers of the Lord's people gathered to commemorate the death of Christ and impart spiritual gifts to one another. In respect of numbers the comparison could hardly apply but the warmth of fellowship which prevailed was reminiscent of those bygone days. One new member was added to the Toronto communion roll. The lady was a Mrs Singh, an Hindu, whose parents were ardent devotees of their religion but their daughter, mercifully delivered from the power of darkness found herself rejoicing in Christ Jesus, while seated with His guests at His Table in Toronto. The power of the Lord unto salvation is not limited by colour, creed or nationality. This fact was most singularly illustrated in the church in Toronto, when men and women of different nationalities sat together at the Lord's Table to commemorate the death of Him Who gave Himself for the life of the world.

These communion seasons mark, we pray, the beginning of better days for the Church in Canada. For the benefit of all interested in our church there we recommend that our people at home and elsewhere inform their friends in Canada of the church services. The addresses of the places of worship are given in the Free Presbyterian Magazine.

Of our seven Sabbaths in Canada we spent one in Winnipeg where we were most warmly received. I preached twice in the church on Sabbath

and having regard to the infrequency of the services there, the congregations were encouraging. After a period of fourteen years one was struck at the changes which had occurred. Needless to say we sadly missed the men and women who were among our best friends in 1961. Death had taken them to their long home and their departure has not only depleted our ranks in Winnipeg but greatly weakened the hands of those who still adhere faithfully to our position in that city. These long for regular services as they hunger for the bread of life. The revival of our church in Winnipeg is our fervent desire. We ask for the prayers of the Lord's people on behalf of Christ's cause there.

While in Winnipeg we received the sad news of the death of Mr Thomson, Toronto. To Mrs Thomson and her family we offer our sincere sympathy in their great loss.

It was a pleasure to visit Mrs Morrison, a worthy member of the congregation, but housebound now for many years. On our arrival at Winnipeg, Mr Gillies met us at the airport, notwithstanding the fact that our plane was over two hours late. We greatly appreciated this and also the generosity of Mrs Kitchen, Mr and Mrs Gillies and Miss Nicol in whose homes we were so warmly entertained. On Monday evening Mr Gillies kindly accompanied us to the airport where we boarded the plane for Toronto.

On Tuesday morning Mr J. C. Fraser and I paid another visit to our friends in Chesley where we were entertained by Mr and Mrs Schuit. In the evening I held a service and met the Building Committee, whose enthusiasm deeply impressed me. That same evening we returned to Toronto where we spent the remaining part of our Canadian visit.

After a period of pleasant but fully occupied forty five days in Canada my wife, son I left Toronto for home on 11th August. As on the former occasion we were seen off by a goodly number of devoted friends — too many to mention by name. To them and others we are deeply indebted for their kindness to ourselves and their manifest zeal for the Cause we mutually love. "His name shall endure for ever; His name shall be continued as long as the sun; and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call Him blessed." Ps. 72 v. 17.

Church Deputy

Rev. and Mrs E. A. Rayner, left this country at the end of October for Ontario. They expect to remain in Canada for at least two months before proceeding to Australia. Their address in Toronto is: 458 Huntingwood Drive, Agincourt, Toronto. Tel: 416-293-9110.

Obituaries

The late Mr William Bruce, elder, Wick.

The father of the subject of this obituary was also named William and was an elder in the Wick Congregation for twenty-five years. He died in 1949, aged eight-one years. His son, of whom we now write was born at Thrumster, some miles south of Wick, on 28th November 1897, and died on the 16th of January 1975, aged seventy-seven years, at his home in Bower.

He served in the Army in the First World War. He was admitted as a member in the Wick congregation in October 1923. He was ordained a deacon in 1924, and afterwards in 1963 was ordained an elder. During this long period of over fifty years in office he proved himself a worthy deacon and elder.

He was engaged during his life in the farming industry and was known as a most competent man in his calling. His farm and home were situated in a quiet part of Caithness, in the Bower district about ten miles west of the town of Wick, to where he travelled regularly with his family to the public worship of God. Visitors to his home always received a warm welcome and he himself was manifestly a Christian head of a Christian home: the Word of God being given the place therein as the rule of faith and manners for the Lord's people, in their private lives, as well as for their public walk and conversation in the Church and in the midst of the world: "For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the Church of God?" (1 Titus 3:5). William Bruce, by divine help, looked well to his conduct at home and from home and was highly respected in this regard.

