

The Free Presbyterian Magazine

Vol 110

June 2005

No 6

God's Gifts to His Church

Christ's work on earth had been completed when the disciples watched Him go up to heaven and a cloud received Him out of their sight. He entered into heaven to sit at the Father's right hand – the place of power, to which as God-man Mediator He had been appointed from all eternity. He had come into the world to do all that was necessary for the salvation of rebellious sinners. Now that work was over, and the resurrection bore testimony to the fact that the Father was fully satisfied with what He had done. After the 40 days and 40 nights, during which He taught His disciples to understand the Scriptures to an extent far beyond what they had ever done before, He ascended. Among the passages the Saviour expounded to them may very possibly have been the words of David in Psalm 68:18: "Thou hast ascended on high . . . Thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also".

From His place at the right hand of the Father, Christ exercises His right to distribute the blessings He purchased for those whom the Father gave to Him in the everlasting covenant. What wonderful gifts these are! As David Dickson expresses it in his commentary on the Psalms: "Christ as Mediator and King of His Church was fully furnished with all things needful for gathering His Church, for edifying, governing and perfecting it". We can sum up these gifts as the great blessing of salvation for rebellious sinners. Or we can attempt to look into the length and breadth and depth and height of this blessing and consider the individual gifts which come together in this one blessing of salvation – for instance: forgiveness, holiness of heart, adoption into God's family, His care and protection for His people throughout the rest of life, and a place in heaven thereafter. Paul sums it all up when he assures the Philippians: "My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Phil 4:19).

Yet when Paul refers to Psalm 68:18, what gifts does he focus on? "He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers" (Eph 4:8). The first three offices in this list were only for the first age of the Christian Church, but the final gift, of "pastors and teachers", is permanent – the ministry in both its pastoral and teaching work.

What an amazing gift was granted to the early Church when Saul of Tarsus was called by grace and sent out as “a chosen vessel” to bear God’s “name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel”! And we can cast our eyes down the history of the Christian Church and pick out other ministers who also were remarkable gifts from God: Martin Luther, John Calvin and John Knox, to name but three. Yet clearly every man who is divinely called to the work of the ministry is a gift from Christ, one of the multitude of gifts which He purchased for sinners, even for the rebellious.

Just as Christ “came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance” when He was on earth, so when He sends out His ambassadors He sends them to call rebellious sinners. Preachers are not to minimise the seriousness of sin but are to make it clear that “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Rom 3:23) and that “the wages of sin is death” (Rom 6:23), even eternal death. But to these hell-deserving sinners, ministers are to proclaim Christ’s work of redemption; they are to point to Him as exalted to give repentance and forgiveness of sins – and all the other blessings for time and eternity which are embraced in the covenant of grace. They are to beseech even the most rebellious of sinners to be reconciled to God and are, in their preaching and pastoral care, to strengthen believers, encouraging them through the promises, showing them Christ’s utter sufficiency to supply all their needs, but at the same time demonstrating the requirement that God’s children should be holy even as their Father in heaven is holy.

Yet we must remember that, whatever gifts God gives, it is *His* work to apply the truth to individual sinners and thereby build up the Church. So the Psalmist makes plain: “Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it” (Ps 127:1). Although Paul himself would plant, and Apollos water, God must give the increase. Ultimately it was not Luther’s resoluteness or Calvin’s massive intellect or Knox’s boldness that was responsible for the success of the Reformation in the sixteenth century, though these obviously were relevant factors, and God in His providence had moulded these individuals and many others – as gifts to His Church – in the way He did, with a view to bringing about the spiritual transformation of large parts of Europe at that time. Certainly Paul was sent to the Gentiles “to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God” (Acts 26:18) – a superhuman work indeed. But he was sent as an instrument, whose labours the Holy Spirit was to bless, and in that way the Church of God was to be built up. Similarly every other pastor and teacher is an instrument whom God may be pleased to use to the good of souls.

Likewise, “except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain”. Yet the watchman must watch; ministers must be on the alert for the

dangers, which in their time, threaten the Church. They must raise the alarm; they must warn the people about these dangers; and they must expound to them the particular scriptures which direct them as to how they should think and act in a world where temptations of so many kinds surround them.

In normal circumstances, sinners will be born again as a result of the preaching of the gospel. It is remarkable that the last-quoted Psalm goes on to say, "Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord; and the fruit of the womb is His reward." (Ps 127:3). As this is true naturally, so it is also true in the spiritual realm. It is in God's kindness that He not only gives a minister to a congregation but also gives His blessing so that sinners are added to that particular part of the Church, as stones built on the one foundation, which is Christ Jesus. And it is clearly part of the preacher's reward that his ministry should be blessed in this way, and also in the spiritual growth of those who are already true followers of the Saviour.

When God gives gifts to His Church, what should be the response? Whatever else, thankfulness is essential. But not only are congregations to express their thankfulness in praise and prayer, they are also to follow this through in all its implications. They are to demonstrate that they appreciate their pastors as gifts whom God has given to them. If, on the human level, people do not make use of a gift, one can safely assume that they do not value it. And if individuals in a congregation do not attend public worship, when able to do so, one can safely assume that they do not value God's gift to them – and indeed that they do not value their souls and, more significantly still, that they do not value God's "unspeakable gift", Jesus Christ the divine Saviour.

But those who value a ministry as God's gift will be most earnest in seeking God's blessing. They will ask the Lord to bless the minister himself, to protect him from every danger and to enable him to grow in grace and in knowledge. And they will ask God to bless him in his work: to help him in his studies and, in particular, in his preparation for preaching, to apply the preached word to the good of many souls and to keep him faithful in all the responsibilities of his office. As individuals, they must be willing to receive the truth proclaimed, for they are to treat their minister as an ambassador to them from God. They are not, of course, to listen unintelligently, for we have the example of the Bereans, who "received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11). Those who value this particular gift of God are under obligation to support the ministry financially, for "even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel" (1 Cor 9:14).

May the Lord give many more ministers to His Church and may He grant also the gift of the Holy Spirit so that their preaching might be richly blessed!

Almost Saved¹

A Sermon by *J A Alexander*

Luke 17:32. *Remember Lot's wife.*

Among patriarchs and prophets, apostles and martyrs, there is not one we are called to remember – not even Abraham or Moses, not even Paul or Stephen. This is the only case in which an express divine command can be appealed to: “Remember Lot’s wife!” The unique prominence thus given to an otherwise unimportant character in sacred history may serve to justify a brief inquiry *how* and *why* the exhortation is to be complied with. In other words, (1) what is there in the case of Lot’s wife to be thus remembered? And (2) of what use can the recollection be to us?

1. The customary topics of commemoration are noble birth, splendid achievement and surpassing excellence, which are, alas, too seldom found in combination. But in which of these respects was Lot’s wife entitled to be snatched from oblivion? Was it birth or name, good works or evil deeds, extraordinary piety or unexampled wickedness, that gives her this pre-eminence? Her very name has been omitted in the record that bears witness to the fact of her existence. Of her birth we can learn absolutely nothing from a history distinguished from all others by the minuteness of its genealogical details. We know who Abraham’s wife and Nahor’s wife were – not their names only, but their parentage – but Lot’s wife, so far as the inspired record goes, her birth is a secret and her name a blank!

There are cases, however, in the sacred history where no small interest attaches to the character and deeds of those whose names are not recorded. Without going beyond the field of female biography, we may cite as examples the widows of Zarephath and of Shunem, and the woman of Samaria, for whom or upon whom the Lord wrought miracles of healing. But Lot’s wife is revealed to us by no description, no characteristic actions, no glimpses of her private life. She is not even mentioned in the history of Lot’s migrations or of his residence in Sodom. She appears for the first and almost for the last time in the brief but vivid picture of that hurried escape, when Lot still lingered, and “the men laid hold upon his hand, *and upon the hand of his wife*, and upon the hand of his two daughters, the Lord being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city, and . . . said,

¹Reprinted, with abridgement, from *The Gospel of Jesus Christ*, a volume of sermons by Alexander (1809-60), who was a professor in Princeton Theological Seminary. The original American edition appears to have been in two volumes, and the first has been reprinted in paperback by Solid Ground Christian Books as *Theology on Fire, Sermons from the Heart of J A Alexander*, 414 pp, available from the Free Presbyterian Bookroom at £16.95.

Escape for thy life; *look not behind thee*, neither stay thou in all the plain: escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed”.

Is this blank then to be filled up by indulging the imagination, by investing this mysterious figure with fictitious qualities? Certainly not. We can remember only what we know. The command is not to imagine but to remember. And in this case we can only know what is recorded. The Saviour evidently takes for granted that His hearers knew the fact which He commands them to remember. They could know it only from the narrative in Genesis. Had anything beyond this been required, it would be expressed, as in other cases where the Saviour and His followers reveal something not contained in the Old Testament. Such additions to the history are the names of the Egyptian sorcerers, Jannes and Jambres, not recorded by Moses but disclosed by Paul to Timothy; and Jude’s citation of the prophecy of Enoch, and of Michael’s contest with the devil for the body of Moses. But in this case there is no such completion of the history; it was to some familiar fact that Christ alluded when He said to his disciples: “Remember Lot’s wife”.