He was earnest and lively while engaging in prayer. Friends who were accustomed to hear him in public, as on other occasions, will ever remember this. One conspicuous feature of his prayers was the use he made of quotations from Scripture to express his exercise, in for instance confession of sin or in pleading for the divine favour and blessing. An evidence of how his spiritual feelings could be moved and affected was seen when the Kirk-Session examined those applying for membership for the first time and who were accepted for admission to the Lord's Table. Invariably, the tears were seen to fill his eyes. We read of Barnabas, that "when he saw the grace of God," in sinners being brought to believe in Jesus, "he was glad." There are tears of joy in the experience of

Christians when they know of any being brought out of darkness and truly and in reality drawn to the suffering Saviour of the lost, to believe in Him under the influence of the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, and to find in Him, all their salvation.

Our late friend had a clear understanding of the precious and fundamental truths and doctrines of the Word of God: and was a discerning hearer of the preaching of the Gospel. He said on one occasion that he had no mind or place for traditions. In his spare time he read a good deal. Once he was heard to remark quite casually, that he had just finished reading all Bunyan's Works.

The pilgrim, of whom we write began to be greatly missed in the congregation when he was confined to his home by a progressive physical ailment. When visited now and again he revealed a quiet and composed frame of mind. He remarked during a visit by his fellow elders, that the doctor asked him if he felt depressed. His reply was, "No!" He did not conceal that he had a good hope of a better Country, even an heavenly. And we believe he has gone to be with Jesus, his Redeemer and Lord.

The sincere sympathy of the Wick Congregation and other friends is extended to his sorrowing widow and son, and his sisters. The grace of the Lord Jesus is sufficient for them.

R.R.S.

The late Mrs Dolina MacLeod, Wick

Mrs MacLeod was born near Lochinver, Sutherland, on 6th November 1907, and died at the age of sixty seven years. She came to reside with her husband in Helmsdale about forty years ago. While in Helmsdale she became a member in the Congregation there under Rev. William Grant's ministry, to whom she was greatly attached. Later she resided with her husband at Loth, near Helmsdale. After Mr MacLeod died, she came to reside with her daughter, Mrs Robert Chalmers, in Wick: and thereafter transferred her membership to Wick Congregation.

For quite a while Mrs Macleod had not enjoyed good health: but this did not hinder her regular attendance upon all the services in the house of God on Sabbath and weekdays. It was seldom she was heard to complain of her physical affliction, although once and again she had to enter hospital for short periods. She cast her burden on the Lord, from her heart, in secret prayer, and was undoubtedly graciously sustained.

But on the last occasion she had to be taken to hospital, she died unexpectedly on Wednesday evening, the 25th June 1975.

By her intimate Christian friends she was known as a gracious, humble

person, living a life which becometh the gospel of Christ Jesus. She was indeed adorned with a meek and quiet spirit which is in the sight of God of great price. Yet she possessed a most friendly and attractive personality and was held in affectionate regard by her friends.

Her son-in-law and daughter and their children were greatly privileged by having her presence and Christian example in their home for those few recent years. And she was very contented in their home where she enjoyed every kindness and comfort. May they not forget what they saw and heard of her godly life.

The Lord's people in the Wick congregation were saddened by her removal from their midst. But her latter end was peace. To her daughter and sons and son-in-law, and other members of the family we extend our sincere sympathy. May they seek their Mother's Saviour and find that life which shall never end.

R.R.S.