This familiar fact could not be the angels’ intervention and deliverance of Lot’s wife, with her husband and her children, from the doomed city – because this was not remarkable enough to be appealed to as a great historical example. Had miraculous deliverance been all, the wife of Noah might have had a better claim to this distinction. We must therefore go a step further and consider the other half of her recorded history as furnishing the lesson which our Lord inculcates in the text. That other half is all comprised in a single verse of Genesis: “His wife looked back from behind him, and became a pillar of salt” (19:26). So sudden is her disappearance from the stage of history. She only appears long enough to disappear again. Hence her history is all centred on a single point, the last. It has no beginning and no middle, but only an end – a fearful end. Our first view of Lot’s wife is afforded by the light of the sulphurous flames already bursting from the housetops of the reprobate city. Our last view, the moment after, by the same fires as they mount to heaven and light up the whole horizon, reveals, among many old, familiar objects, one never seen before – a pillar of salt on the road to Zoar. That very pillar was what the disciples recalled when Jesus said, “Remember Lot’s wife”.

I proceed directly, therefore, to point out the three particulars in which her end was so distinctive as to render it a fit example for the purpose which our Saviour had in view when He told His disciples to remember her. In doing this I shall, of course, make no appeal to your imagination but confine myself with rigour to the brief and plain terms of the history.

(1.) *She was almost saved*. The cases are innumerable, no doubt, in which

men have been destroyed when apparently on the verge of deliverance; but there must be very few cases, if any, where the subject passed so quickly through the startling vicissitudes of life from the dead, and death in the midst of life. First, entire security; then awful and apparently-inevitable danger; then miraculous deliverance; then sudden death. The point to which I would direct your attention first, is the extraordinary, unexpected and, to all appearance, certain and complete deliverance, which Lot's wife had experienced. In prospect and in expectation she was saved already, and in actual experience she was almost saved. She had been thrust out from the burning city by angels' hands, her husband and her children at her side. The chosen refuge was not far off, perhaps in sight; the voice of the avenger and deliverer was still ringing in her ears: "Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain: escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed".

With such facilities and such inducements to escape, with her family on one side and her saviour on the other, Sodom behind and Zoar in front, who would not have thought what she thought, that Lot's wife was saved? Had she been left behind to perish in the flames, the suicidal victim of her unbelief, her end would have resembled that of thousands, and our Lord would not have told us to remember her, as if one out of the multitude consumed in that hot furnace were entitled to be any more remembered than the rest. But when actually brought outside the gates, perhaps against her will, and by such hands too, and already on her way to the appointed place of refuge, with the cry of the angel and the crackling of the flames both impelling her onwards – surely she was almost saved!

(2.) But though almost saved, *she perished after all*. What I wish you to observe is not the bare fact that she perished – so have millions, both before and since – but that she perished *where* she did. Perdition is indeed perdition, come as it may, and there is no need of fathoming the various depths of an abyss which is bottomless. But to the eye of the spectator, and it may be to the memory of the lost, there is an awful aggravation in the preceding and accompanying circumstances of the final plunge. He who sinks in the sea without the hope of rescue may be sooner drowned, but to the heart of an observer how much more sickening is the end of him who disappears with the rope or plank of safety within reach or in his very hand, or of him who slips into the surging waters from the surface of the rock which, with his failing strength, he had just reached, and on which for a moment he had imagined himself safe at last! The same essentially is the case of those who escape one danger only to be swallowed by another, like the seaman who had braved all the chances of war and the diseases of a sickly climate only to be wrecked as he was reaching home; or the case of

the soldier who escapes the edge of the sword on many a battlefield only to die as the victim of disease or accident. Of all such cases, the most striking is that of Lot's wife, who was almost saved, yet not saved, who perished in the moment of deliverance!

(3.) The destruction of Lot's wife was so ordered as to make her *a warning to all others*. You may smile at the credulity of those who imagine that the monumental pillar exists and may yet be identified. If you will, in the pride of science or the pride of ignorance – for they are near akin and often coincide in their conclusions – you may believe that this is a strong Oriental hyperbole, a metaphorical description either of perpetual remembrance or of a natural transient effect. The pillar of salt may have vanished from the shore of the Dead Sea, but it is standing on the field of sacred history. The Old and New Testaments both give it place; and as it once spoke to the eye of the Canaanite or Hebrew who revisited that scene of desolation, so it now speaks to the memory and conscience of the countless multitudes who read or hear the law and the gospel. It says to them, and to us among that number, as our Lord said of old to His disciples, "Remember Lot's wife!" Remember the awful end of one who seemed miraculously saved from a miraculous destruction, only to meet it in another form and in another place, the very threshold of deliverance, converting her at once into a pillar of salt, and a perpetual memorial of the "goodness and severity of God".

2. The end to be attained, by our remembering Lot's wife. It is no unreasonable question, if propounded in a proper spirit, free from petulant levity or sceptical presumption: What have we to do with this remote event of patriarchal history, this incident attending the destruction of a place whose very site has been blotted out from the surface of the earth?

In the first place, we may rest assured that the narrative was not recorded for its own sake or to gratify a spirit of historical inquiry; because this would render unaccountable the fewness of the facts recorded, and still more so the emphatic exhortation of our Saviour to remember this particular event. The only satisfactory solution is that the case of Lot's wife may be repeated in the experience of others, not in its outward form and circumstances, but in its essential individuality. This supposition may be directly proved by the example of our Saviour applying this historical example to the siege and destruction of Jerusalem. After warning His disciples against such security and self-indulgence as prevailed before the flood and the destruction of Sodom, and commanding them "in that day" not to delay their flight for what seemed to be the most necessary purposes, He adds, "Remember Lot's wife!" This can only mean that similar effects may be expected from like causes, that the course of divine providence is governed by fixed laws, and that the

same succession of events may therefore reappear. Our Lord Himself propounds the principle of application in the conclusion of this same discourse, when the disciples asked Him, "Where, Lord? And He said unto them, Wheresoever the body is, there will the eagles be gathered together."

It thus appears that, far from being forbidden to apply the text to other cases than the one which the Saviour had immediately in view, we are directly taught to consider it as applicable to ourselves and others, and to spiritual, no less than to outward, dangers. If those who were liable to be involved in a great temporal calamity might be warned by the example of Lot's wife, how much more conclusive is it as a warning against fatal procrastination before a danger as much more awful than the one in question as the soul is more precious than the body, or eternity than time. Accordingly, with how much greater emphasis may they who are exposed to this tremendous risk be exhorted to "remember Lot's wife".

I proceed, then, in the same order as before, to point out how the fearful end of Lot's wife may be repeated in our experience. If it can be done, this will be the most effective application of the text: as an exhortation to remember her and profit by her terrible example.

(1.) We, like Lot's wife, may be *almost saved*. This is true in a twofold sense. It is true of outward opportunities. It is also true of inward exercises. If a heathen who has just been made acquainted with the method of salvation, and is surrounded by innumerable multitudes still strangers to it, could be suddenly transported into this community and see your multiplied opportunities for securing salvation, he would, of course, consider you as almost saved. Regarding heathenism as the Sodom from which he has just escaped and from which we have so long been delivered, he would look upon us, not as almost, but as altogether saved. The intellectual and social influences of Christianity would inevitably lead at first to false conclusions in the mind of such a stranger, and constrain him to cry out, These people, although not yet in heaven, are already saved; and in reference even to that final end they are almost saved!

We know how mistaken such an inference would be. You need not be reminded how far these external advantages, precious as they are, may fall short of securing the salvation of those who enjoy them. You know, although a heathen convert might be ignorant, that men may have all this and more, and yet be neither almost nor altogether saved. You know how many individuals may go down from the midst of the restraints of social discipline, like Korah and his company, if not into the drunkard's grave, at least into an eternity without hope. Yet there is a sense in which many who are not safe might seem almost saved. Amidst the unbelief and opposition to the truth

which still prevail in the hearts of some who hear the gospel, there are strong though ineffective desires for something better. Resolutions to repent and believe are perpetually surging up in the commotions of that sea which cannot rest, and we might be tempted to say, Surely, these struggling souls are almost saved. Yes, we should be still more disposed to say this if we knew how often childish levity, outward indifference, proud contempt, and even seeming spite, are but the mask of an interior strife which the subject would conceal, not only from his neighbours, but from himself.

The great mistake to which we are exposed in all such cases is to regard this approach to true faith and repentance as a state of safety. In itself, it is a state of the highest importance; in itself, it is incomparably better than a state of total opposition or of absolute indifference. But if we consider the future, it is not a safe state, and the longer it continues the less safe it is. It is not safe, because it is a critical juncture on which the future may be finally suspended. It is safe to enter, but not safe to rest in. The sooner we are brought to it the better, and the sooner we escape from it the better – if we only do so in the right direction. For, alas, there are two ways in which the doubt may be resolved – by advancing or receding, going right or going wrong, escaping to Zoar or turning back to Sodom.