Gathan Gloir na Diadhachd

Leis an Urr. Eideard Pearce

(Air a leantuinn bho t.d. 335)

1 Thugaibh fodh'n ear ciod e'n saoghal caochlaidheach anns am bheil ar còmhnuidh againn, anns an t-saoghal a tha nochdadh atharrachadh a h-uile latha, iomadh atharrachadh, agus atharraichidhean mòr, is fìrinn e, 's e saoghal gu maith caochlaidheach a anns an t-saoghal so, agus cha'n eile e fada gus am bi e air a chaochladh gu staid anns am bi e gu bràth. Tha'n latha a teachd 'n uair a bhitheas na h-uile nì dhuibh so air an atharrachadh; siubhlaidh na neamhan air falbh, leighidh an talamh le dion theas, II.Pead. iii.10, 11, agus aig an am so cha'n eil an saoghal gu'n atharrachadh, agus cia cho mòr na h-atharraichean faodaidh sinn a bhi beo gus fhaichinn. Co aig a tha fios? Tha leithid de dh' atharraichidhean coltach ri bhi tighinn air an t-saoghal 's nach nì ach Dia neo-chaochlaidheach bhur cumail suas fodha. Ann an Lucas xxii.25, 26, tha sinn a leughadh mu chinneach a bhitheas air an talamh, maille ri treigsinn cridhe, agus trom smal, cridheachan dhaoine dha'n treigsinn le eagal agus a thaobh a bhi'g amharc os deigh na nithean sin a thig gu crìch air an talamh. 'S e suim na nithean so, gu'm bi a leithidean sin de dhatharraichean, a leithid de reubaidhean, a leithid de chrathaidhean, a leithid de thionndaidhean uamhasach air oibreachadh a measg chinneach na talamhainn, a leithid de dh' fhàsachaidhean air a dheanamh, agus a leithid de stoirmeanan de dh'fheirg agus de dhioghaltas a thuiteas air an

t-saoghal agus gum b' daoine a treigsin am beatha agus air fuadach gu ceann an gliocais, tuitidh iad gu bhi treigsin an spioraid, analaichidh iad a mach an dearbh anamaibh, na bithidh iad air an lionadh le leithid de chràdh, uamhas, agus duibhre anam, agus gu'm bi iad ullabh gu bhi tighinn ri'm beatha fein, ach a luchd mo ghràidh ged a bhitheadh-mid beo gu bhi faicean na nithean sin cia cho maith 's a bhitheadh Dia neo-chaochlaidheach? Oh fhearaibh! a bhi beo ann an saoghal caochlaidheach co nach suidhicheadh air Dia neo-chaochlaidheach mar chuibhrionn agus sonas duine? Co nach fhaigheadh snas air agus a stigh ann an Carruig nan Àall. Cia cho maith, cho milis 's a bhitheas E, Dia neo-chaochlaidheach a bhi againn mar ar fasgadh agus ar dion.

2 Thugaibh fa'near ciod e na nithean caochlaidheach a tha'n comhfhurtachdan a chreutair agus ann an solasan an t-saoghail. Mar tha an saoghal anns am bheil ar còmhnuidh na shaoghal caochlaidheach mar sin tha comhfhurtachdan a chreutair nan comhfhurtachdan caochlaidheach. na'n seasadh an saoghal far am bheil e, agus mar a thà e, gu'n atharrachadh air bith dhe na dh'ainmich sinn gidheadh tha comhfhurtachdan a chreutair, aig a chuid is fearr, buailteach de dh'atharrachadh gach latha, agus cia cho luath 's a dh'fhaodas sinn a ràdh mu aon na aon eile dhiubh, na mu'n tiomchull uile, mar a thubhairt Iacob mu Iosaph agus Simeon, Gen, xlii.36, "Iosaph cha mhaireann agus Simeon cha mhaireann agus Benjamin bheir sibh air falbh; am aghaidh sa tha na nithean so uile." Cia cho maith sa dh'fhaodas sinn a ràdh, tha chomhfhurtachd so na chomhfhurtachd ud eile, Co is urrain a ràdh? Tha ceard agam a nis, a'màireach faodaidh a bhi cha'n eil i agam. Tha àite còmhnuidh taitneach agam, a màireach, faodaidh i bhi na luaithre. Tha nis agam mo chàirdean agus mo dhaimhean, m'fhear pòsda, na mo bhean na luidh gu taitneach ann am bhroilleach, mo chlann mar phlanntaibh tiomchull mo bhùird, a màireach, faodaidh e bhi gu'm biodh iad uile na'n luidh anns an ùir agus gu'n teid iad sios gu dorsaibh na h-uaigh agus nach fhaic mi iad ni's motha. Mo thruaigh! cha'n eil na nithean sin ach mar ni, theid as an t-sealladh (mar a tha Solamh a labhairt mu shaibhreas). Dhe leithid do ghné tha'n caochlaidheachd gu'r gann a tha bith aca. Na, smuaitich gu'm fanaidh na nithean sin maille ruinn, gidheadh ciod cho luath 's a dh'fhaodas iad a bhi air an deanamh searbh dhuinn? Cia cho luath 's a fhaodas am fion is fearr so tionndadh gu searbhadas? Cia cho luath 's a dh'fhaodas na comhfhurtacan is milse tionndadh gu crann-ceusaidh searbh? Aig amaibh faodaidh miann ar sùilibh a bhi air a toirt air falbh bh'uainn le buile (mar a bhagair Dia air an fhàidh bho shean) 'sin gu h-obann agus