(2.) The state described is, after all, like that of Lot's wife when, against her will, she had been brought out of the city. *She seemed to be beyond the reach of all immediate danger.* She was following safe guides, and in the right direction. Yet she looked back, and she perished. So have thousands. So may you. Those who are almost saved may perish, fearfully and finally, in reach – in sight – of heaven; yes, at the very threshold of salvation. It is vain to quarrel with this fearful possibility and risk. It is vain to say, Are we not convinced of our danger? So was Lot's wife. Are we not escaping from it? So was she. Are we not near the place of refuge? So was she. But she looked back – no matter with what motive. She looked back – no matter for how long or short a time, though it were but for a moment. She looked back – whether from curiosity or a lingering desire to return, we are not told; we need not care. We only know that she looked back, she violated the divine command, abjured the only hope of safety – and you know the rest.

Whatever may have tempted Lot's wife to look back, we know the multiplied temptations which lead sinners to do likewise. And this terrible example cries aloud to those who are assailed by lingering desires for enjoyments once abandoned, or by sceptical misgivings, or by evil habits unsubdued, or by disgust at the restraints of a religious life, or by an ungodly desperation such as sometimes urges us to "eat and drink, for tomorrow we shall die". To all such, this terrible example cries aloud: Remember Lot's

wife – her escape and her destruction. However different your outward situation, yet remember her; for if, like her, you are the destined prey of God’s avenging justice, it will find you out, because “wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together”.

(3.) They who are almost saved, may, like Lot’s wife, not only be destroyed in the very moment of deliverance; they may be so destroyed as to become *a monumental warning to all others* that the longsuffering of God is not eternal. Looking back to the cities of the plain, they may not only experience their destruction but, as pillars of salt, attest it to succeeding generations. To a certain extent this is true of all who perish. “The Lord hath made all things for Himself; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.” They who will not, as “vessels of mercy”, glorify His wisdom and His goodness, must “show His wrath” and “make His power known” as “vessels of wrath fitted to destruction”. They who will not consent to glorify Him willingly must be content to glorify Him by compulsion. This is true of all who perish, and who therefore may be said to become pillars of salt, standing, like milestones, all along the broad road that leadeth to destruction.

They are solemn though speechless monitors of those who throng it, and planted even on the margin of that “great gulf” which is fixed for ever between heaven and hell. But in another and a more solemn sense, it may be said that those become pillars of salt to their successors who perish with the very foretaste of salvation on their lips, who make shipwreck in sight of their desired haven, who are blasted by the thunderbolt of vengeance after fleeing from the city of destruction and amidst their very journey towards the place of refuge. What a thought is this: that of all the tears which some have shed in seasons of awakening, and of all their prayers and vows and resolutions, all their spiritual conflicts and apparent triumphs over self and sin, the only ultimate effect will be to leave them standing by the wayside as pillars of salt – memorials of man’s weakness and corruption and of God’s most righteous retributions! Are you willing to live – and, what is more, to die – for such an end as this: to be remembered only as a pillar of salt: a living, dying, yet enduring, proof, that sinners may be almost saved and yet not saved at all, that they may starve at the threshold of a feast, and die of thirst at the fountain of salvation?

It is not unusual for those who have outlived their first impressions of religion, and successfully resisted the approaches of conviction, to subside into a state of artificial calmness, equally removed from their original unconcern and from the genuine composure of a true faith and repentance. As you feel this new sense of tranquillity creep over your excited senses, assuaging your disturbed conscience, you may secretly congratulate yourself

that your feelings have changed so much for the better. But you may not be aware that the relief which you experience is similar to that which often follows long exposure to intense cold, when the sense of acute suffering is succeeded by numbness. Then the faculties, long stimulated by resistance, are lulled into a drowsy languor, which is as surely the precursor of paralysis and death as if the limbs were already stiffened and the process of corruption had visibly begun. Or the change of feeling now in question may resemble that which came upon Lot's wife as she began to lose her consciousness of pain and pleasure beneath that saline incrustation which enchained her limbs, suppressed her breath and stopped the circulation of her life's blood. Was that an enviable feeling, even supposing it to exclude all suffering? Could you consent to purchase such immunity from pain by being turned into a pillar of salt?

Not the least solemn aspect of the strange event which has afforded us a theme for meditation is that, although Lot's wife was fearfully destroyed at the very moment when she seemed to be beyond the reach of danger, we have no intimation that the lightning struck her, or that the fires which it kindled scorched her, or that the waters of the Dead Sea overwhelmed her as they rushed into their new bed, or that any other violence befell her. But we read that she looked back and became a pillar of salt, perhaps without a pang of bodily suffering, perhaps without any consciousness of outward change. One moment she was full of life, the next a white and sparkling, cold and lifeless mass. If this is the death which you would choose to die in soul or body, then look back to Sodom, stretch your hands towards it and receive the death which comes to meet you in your cold embrace. Turn back, turn back, if you wish to become a pillar of salt.

If not, go on, on! Escape for your life. Look not behind you. Stay not in all the plain. Escape to the mountain lest you be consumed. And though you feel a secret drawing towards the scenes which you have left, yield not to it, but let memory do the work of sight. Instead of turning back to perish without hope, let it suffice you to *remember Lot's wife!*

Gospel promises . . . are the free and gracious dispensations of God's good will and love, to sinners, through Christ, in a covenant of grace; wherein, upon His truth and faithfulness, He engageth Himself to be their God, to give His Son unto them and for them, and His Holy Spirit to abide with them, with all things that are either required in them or are necessary for them to make them accepted before Him, and to bring them to an enjoyment of Him.

The cheerful profession of confidence in God, against all opposition, and in the midst of all distresses, is that which believers have a warrant for in the promises that are made unto them.

John Owen

John Wesley's Legacy¹

3. The Second Blessing and Hymn Singing

Roy Middleton

The Second Blessing. The fourth strand of Wesley's legacy is an aspect of his teaching that has penetrated not only into the Evangelical Churches, but also into some Churches professing to be Reformed.

The distinctive element of John Wesley's doctrine of sanctification was his assertion that Christian perfection was experienced as a second blessing, distinct from, and subsequent to, justification. This second-blessing teaching was a significant injection into Protestant theology that has had far-reaching consequences right down to the present time. By this concept Wesley introduced the two-tier view, now common, of the Christian life – the higher Christian life and the lower Christian life, the spiritual Christian and the carnal Christian, the spirit-baptized and the non-spirit-baptized, the sealed believer and the unsealed believer.

Within just two years of his Aldersgate experience Wesley wrote a preface to a selection of hymns published by himself and his brother Charles, in which he dealt with the question of Christian perfection, or as he called it, "full salvation". He wrote, "Neither, therefore, dare we affirm (as some have done) that this full salvation is at once given to true believers. There is, indeed, an instantaneous (as well as a gradual) work of God in the souls of his children . . . we do not know a single instance, in any place, of a person's receiving, in one and the same moment, remission of sins, the abiding witness of the spirit, and a new clean heart."²

From these early beginnings Wesley's concept of a second blessing was to develop and become more explicit as he grew older. In a letter written in 1762 he states his doctrine: "Sanctification (in the proper sense) is an instantaneous deliverance from sin and includes an instantaneous power then given always to cleave to God".³ Four years later, in 1766, in his *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, after stating that the destruction of sin can take many years and be a gradual work, he writes, "All this we know: but we

¹This is the final article in the series, which was based on the latter part of a paper given at the 2003 Theological Conference on *The Life and Legacy of John Wesley*. The first article dealt with Wesley's contribution to the formation of an Evangelical version of Arminianism; the second dealt with his views on Perfectionism and on women preachers.

²*The Works of the Rev John Wesley*, London, 1872, vol 14, p 326, (cited afterwards as *Wesley's Works*).

³*Letters of John Wesley*, (edited by John Telford), London, 1931, vol 4, p 188, (cited afterwards as *Wesley's Letters (Telford)*).

know likewise that God may, with man's good leave, 'cut short His work' in whatever degree He pleases, and do the usual work of many years in a moment".⁴ In a letter of advice to a female preacher written in 1773, Wesley writes, "Your own soul will be quickened if you earnestly exhort believers without fear or shame to press after full salvation as receivable now, and that by simple faith".⁵ Seven years before his death, in another letter, Wesley restates his second-blessing theology in the starkest terms: "But the work itself (that is, sanctification as well as justification) is undoubtedly instantaneous. As after a gradual conviction of the guilt and power of sin you were justified in a moment, so after a gradually increasing conviction of inbred sin, you will be sanctified in a moment. And who knows how soon? Why not now?"⁶

A great deal of discussion has taken place as to how Wesley developed his theology of a second blessing, or second work of grace. Two sources have been identified. The first was the teaching of the Moravians.⁷ Wesley professed to have been brought to faith under Moravian influence. Directly after his Aldersgate experience, he went to Herrnhut, the Moravian settlement in Germany. The Moravians believed that the witness of the Spirit to the new birth was usually bestowed some time after a person had been forgiven and it was this second experience that enabled them to gain a victory over sin.