mu'm biodh fios againn air ar comhfhurtachdan 'us taitnich, is mìlse, agus is tlachdmhor air an toirt air falmh bhuain. Aig amaibh eile thig miann ar sùilean gu bhi na eallach do ar n-anamaibh, thig ar comhfhurtachdan is dlùith gu bhi air an deanamh searbh dhuinn, agus sin a bha'n de milis agus taitneach dhuinn an diugh theagamh searbh dhuinn agus na eallach. An diugh a ni a bha na aoibhneas do ar cridheachan, a màireach faodaidh na bhioran dha ar taobh agus mar dhroighean do ar sùilean. Oh! cia luath, aig iomadh uair, a thionndaidheas ar sruthain is mìlse gu bhi na uisgeachan Mhàra dhuinn. Nis air an taobh so co nach gabhadh fois Ann agus na neo-chaohlaidheachd. Tha so air fhaotainn ann an Dia a mhàinn, agus uime sin biodh Esan a mhàinn na fhois agus na chuibhrionn dha ar n'anamaibh.

(R'a Leantuinn)

Book Review

The Lives of Philip and Matthew Henry. Banner of Truth Trust. £2.95.

Many readers of Christian literature at the present time are unacquainted with the lives of those eminent men, father and son, and particularly with the life of Philip Henry who was born in 1631 and died in 1696. **The Banner of Truth Trust** has recently reprinted, for the first time in one volume, **The life of the Rev. Philip Henry** by his son Matthew Henry, and **The Life of the Rev. Matthew Henry** by John B. Williams. The name of Matthew Henry is famous as the author of the highly-prized Commentary on the Scriptures. C. H. Spurgeon described it as "first among the mighty for general usefulness." His **Life** of his father is also a spiritual classic, of which William Jay once wrote, "A young minister should have this book ever near him." Of Matthew Henry his biographer wrote, "whether considered as a Christian, or a minister, in private life, or in public, he was an 'example to believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.' His character as a Christian was superlatively bright and brilliant."

Philip Henry too was an outstanding Christian of whom it was said that he was "one of the most pious and excellent men of the age in which he lived, or any other." He was a graduate of Oxford University and a very learned man. As a child he was a playmate of the royal princes, Charles and James Stuart, and as a young man he watched, with a sad heart, the beheading of King Charles 1.

We recommend the purchase of this book which is a well-presented and reasonably priced volume, in keeping with the standard we have come to expect from these publishers. It could prove particularly useful

to Secondary School or University students who are studying the Puritan period. It does give a well-informed general appraisal of political events in seventeenth century England in marked contrast to certain modern text books.

D.M.M.

Notes and Comments

Persecution of Christians by the Communists

Behind the iron curtain the persecution of Christian believers and their families continues. The atheistic system which holds power in those countries is violently antagonistic to Christianity in any shape or form. It does appear that protests by persons from countries outside the iron curtain are effective in some instances in securing or hastening the release from prison of these persecuted brethren, or in relieving some of the suffering to which they are exposed for the sake of Christ. For example, of the seven Russian Reform Baptists imprisoned for their involvement in a secret Bible printing press, the five women were released from prison after serving only eight months of their sentences. It is also reported that Vasile Rascol, the Rumanian sentenced to two years for distributing Bibles was released nine months early though in this case it would appear to be on the grounds of ill health. Many other Christians however are still in prisons in Siberia and elsewhere in the U.S.S.R., as well as in other Eastern European countries.

While making whatever protest we can over these persecutions, let us value all the more the opportunities which are afforded to us still to worship God in public and in private in peace and quiet. Let us also pray that the Lord will continue these blessings to us as a nation at a time when we appear ready to lose them through our many sins and backslidings from God.

Charity Status of the L.D.O.S.

The charitable status of the Lord's Day Observance Society has been questioned by the Charity Commissioners and also by the Expenditure Committee of the House of Commons. The Report of the Committee states: "We have received representations about the L.D.O.S., a religious society, which is not only propagating a particular object but indulges in very considerable political pressure and propaganda to attain its ends." The General Secretary of the L.D.O.S. in replying in a Memorandum to

these observations which he regards at its best as misleading and damaging states: "The only occasions when the Society has taken 'political action' — if by such term is meant some kind of contact with Parliament or its Members — have been (a) at General Elections when the Society has asked its sympathisers to question the candidates about possible legislation with regard to 'Sunday', and (b) at such times as legislative action is before Parliament which would affect the preservation of 'Sunday', when M.P.'s are contacted by both the Society and many constituents."

We regret that the Charity Commissioners and a Parliamentary Committee should express doubts about the justification of the Society's charitable status. Its witness on the side of the Lord's Day has not made it a popular society in high places nor amongst an ungodly world. It is not surprising therefore that representations should be made against it but it is regrettable that any place would be given to these representations.

Church Notes

Concerted Prayer

Let us remember in our prayers the persecuted Church of God in the world and let us plead that the Lord will hasten the day when "the knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea". Let us not forget Rhodesia in its present situation and seek, if that is the Lord's will, that an ordered settlement be obtained between its European and African peoples.

Our friends on the Mission Field should ever be borne upon our spirits at a Throne of grace — that the Lord would sustain them and prosper His Cause in that part of the world and wherever He is sending His Word throughout the whole world.

The Voice of Death

It is with sorrow we record the removal by death of three elders of the Church during the month of October. These were: Mr Colin Gillies, Applecross; Mr Alexander Maclean, Gairloch; and Mr Angus Macleod, Ullapool. Besides these three, there passed away since May: Mr Roderick MacInnes, Staffin; Mr John MacKay, Dunvegan; Mr John MacCuish, Shieldaig; and Mr Hector Campbell, Ullapool. The removal of these gracious men leaves a blank in our midst. The Lord alone is able to repair the breaches made in the walls of Zion. May He raise up others to take the place of those whom He has taken home to glory. We extend

sympathy to the families and congregations concerned and commend them to the God of all grace.

The Free Presbyterian and Young People's Magazine

From January 1976 (D.V.) the F.P. and Y.P. Magazines are to be published together instead of separately. The Editors will continue to be responsible for their respective sections of the combined Magazine. The Magazine Committee has, reluctantly, had to come to this decision because of rising costs. It would be of great help in the present situation if Deacons' Courts and also the people of the Church could see their way to give additional support to the Magazine Fund. The Magazine is sent out with the desire and hope that the contents may, by the Lord's blessing, be used for the edification of those who read it. We would value the prayerful interest of the people of the Church in this work.

Westminster Conference

The above Conference meets on December 16 and 17 at Westminster Chapel, London, to consider 'The Christian and the State in Revolutionary Times'. The Chairman is Dr D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones. Full details are obtainable from the Conference Secretary, Rev. David Bugden, 75 High Street, Warboys, Huntingdon, Cambs.

Correction of List of Communions

The list of Communions on the inside front page of the Magazine has been corrected for 1976. Would ministers of congregations kindly intimate to the Editor any additional corrections which may be required.

End of Financial Year

Deacons' Courts and Congregational Treasurers are reminded that the current Financial Year ends on 31st December, 1975. All congregational contributions to the Funds in respect of 1975 should be sent to the General Treasurer so as to arrive not later than 8th January, 1976, D.V., after which date any contributions received will be credited to 1976.