Shortly after Wesley returned to England in September 1738, he wrote a letter to his older brother Samuel using language that was the germ of what would become, a year later, his doctrine of entire sanctification experienced as a second work of grace. His words were: "'The seal of the Spirit', 'the love of God shed abroad in my heart', and producing joy in the Holy Ghost, 'joy which no man taketh away', 'joy unspeakable and full of glory' – this witness of the Spirit I have not, but I patiently wait for it. I know many who have already received it, more than one or two in the very hour we were praying for it."⁸ By the autumn of 1739, he had become convinced that Scripture taught that this fullness of blessing would accompany a second and deeper moment of hallowing grace, which would bring purity of heart and perfect love.⁹

⁴*Wesley's Works*, vol 11, p 423, The more readily available edition of Wesley's *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection* is the often re-issued Epworth reprint – 1952 onwards, p 81.

⁵*Wesley's Letters (Telford)*, vol 6, p 13.

⁶*Wesley's Letters (Telford)*, vol 7, p 222.

⁷For a discussion of the Moravian influence on Wesley's second-blessing teaching see Timothy L Smith, "John Wesley and the Second Blessing", in *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, vol 21:1&2, Spring-Fall 1986. This paper provides a most useful account of the development of Wesley's second-blessing theology.

⁸The letter to Samuel from London is dated 30 October 1738 and is printed in *The Works of John Wesley*, vol 25 Letters I, 1721-1739 (ed Frank Baker), Oxford, 1980, pp 576-577.

⁹This is seen in a sermon he preached on 7 October 1739 entitled, "The Spirit of Bondage

The other major influence on Wesley's thinking was his High Anglican upbringing, where a type of second work of grace was a theological commonplace. This was the High Anglican concept of confirmation. Low Church Anglicans view the rite of confirmation, when a Bishop lays hands on the head of the candidate, as being essentially a personal renewal of the promises made by others, at baptism, in the name of the subject. The High Anglican view is quite different. They regard it in a similar way to the Romanist teaching of confirmation as a rite for conveying the Holy Ghost. High Church influences and the Roman Catholic conception of piety and devotion permanently affected Wesley's thinking and were to have a major and formative influence on his conception of both Christian perfection and the second blessing. As A Keith Walker observes: Wesley "was even tempted to become a Roman Catholic. Nor did the 1738 experience relieve him from doubt and darkness, despite Bohler's promises. It is also significant that in later life he praised mortification . . . ascetical and mystical writers. Wesley was never a simple Protestant. Workman¹⁰ recognises the affinity between Methodism and mysticism and between Wesley and St Francis of Assisi."¹¹

Lorraine Boettner describes the Romanist concept of confirmation in this way: "In the so-called sacrament of confirmation the Bishop lays his hands on the head of the person who previously has been baptized, for the purpose of conveying to him the Holy Spirit".¹² William J O'Shea of the Catholic University of America speaks of baptism and confirmation in these terms: "Confirmation is the sacrament that bestows the Holy Spirit in a special way. Just as we can say that baptism is the sacrament of the resurrection, so we can say that confirmation is the sacrament of the sending of the Spirit. As we associate baptism with Easter, so we associate confirmation with Pentecost. . . . The first anointing of the Spirit takes place in Baptism, making him a son of God. The second takes place at Confirmation when the Spirit descends upon him again to make him a prophet, to equip him with the gifts he needs and of Adoption". See *Wesley's Standard Sermons*, E H Sugden (ed), London, 1961, vol 1, pp 178-198 (afterwards referred to as *Standard Sermons*). Wesley was very much encouraged at this time by his mother's experience a few weeks before his own conversion in May 1738, but she seems only to have told him about it in September 1739. Whilst receiving the sacrament, she knew that God for Christ's sake had forgiven her all her sins. This she regarded as the "witness of the Spirit". See *Standard Sermons*, vol 1, p 200.

¹⁰Herbert Brook Workman (1862-1951) was both an editor and contributor to one of the standard histories of Methodism: *A New History of Methodism*, W J Townsend, H B Workman, G Eayrs (eds), 2 vols, London, 1909. Workman contributed the first chapter: "The place of Methodism in the life and thought of the Christian Church".

¹¹A Keith Walker, *William Law: His Life and Thought*, London, 1973, p 138.

¹²Lorraine Boettner, *Roman Catholicism*, Philadelphia, 1962, pp 190-191. The citation is on pp 246-247 in the 1966 Banner of Truth edition.

to enable him to live fully the life of an adopted son, and to fulfill his mission in the church.”¹³

Here we have the Romish and High Church concept of a second blessing. It is of immense significance from the viewpoint of the history of doctrine that Romanists, Wesleyans and Pentecostals all appeal to exactly the same Biblical passages in support of their different second-blessing theologies: the Romanist to support confirmation, John Fletcher to support the Wesleyan doctrine of Christian perfection, and the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement for its doctrine of the baptism of the Holy Spirit conceived of as a second blessing. All appeal to such texts as Acts 8:12-17, 10:44-46, 19:5-6.¹⁴

Before Wesley there was no fully-developed Protestant doctrine of a second work of grace; since Wesley, those who have embraced a second-blessing concept have, wittingly or unwittingly, been Wesley's children. The concept is the hallmark of Pentecostalism, which it has inherited from Wesley via the American holiness movement.¹⁵

Amazingly, this two-tier view of the Christian life has, in the last 50 years, become a feature of many churches and ministers professing the Reformed Faith. This has largely been due to the influence of Dr D Martyn Lloyd-Jones. In the introduction to Lloyd-Jones' volume *Joy Unspeakable*, his grandson Christopher Catherwood observes that his grandfather, “believed passionately in the baptism with the Holy Spirit as a second, post-conversion experience”.¹⁶ In the book Lloyd-Jones appeals to exactly the same texts to defend his second-blessing teaching as the Roman Catholics for confirmation, and the Wesleyans for second-blessing perfection.¹⁷

¹³William J O'Shea, *Sacraments of Initiation*, Englewood Cliffs, 1965, pp 48-49,63, cited in Laurence W Wood, *Pentecostal Grace*, Wilmore, 1980, pp 243-244. This citation is taken from the chapter in Wood's volume entitled, “The Wesleyan doctrine of Christian perfection as a re-interpretation of the Roman Catholic and Anglican rite of confirmation”.

¹⁴An outstanding exposition of these and similar texts will be found in Robert L Dabney's article, “Prelacy a Blunder – Grounded on erroneous exposition”, reprinted in *Discussions: Evangelical and Theological*, vol 2, London, 1967, pp 218-260, esp pp 234ff, where he deals with the correct view of the charismata.

¹⁵For further details see, Donald W Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*, Grand Rapids, 1987; Donald W Dayton, “The Doctrine of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit: its emergence and significance” in *Wesley Theological Journal*, vol 13, Spring 1978, pp 114-126.

¹⁶D Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Joy Unspeakable*, Eastbourne, 1984, p 13.

¹⁷Errol Hulse, reviewing the volume and Lloyd-Jones' use of the Acts texts cited above, observes, “The Doctor builds his case on these texts in typical Pentecostal fashion” (*Reformation Today*, no 84, March-April 1985, pp 13-14). For further analysis of Lloyd-Jones' Second Blessing teaching see Michael A Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit: The teaching of Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones*, Leicester, 1989; John Brencher, *Martyn Lloyd-Jones (1899-1981) and Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism*, Carlisle, 2002, pp 200-205; Peter

Hymn Singing. The fifth and final strand of Wesley's legacy we shall notice is hymn singing.¹⁸ This element of his legacy has not only penetrated Evangelicalism but is also the worldwide practice of most Churches claiming to be Reformed.

John and Charles Wesley were not the first to introduce the singing of hymns into the worship of the Protestant Churches in England. The solemn responsibility for the introduction of this unscriptural practice lies mainly on the shoulders of Isaac Watts. The composition and singing of hymns was also a feature of seventeenth-century Anglicanism, and of men like Richard Baxter and the Baptist, Benjamin Keach.¹⁹ In the seventeenth century the English hymn developed alongside the Metrical Psalms. Isaac Watts forged them into a single art.²⁰ Watts' mistaken concern was for what he considered to be the absence of specifically Christian doctrine in the Psalms. In astonishing language Watts wanted to accommodate the Book of Psalms to Christian worship. He wrote, "In order to do this, it's necessary to divest David and Asaph of every other character but that of a psalmist and a saint and to make them always speak the common-sense of a Christian".²¹ Watts added, "What a hard shift the minister is put [to] to find proper hymns at the celebration of the Lord's Supper where the people sing nothing but out of David's Psalm Book".²² William Romaine reacted to Watts' innovations by stating, "Why should Dr Watts or any hymn-maker not only take the precedence of the Holy Ghost, but also thrust Him entirely out of the church? Insomuch that the rhymes of a man are now magnified above the word of God, even to the annihilating of it in many congregations. If this be right, men and brethren, judge ye."²³

Masters, "Opening the door to Charismatic Teaching: Analysing the latter-day abandonment by Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones of orthodox Holy Spirit theology", and, "Why did Dr Lloyd-Jones yield to quasi-Pentecostal ideas" in *Sword and Trowel*, 1988, no 2, pp 24-35; Roy Middleton, "The Synod Resolution on the Pentecostal-Charismatic Movement & the teaching of Dr D M Lloyd-Jones" in *The Free Presbyterian Magazine*, vol 92, no 5, May 1987, pp 149-157.

¹⁸For the general background to the Wesleys' hymns see; J R Watson, *The English Hymn: A Critical and Historical Study*, Oxford, 1997; Bernard L Manning, *The Hymns of Wesley and Watts*, London, 1942; Rupert E Davies, *Methodism*, London, 1976, especially chapter 5 dealing with "The Theology and the Hymns of the Revival", pp 81-104.

¹⁹Watson, pp 110-114. Keach gradually introduced hymns into public worship when he was the minister of the Particular Baptist congregation in Southwark. He has been called "a pioneer of congregational hymn singing".

²⁰Watson, p 133.

²¹George Burder (ed), *The Works of the Reverend and Learned Isaac Watts, DD*, London, 1810, vol 4, p 118, cited in Watson, p 154.

²²*Watts Works*, vol 4, p 114, cited in Watson, p 154.

²³William Romaine, "An Essay on Psalmody", in *The Works of the Late William Romaine*, London, 1813, vol 5, p 85.

Wesley then was not the first to introduce hymns, although he was an early advocate of the singing of hymns within the Church of England. His legacy in this area is twofold. The first element is the introduction of a new subjective and emotional type of hymn that was far removed from the sobriety of Watts. Some of the encouragement for this sort of production came from the Moravians, whose hymns he translated. Wesley had been greatly impressed by Moravian hymn singing in the midst of an Atlantic storm on the way to Georgia. The Moravians introduced Wesley to a new concept of hymnody which he and his brother would use extensively. Part of this concept was the idea that hymns used in public worship might not only be addressed to God, but might also be addressed to fellow worshippers. Hymns might be used for teaching as well as for worship.²⁴

The second element of the Wesley legacy is the use of hymns as a weapon in theological controversy. Hymns were used by the Wesleyans to propagate Arminianism, perfectionism and the second blessing. Theologians then as now tend not to take hymns seriously. The Wesleyans did take them seriously.²⁵ During the first Calvinistic controversy with Whitefield, they used hymns to propagate their distinctive teaching. Nehemiah Curnock, the editor of the standard edition of Wesley's *Journal*, has observed that *Hymns on God's Everlasting Love* "played so momentous a part in the Calvinistic controversy of the time Sung in the meeting of the society and read in the Methodist homes, they were fuel to the flames of the controversy. So were the tracts, pamphlets and sermons which appeared in rapid succession from the press."²⁶ The Methodist historian A W Harrison says, "By far the most effective publication [in the early Calvinistic controversy] was a lively collection of hymns and propagandist poems from the Wesleys. Presumably most of them were written by Charles Wesley and appeared under the heading *Hymns on God's Everlasting Love*, to which was added the hymns of the 'Cry of the Reprobate' and the 'Horrible Decree'."²⁷

Both John and Charles Wesley detested the doctrine of the decrees and they caricatured them in verse. Harrison observes, "Charles Wesley . . . was

²⁴B C Drury, "John Wesley, Hymnologist" in *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*, vol 32, p 103. Drury observes that John Wesley's *Collection of Psalms and Hymns*, published in 1737, "is unique amongst Wesley's hymn-books in that it contains nothing by Charles: Aldersgate was yet to come. It was John, not Charles, therefore, who started the eighteenth-century hymnodic revolution."

²⁵ See Timothy L Smith's observations in "John Wesley and the Second Blessing", in *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, vol 21:1&2.

²⁶*The Journal of the Rev John Wesley*, (ed Nehemiah Curnock), London, 1938, vol 2, p 447, note 2.

²⁷A W Harrison, *Arminianism*, London, 1937, p 195.

spoiling for the fray”.²⁸ His so-called hymn, the “Horrible Decree” contains this appalling verse: “God, ever merciful and just / With new-born babes did Tophet fill / Down into endless torments thrust / Merely to show His sovereign will / This is that Horrible Decree / This is that wisdom from beneath / God (O detest the blasphemy!) / Hath pleasure in the sinner’s death”.²⁹ Concerning this verse J I Packer has written: “Comment on the tone and content of such lines and on the degree of pastoral wisdom which they show as a contribution to domestic debate within the young Evangelical movement is surely superfluous”.³⁰

The Wesleys deliberately composed, for congregations to sing, verses that taught universal redemption. These hymns, it is said, “drove out of the societies the doctrines of election and reprobation”. There was the sound of battle in the following chorus: “For all, for all the Saviour died, / For all my Lord was crucified”.³¹ The Wesleys set their people singing verses that attacked Calvinism and, as Harrison notices, when “the controversy is forgotten . . . the teaching is absorbed”.³² They waged theological battle through hymns.³³ John Wesley’s final response to John Gill was a short tract containing nothing but a collection of hymns. The Wesleys had confidence in their hymns as statements of theology.³⁴

Dr Sidney Martin, a minister of the Church of the Nazarene, in a paper read to the Wesley Fellowship in 1989, commented on the effectiveness of Charles Wesley’s hymns as a weapon in theological controversy. He wrote, “Charles Wesley’s hymns are read and sung today without those who use them being at all aware of a polemic intention in the word[s]. The battle with Calvinism has been won so completely that the original intention of many of the phrases in the hymns is quite unrealised, and the words are taken as the simple expression of what has become evangelical commonplace.”³⁵

²⁸Harrison, p 195.

²⁹Cited in Harrison, p 196.

³⁰J I Packer, *Collected Shorter Writings*, vol 4, Carlisle, 1999, p 301.

³¹Harrison, p 217.

³²Harrison, p 197.

³³Harrison has observed: “Never since hymns about the Son being of one substance with the Father were sung in Alexandria during the Arian controversy did hymns play such a large part in theological discussion as in the eighteenth century”, p 197.

³⁴See Luke L Keefer Jr, “Characteristics of Wesley’s Arminianism”, in *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, vol 22:1, Spring 1987.

³⁵Sidney Martin, *John Wesley and the Witness of the Spirit*, Ilkeston, 1990, p 8. Martin is quoting from Henry Bett, who is cited in J Brazier Green, *John Wesley and William Law*, London, 1945, p 95. Martin’s comment on the “battle with Calvinism” is clearly an overstatement. His point, however, about professing Calvinists singing Wesley’s hymns is rather disturbing.

From Wesley onward, those who wish to infiltrate the Evangelical churches with false teaching compose their own hymns for that purpose. It is a significant feature of Pentecostalism that they purvey their false teaching by new hymns (some would call them songs) and choruses. It is hardly surprising that the modern defenders of hymnology seldom ever mention this use of hymns. A notable example of this is the recent, surprising, and rather shallow defence of hymnology by Iain Murray.³⁶ It is also profoundly sad that the Leicester Ministers' Conference organised by the Banner of Truth Trust abandoned exclusive Psalmody and introduced hymn singing for the first time in 2004. A report by the editor of *Evangelicals Now* has the following observation: "The innovation of the singing of hymns (as opposed to just Metrical Psalms) with piano accompaniment (rather than unaccompanied singing) was a quiet revolution".³⁷ An Evangelical hymnbook called *Praise*, published in 2000, is riddled with Pentecostal teaching and contains over thirty songs by Graham Kendrick.³⁸ John Thackway in the *Bible League Quarterly* has robustly, and correctly, condemned this hymnbook.³⁹ It has, however, been defended by some of the leaders in the Reformed movement in England.⁴⁰

This use of hymns to spread false doctrine is the outworking of Wesley's legacy. Due largely to Dr Lloyd-Jones' influence, second blessing teaching has been accepted in some sections of the Reformed Community. It is not surprising therefore that, once these axioms of the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement have been embraced, some of those who have done so will want to introduce the songs associated with that movement into congregational praise.

What distinctive strands of Wesley's legacy have gone outside of Methodism and penetrated not only into Evangelicalism but in some instances into sections of the professedly-Reformed community? The list is one that

³⁶I H Murray, *The Psalter – The only Hymnal?*, Edinburgh, 2001.

³⁷*Evangelicals Now*, June 2004, p 2.