Congregational Financial Statement

In accordance with a motion of Synod, copies of Congregational Financial Statements are to be sent to the Finance Committee. It is requested that copies in respect of the year to 31st December, 1975, be sent to the General Treasurer, Clerk to the Finance Committee, by 29th February, 1976, D.V.

Acknowledgment of Donations

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

Jewish and Foreign Mission Fund: Anon, North Tolsta, £10 for Bulawayo Church; Acts 1 v. 8, Edinburgh postmark, £10 for Mbuma Hospital.

China Mission Fund: Anon, Inverness, £50.

Organisation Fund: Anon, Twickenham postmark, £30.

Ingwenya: New Zealand \$118.89 for printing tracts; Inverness Sabbath School \$466.96 for Bulawayo Church; Vancouver \$1864.30, for General Funds; Timothy Mission \$54.72, for Mbuma Hospital; T. Mackay per J.T., \$12.10, for General Funds; M.M. \$70.00, for Bulawayo Church; D.M. \$130.00, for General Funds; D.M. \$63.00, for General Funds. The above is a corrected list of donations which appeared in the November Magazine.

Publications Fund: London Congregation £5.

Free Distribution Fund: London Congregation £5.

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

Aberdeen: J. M., Aviemore £1 for Communion Expenses; W. M., Fearn £10 for Manse and Church Fund; Mr A. £1; Mr M. £1 both for Manse Fund.

Daviot: In memory of a loving husband and dear father, £200.

Flashadder: A sincere Friend, Edinbane £5 for Flashadder communion expenses.

Gairloch: A Friend, Portree £5 for Sustentation Fund, A Friend, Fort William, £5; for Communion Expenses; A Friend, Glenmorrison £3; David £5, last two for Congregational Purposes. All above donations per Rev. A. Macdonald.

Glasgow: Anon £1 for Congregational Fund; N. H., Lochgilphead £1 for Sustentation Fund per Rev. D. M.; Anon £20 for St Jude's Development Fund per W.D.F.

Greenock: Mrs R. Harris £5; A Friend £10; R. C., Bangon N.I. £7 all for Congregational Purposes and all per Rev. L. Macleod.

Kames: A Friend, Edinburgh £1 for Sustentation Fund.

North Harris: A Friend, Meavag, South Harris £1 for Church Door Collection; Same, £5 for Communion Expenses; A Friend, Inverness £5 for Communion Expenses; A Friend, Tarbert £9.85 for Congregational Funds per W. D. F.; A Friend, Leacklee, Stockinish £10 (£5 for Communion Expenses and £5 for Minister's Car Expenses); A Friend, Tarbert £5 (£3 for Church and Manse Property and £2 for Minister's Car Expenses); A Friend, Tarbert £10 for Minister's Car Expenses; A Friend, Leverburgh £5 for Minister's Car Expenses; Anon £2 for Dominions and Overseas Fund, last five per Rev. A. McK; From Friend, Tarbert found in plate £5 for Minister's Car Expenses.

Plockton/Kyle: Mrs MacI, Kyle £10 (Sustentation Fund £5, Home Mission £2; Foreign Mission £1, Manse Building £1; Trinitarian Building Society £1)

Portree: M.G., Braes £5 for Church Bus (Church Plate); Friend £3 per F.M.; Anon (Church Plate) £1.35, last two for Dominions and Overseas Fund.

Raasay: In Memory of dearly beloved wife £7 for Sustentation Fund per J. M. MacLeod; Friend, Raasay £6; C. C. M., Raasay £2; Friend, Inverarish £4; A Friend £5; Friend, Inverarish £5, all for Manse Extension and all per J. M. MacLeod; A Friend, £2 for Congregational Fund per N. MacKay; Two Friends, Inverarish £5; Friend, Raasay £1; Envelope in plate, Matth. 6:3 £10, all for Congregational Funds.

Shieldaig: A Friend, Raasay £3 for Manse Repairs; A Friend of Shieldaig Congregation £20; A Shieldaig Friend £2 for Car Fund; In memory of Margaret Campbell, Ardheslaig £100; Anon, Canada £100.

Stoer: Anon £5 (in plate) for Congregational Purposes.

Stornoway: Two Friends, Inverness £20 for Congregational Funds per Rev. J. Macleod.