³⁸Graham Kendrick (born 1950) is a Charismatic and a singer/songwriter. His most famous song, "Shine, Jesus, Shine", is included in *Praise*. It was sung in an open air mass in Manila, and the pope is said to have swung his walking stick in time to the music.

³⁹Thackway's vigorous critique is in the *Bible League Quarterly*, no 403, October-December 2000, pp 258-285. The article, slightly enlarged, was reprinted in booklet form, John P Thackway, *Praise! – A Critique*, Bible League, 2001. See also a further article by Thackway entitled, "The Sad Saga of *Praise!*" in the *Bible League Quarterly*, no 405, April-June 2001, pp 342-354.

⁴⁰For details see the articles cited earlier by John Thackway in the *Bible League Quarterly*, issues 403 and 405. In addition see Thackway's excellent critique of the new edition of *Christian Hymns* (published by the Evangelical Movement of Wales and also containing songs by Graham Kendrick) in the *Bible League Quarterly*, no 419, October-December 2004, pp 128-151.

Methodists would be proud to defend; it includes Evangelical Arminianism, perfectionism, women preachers, the second blessing and hymn singing. For those seeking to maintain a witness to Calvinistic Presbyterianism the list is doleful. In the light of these serious departures from the teaching of Scripture we must state very clearly that John Wesley's legacy is deeply flawed.⁴¹

Those Who Look to Jesus¹

Isaiah 45:22. *Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.*

Finlay Beaton, Inverness: One mark of those who look to the Lord Jesus Christ is that old things have passed away and all things are become new. This is seen by their walk in the world. They have the fruit of this in their heart, but it is another thing to speak about it. They will be wondering if it is the right thing they have and learning more and more of what is in their hearts. They desire a token for good that they are of God's people. They have learned their great need of Christ; others do not feel this need. They had a real taste of pardon; but though having no doubt of it at one time, they now doubt it many times. They will be praying: "O send Thy light forth and Thy truth" (Ps 43:3). The Bible becomes a different book to them; they will be saying with Jeremiah: "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by Thy name, O Lord God of hosts" (Jer 15:16).

In all their trials they turn to God's Word. They are a praying people, yet complain they cannot pray. They have a hunger in their souls, that they did not have before, which leads them to the Word, to search the Scriptures, where they get light. They can discern between good and evil, but complain they cannot discern this mark in themselves; yet they can discern it in others. They seek to Christ as much for their sanctification as they did for their just-

⁴¹It was rather surprising, and disappointing, that many of the articles on Wesley emanating from Reformed circles in the ter-centenary year of his birth appeared unwilling to subject his highly-defective theology to serious criticism.

¹These are notes of a Question Meeting held in Stratherrick in 1961. Marks were asked of those who always look to Christ alone, as distinct from those who make a profession of godliness but whose conduct proves that it is not to Christ they are looking at all. Some speakers made remarks which, though apparently general, were intended to apply to their personal experience. There is no record of what was said by the minister who opened the Question, whose duty was, basically, to explain the verse given out. Apart from Mr E A Rayner, now minister of Grafton, all the other speakers included here have passed into eternity. Rev D J Matheson, who closed the Question – summing up what had been said – was the then minister of the joint congregation of Daviot, Stratherrick and Tomatin.

ification. They will be saying, If I was of the number of the Lord's people, things would not be with me as they are. They desire to be delivered from sin; they suffer from heart disease. The Lord says to them: "I am the Lord that healeth thee" (Ex 15:26). They desire to keep His statutes.

Having a high opinion of Christ, they love Him; yet they will be saying, I wish I had a drop of love to Christ. Their language betrays them. Before this change they said, "We hid our faces from Him". They seek holiness and find they are not attaining to it. When He visits them, they say, "My beloved is mine, and I am His" (Song 2:16). They desire to praise the Lord that, when He passed over others, He looked on them in mercy. He will acknowledge them as all His own.

John MacLennan, Muir of Ord: We think that those who were brought in mercy to look to Christ will be wondering that ever such a conviction would be given to sinful men, and especially to themselves. They are saying with the Psalmist: "In our low state who on us thought" (Ps 136:23). By nature, man has no consciousness of his need of looking to Christ; he is quite satisfied as he is. The question is: What gets the chief place in our hearts? Christ gets that place from His people – those who have been brought to seek Him with their whole heart, soul and mind. They are sure that, unless the Holy Spirit came to convince them of their sins, they would never have come to feel their need of the Holy Spirit to quicken them. "Revive and quicken me, O Lord, even for Thine own name's sake." They bear many marks which, although they can see them in others, they cannot see them in themselves. They seek to hear a token for good in hearing the gospel preached. They are a poor and needy people, in need of the prayer of the Psalmist daily: "Turn Thou away my sight and eyes from viewing vanity" (Ps 119:37).

E A Rayner, New Zealand: Man by nature is dead in trespasses and sins; he has no eye for things that are important for eternity. It is to be believed that those who are looking to Christ are mourning for their sins. If they do not look to Christ they do not realise that Christ is the burden-bearer. The hypocrite gets angry when he is told that such and such is wrong, but those who are born again will be willing to discover whether they are the true children of the Lord; they are not afraid to be among the people of God, where they will be examining themselves whether they are the true people of God. Those who do not look to Christ are not willing to give up whatever is offensive to the Lord. Saul was told to slay all the Amalekites, but he only destroyed some and kept what he wanted. So with those who are not looking to Christ truly, they keep their darling sins. This people are a praying people; they look to Christ for nourishment, looking for crumbs in public and in private.

Alex MacPherson, Daviot: We believe it will be a question with this people:

“How can I speak of these matters? There is so much darkness and deadness in me!” Yet there is something within them that they would not exchange for all in this world. The Church said, “I am black, but comely” (Song 1:5). Most of us have heard all our lives that sin separated us from God and would separate us eternally unless God would deal with us in mercy. When God began to take to do with us, there was much encouragement in His Word, even in this passage itself.

They tried to do things for themselves, but God showed them that “vain is the help of man” (Ps 60:11), and: “Trust not in princes, nor man’s son” (Ps 146:3). Death reigned in the soul, but when God opened their ears, they had to consent to the sentence against them: “The wages of sin is death” (Rom 6:23). However, God says “He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him” (Heb 11:6). When they are brought to look on their past life, they wonder how they have been preserved among so many troubles. Is their comfort not in this: “I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee” (Jer 31:3)? They say, “Not unto us Lord, not to us, but do Thou glory take”. They know the reality of sin; in the day of justification “they looked to Him, and lightened were” (Ps 34:5). They enjoy the sweetness of the forgiveness of their sins, yet sin cleaves to them.

Recently I saw a tree that had been frosted, the leaves all withered early, and one would say the tree was dead, but now, after the rain and warmth, the tree has produced fresh green leaves again, even better than before. The tree had been planted in good soil and well rooted. So with these people: “Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God” (Ps 92:13). They have their roots in a rich place like this tree and shall flourish. Desiring to grow in grace and be enabled to show some fruit, they would like to see others having their roots fixed in a sure place – found in Christ without their own righteousness. They have many troubles and trials, yet they have One who says, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Heb 13:5). They are liable to all the miseries of this life and yet how little of them we have to bear, and that is of His mercy and loving kindness.

A Cameron-MacKintosh, Tomatin: It is true of this people that they would seek to praise the Lord that salvation is all of grace and not of works. In them dwelleth no good thing; within them is a wicked heart, desperately wicked, and in themselves they can do nothing. They would like to take their place at the feet of Jesus and walk to the glory of God. They seek that they would be upheld and their prayer is: “Hold up my goings, Lord, me guide in those Thy paths divine” (Ps 17:5).

William MacQueen, Daviot: This people desire to be clothed with the righteousness of Christ; if not, they will have to appear in their nakedness before

an assembled universe. They do not trust in themselves, or in any thing pertaining to self – not in their prayers or anything else. Yet, they will be praying: “Lord God of hosts, my prayer hear” (Ps 84:8). When they come to the house of God they desire to hear about Christ and Him crucified, who is their all and in all, for time and for eternity; they desire to have their minds instructed, to be fed with the finest of the wheat. It is said: “Learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls” (Matt 11:29). Their cry will also be: “Woe’s me that I in Mesech am a sojourner so long” (Ps 120:5).

I was reading a sermon in the hearing of some of you, and these words struck me very much: “There is a way to hell that sails past the gates of heaven”. As we have in Philippians: “For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ” (3:18). I will finish with the words of Luther: “Learn, my dear brother, to know Christ and Christ crucified, learn to despair of thyself and to sing to the Lord this song: Lord Jesus, Thou art my righteousness, but I am Thy sin; Thou hast taken what belonged to me; Thou hast given me what was Thine; Thou becamest what Thou wast not in order that I might become what I was not myself”.

Rev D J Matheson: If sin becomes a reality to any sinner, it is something supernatural. The Lord Jesus Christ becomes a reality, also the three Persons in the Godhead. God is the author of salvation and the Holy Spirit applies the redemption that Christ purchased. They are led to a crucified and risen Saviour. Men may have much wisdom, but this carnal wisdom will not lead them to Christ. Where there is faith, there is repentance and real godly sorrow. I have read that this was the passage which the Lord used to bring Spurgeon to close in with Christ, when preached on by a poor layman; it is all of grace. The Holy Spirit causes the sinner to feel his lostness and darkness, that he will be in outer darkness if deliverance will not come. Those in whom the Lord has implanted saving faith will not be bereft of it, no matter what unbelief will say. They will be praying: “Lord, increase our faith”; “Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift” (2 Cor 9:15), the Lord Jesus Christ. Some girls were asked why He was called this. After a time one child said, “Because Christ is so precious. No one will ever tell of all His preciousness; He is more precious than our very life.”

These people are enlightened, such as were sometimes in darkness. They need prayer more and more; “this poor man cried, God heard, and saved him from all his distresses” (Ps 34:6). They desire that the Lord would look upon them; “in our low state who on us thought” (Ps 135:23). If He had not purposed to save them, they would never have looked to Him. However, we

are duty-bound to seek the Lord, depending on Himself: "Look on me, Lord, and merciful do Thou unto me prove" (Ps 119:132). If anyone is boasting apart from the grace of God, they are deceived for eternity. "By the grace of God I am what I am", "less than the least of all saints".

The Wisdom of God in Redemption¹

4. Some Lessons

W S Plumer

1. How futile are all schemes of man's devising for securing the favour of God and his own happiness! None of them reach the real evils in his case. They do not dispose of sin, either in its power or guilt or pollution.

2. How vain are all objections to the gospel drawn from the feeble, erring, sinful soul of man! Never is man more a fool or a transgressor than when he sits in judgement on this greatest plan and work of God. Did any wise man ever undertake to show how God could have more fitly formed the dove, the eagle, or the horse? Yet many a prating simpleton undertakes to tell the world how he would like the plan of salvation, God's greatest work, to be arranged.

3. How attractive is the character of Jesus Christ! He is the perfection of a Saviour. Some have made the suggestion that He might have rescued many from sin and wrath without so full and frequent and amazing acts of condescension. But who ever taught that He ought to have given higher evidences of compassion and tenderness? All the redeemed join in praising Him, unite in crowning Him, contend in the strife of extolling Him. Matchless Redeemer, none among all the sons of the mighty, none among the holy angels, can compare with Thee.

4. If any desire a rich, pure, exalted, inexhaustible theme of study and inquiry, he has it in the redemption wrought out by Christ. He need go no further. Here the holy angels all stop and bow and worship.

5. Unconverted men ought to feel a lively and profound interest in Christ's undertaking. It mightily concerns them to know something of its wonders. If they ever find life or peace, it must be here. In Christ "are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col 2:3). In Him is life, and the life is the light of men.

6. Children of God, rejoice and obey, "Ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Cor 6:20). Give Him all. Keep back nothing that can honour Him. Hear the voice

¹Taken, slightly edited, from the volume *The Rock of Our Salvation*. The previous extract appeared last month. This is the final extract in this series.

of mercy whispering good counsels to your souls. Present your whole selves a living sacrifice to Him; and let the love of God, like holy fire, come down and consume you. Be not straitened in your charity. Be not slothful in your labours of love. Be not cold in your zeal for the Master. Be ye enlarged.

Book Review

Trouble of Mind and the Disease of Melancholy, by Timothy Rogers, published by Soli Deo Gloria, hardback, 448 pages, £20.95 from the F P Bookroom.

This book is based on the experience of the author, and while not autobiographical, it is profoundly influenced by his eight years of spiritual and mental trouble. Timothy Rogers (1658-1728) was a Puritan preacher in London when that city had many true gospel ministers. The publishers have included a brief but useful account of the author's life, which sets the scene. The author's 23-page preface is of particular value for those who are friends of troubled souls and desire to know how best to comfort and help them. In his well-known *Thoughts on Religious Experience* Archibald Alexander quotes this preface at length and highly commends the book to Christian readers. The preface ought therefore to be read with interest.

The large, clear print makes the volume slightly larger than it might have been, but it is very comfortable to read. The subject is handled, in three parts, with typical Puritan thoroughness, on the basis of Psalm 30:5. In chapters 1-13, Rogers expounds and applies the words: "For His anger endureth but a moment". He discusses the nature and extent of God's anger with His people, and highlights the reasons for it and its benefits. There are clear instructions for those who may be under God's anger and for those who have been delivered from the sense of it. This part contains a beautiful chapter on Christ suffering the wrath of God and another on the exercise of the faith which believers are to have in the suffering Christ. The treatment is intensely practical, but it is also full of sound, clear doctrine. Tenderness and sympathy towards the afflicted shine through every page.

The second part, chapters 14-21, takes up the words, "In His favour is life". The full breadth of God's favour is commended to believers as their present source of comfort. Ways of keeping it are carefully detailed and there is a searching chapter on "Assurance and the false grounds of it". The subject of true assurance is dealt with in a chapter entitled: "By what means we may know whether we have God's favour or not". While there is much emphasis on directions to apply ourselves to the remedies suggested, the book is far from being legalistic. There is an abundance of gospel motives

and the reader is always pointed to the only source of consolation, and to the means of obtaining it – faith in Christ.

The third part, chapters 22-31, expounds and applies the words: “Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning”. This section looks at the many miseries of fallen man with particular emphasis on those of the children of God. There are chapters on desertion and solitude and another answers the objections of troubled souls. These chapters meet the afflicted where their need is greatest. The work concludes in the same way as it started out – by setting forth abundant consolation together with lucid and direct instruction. Throughout, the humility of the author shines through as the ways of God are vindicated, even though they may not always be understood. There can be no doubt that this book treats the subject fully and thoroughly, but the particular feature which runs through it is the writer’s hearty compassion. Unless he had passed through the waters he describes, this feature would undoubtedly be less prominent. He follows the example of the Apostle, who comforted those who were cast down, with the comfort with which he himself was comforted of God (2 Cor 1:4).

This reprint is very welcome for a number of reasons. Firstly, it averts Archibald Alexander’s fear that the work, last printed in 1808, would be lost to Christian readers. His high commendation should make us view it as a classic, deserving the attention of everyone interested in Christian literature.

Secondly, spiritual trouble is never absent from the congregations of God’s children. Afflicted saints, like the poor, are always with us. That mixture of spiritual anxiety with mental depression and physical illness is something with which most believers will come into contact. The thoughts of a reputable physician of the soul, who passed through that trouble himself, are therefore most welcome.

Thirdly, this book will counter-balance the literature and philosophy of the godless psychiatry which is so influential in our society. The writer is very keen to impress on his readers the fact that mental and spiritual illness differ and that medical treatment of the former is most necessary; we have no doubt that he would have welcomed the advances in the treatment of mental illness since his time. But he is equally careful to show the reality of spiritual depression as a sickness of the soul requiring spiritual balm. He points out that both are likely to occur together and that physical illness also may prove a catalyst for spiritual troubles. Yet his study sets out the great remedy for trouble of mind, which the world does not recognise. While there are signs that the medical profession is no longer relying exclusively on the clinical treatment of mental illness and that the spiritual care of those who suffer from bodily ailments is now given a place, the type of spiritual care delivered

is in most cases woefully inadequate. This book would therefore be of great benefit to those involved in that aspect of medical care and would undoubtedly prove useful to ministers and elders, who have a God-given responsibility for the spiritual care of the flock. But we recommend it to all, yet perhaps especially to any who know the meaning of the deep waters of soul trouble.

(Rev) D Campbell

Protestant View

The New Pope

It would appear that most observers of Vatican manoeuvring were surprised at the speed with which the new Pope was elected to office. And there is much speculation about what went on within the conclave of cardinals, meeting behind closed doors, which eventually led to their swift decision. Was there rivalry and disunity among them, as some believe, to the extent that they found it expedient to compromise and elect a 78-year-old whose tenure of the chair, according to the course of nature, might well be short?

His election provides a breathing space. It would be too much of a shock to the system if a so-called liberal Pope were elected as successor to John Paul II, who was reckoned to have been a hard-liner. It is evident that not all devotees of Rome welcomed the election of Joseph Ratzinger and his enthronement as Benedict XVI. The indications are that there is considerable unrest within the whole body, with Vatican authority being flouted on every hand and those demanding change becoming increasingly bold and strident. The head of the Austrian branch of a church reform group is reported as saying that there is a "clear demand" for change, which we understand to mean a relaxation of the rules presently in place on such matters as divorce, birth control, marriage of priests, women priests and dissident theologians.

The unrest is more apparent in some parts than in others. It is reported that in Latin America – described as the great remaining heartland of Roman Catholicism – "some [Roman] Catholics have a blunt warning for Pope Benedict XVI: unless the [Roman] Catholic Church changes course, it may come close to committing suicide". The same report states that "a tug of war is being fought in places like Brazil, with grass-roots priests often trying to stay in tune with parishioners, while the Vatican tries to stay faithful to its values". The difficulty is: how to relax the rules without giving the impression that the Roman church is, after all, subject to change? Since there is (alas!) no popular demand for changing core doctrines such as that of the mass, it is not beyond the wit and ingenuity of Jesuits to find a

way to compromise with those demanding reform, and save Rome's face at the same time.

Notwithstanding favourable media coverage and the congratulations of men such as President George W Bush – who foolishly hailed the present incumbent as “a man of great wisdom and knowledge . . . a man who serves the Lord” – the days of the Papacy are numbered. It came on the scene “after the working of Satan” and has proved a most useful weapon in his hand in pursuing his aim of destroying as many souls as possible while he has the opportunity. But He who bruised the head of Satan is to bring the Papacy to an end in His time. If cracks are appearing in the Papal edifice, it may be a sign that its fall is not far away. We have the Saviour's assurance: “If a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand. And if Satan rise up against himself, and be divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end.” *JM*

Notes and Comments

“A Changing Church”

In 2004 Rev Finlay A J MacDonald, parish minister from 1971 to 1996, Principal Clerk to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland since 1996 and Moderator in 2002, wrote an eminently readable, alarmingly informative book entitled *Confidence in a Changing Church*. His basic premise is that “one of the principles of a reformed church is the recognition that it is in continuing need of reform”. He claims that “this rule has applied in the life of the Church of Scotland over the centuries. The past thirty years have been particularly busy in this regard.” He asserts that “change is of the very essence of the gospel and is thus integral to the life of a church which is faithful to the gospel”. As Moderator, he tells us, he sought “to raise morale and build up a sense, not only of faith in the gospel, but also of confidence in the Church”. He hopes “that some, at least, of those who read will find renewed confidence in a changing Church and a revitalised faith in the gospel”.

Dr MacDonald outlines changes which have taken place in administration and the tension between centralised officialdom and the Church courts. He describes other changes which he regards as moves in the right direction. Viewing with satisfaction the development of ecumenical relations, he would welcome reunion with, for example, the Scottish Episcopal Church, described as “our historic co-heir to the Scottish Reformation tradition”. Growing rapport with Rome is traced approvingly from the presence of Church of Scotland observers at the Second Vatican Council in 1963 to the acceptance by the 1986 Assembly of the argument that the *Westminster Confession's*

references to “infidels, papists and other idolaters” and to the pope as “Antichrist” and “Man of Sin” were “a continuing offence” and “beyond modification except by their exclusion”. Visits of moderators to popes, the meeting of a pope with a moderator beside the statue of John Knox, Church of Scotland representatives at papal inaugurations, Roman Catholic delegates at General Assemblies and local co-operation in worship are viewed as matters “in which the Church of Scotland can take pride”.

Other changes regarded as evidencing faithfulness to the gospel include admission of women as ministers and elders, a new approach to the significance of participation in the Lord’s Supper, a more accepting attitude to those who choose “patterns of relationship other than traditional marriage”, and further departure from commitment to the *Westminster Confession of Faith* as in every respect the confession of the faith of the Church and its office-bearers. Dr MacDonald would like to see the *Confession* effectively relegated to the status of an historical creed and the Church’s faith presented in a manner suited to a broad church which can from time to time, within wide parameters, determine what its faith is. The extreme divergence of views within the Church on basic Christian faith and practice demonstrates how tenuous is official commitment to the *Confession* or to “the fundamental doctrines of the Christian Faith contained therein”. Yet many, if they could be sure of the legal implications, would like finally to break any formal commitment to it and conclude the process begun with the nineteenth-century Declaratory Acts. As long ago as 1971 a majority of Church courts were in favour of abandoning the idea of a subordinate standard.

Behind this attitude to the *Confession* and to the above changes is the attitude to Scripture itself. Dr MacDonald unwittingly identifies the crucial problem of the national Church: “The Church does not hold that the words of the Bible constitute the infallible Word of God, though, being a broad church, any member of the Church is free to believe that. What they are not free to do is insist that everyone else believes the same! The Church interprets Scripture under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and has concluded, for example, notwithstanding certain things which are written in the Bible, that ministers should, subject to certain conditions, be allowed to re-marry divorced persons in Church and that women may be ordained to ministry and eldership. As previously noted, the Church has also interpreted the *Confession* and decided that various statements within it are not part of the ‘sum and substance’ of the faith. This demonstrates that the Church is a living community, seeking faithfully and prayerfully to understand God’s Word in the present moment and to be guided by it.”

When the concept of infallible Scripture and the absolute, unchanging

nature of the truth revealed in it is abandoned, the Church has no standard by which to judge itself and so it cannot bring itself into line with God's will. The changes which result are not of the nature of reformation but apostasy, and the "gospel" proclaimed is not the consequence of "fresh spiritual insights" but results from the fact that "the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not" (2 Cor 4:4). HMC

Evangelicals in a Changing Church

A loosely-structured group within the Church of Scotland, entitled "Forward Together", has recently formalised its organisation, intending to articulate the Evangelical position, particularly on social and moral matters. It appears to have arisen from dissatisfaction with views often put forward on such issues by Church spokesmen and from concern that the Evangelical position has been sidelined within the Church. It hopes to enable the Evangelical voice within the Church of Scotland to be aired and heard and to call the Church back to its biblical and Evangelical roots. Reference is made to the danger of the Church splitting if the Evangelical position continues to be sidelined, though the group claim not to be a splinter group looking for disruption.

In the Church of Scotland, according to Rev Finlay MacDonald in *Confidence in a Changing Church*, ministers are free to hold different views on matters which allegedly do not enter into what the Church defines as the substance of the faith. They are, however, not free to insist that everyone should believe that "the words of the Bible constitute the infallible Word of God" and they are "not free to deny women that which the Church as a whole, following due process, had granted them".

Professed commitment to the authority of the Word of God "contained" in the Scriptures is fatally undermined by taking "contained" to mean "existing there among other things" instead of "restricted to". While some have resisted retrograde movements in the Church of Scotland, the resistance, so far as outsiders can ascertain, has generally been fairly muted and has been followed by practical capitulation. We wish to see the current Church of Scotland brought back to the biblical, confessional and historical position which the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland endeavours to maintain as lineal descendant of the Scottish Reformers. But Church of Scotland Evangelicals, who themselves embrace a wide spectrum of views, must recognise the fact that they are operating on a broad and inclusive basis of Church fellowship derived from the various Declaratory Acts and Articles at the foundation of the post-1929 Church of Scotland. They must decide if they are content to exist as one voice among many. The alternative would require recovery of the biblical doctrine of the Church and re-evaluation of

the foundations of the present Church of Scotland and their relation to it.

We are unaware if Rev Robert Anderson belongs to “Forward Together”, but having recently commended him for exposing the Roman Catholic view that Protestants are sectarian simply by existing apart from Rome, we are disappointed with a more recent letter (*The Scotsman*, 14 April 2005) in which he asserts that the death of the late Pope “filled the spiritual soul of the world in a way no one else has done in living memory” – whatever that may mean. He wrote in this connection of “what a single and committed Christian life can achieve”. The Pope “was a great Christian leader because it was always clear what he believed and his personal devotion reinforced that”. His death “suggests to all that there was something greater living and working in him than mere humanity and mortality”. Dr Anderson “met him at a general audience in 1991. His Christianity shone, alongside his clericalism.” Such remarks are interspersed with complaints regarding the Pope’s rejection, “at the spiritual and theological level”, of Protestants; his attitude to South American and Mexican Evangelicals, which “represented the aggrandisement of Catholic doctrine above the clear work of the Holy Spirit in called and effective Christian lives”; and the undemocratic structures of Romanism.

If this position is typical of that held by many Evangelicals in the Church of Scotland, the prospect of biblical church reformation arising from that source is small. One sad fact emerging from the recent irrational media extravaganza when one pope died and another was elected is that many mistakenly believe that *the* difference between Romanism and Protestantism is that on moral matters the former is conservative and the latter liberal. There has been no recognition of the mutually-exclusive nature of the doctrines of Romanism and Biblical Protestantism, of the fact that Biblical Protestantism maintains the high moral ground of the Bible, and that Romanism left to work itself out, does not – whatever its moral posturing – promote true morality, much less holiness. Large sections of what the media and the general public perceive to be Protestantism have abandoned biblical religion and morality, and this has created a vacuum of which Rome and its official and unofficial propaganda machines take advantage. It is but a little step for those who want to have an authoritative stance on moral issues, but are either ignorant of or indisposed towards Biblical Protestantism, to swallow the doctrines and practices of Rome along with its pronouncements on moral issues.

The betrayal of biblical religion and morality by modern Protestantism has permitted Romanism to appear as the champion of both. Fundamental doctrines of Christianity rejected by much pseudo-Protestantism are held by Rome, but in connection with such error as deprives them of their saving and sanctifying power and makes them part of a system whereby Christ is

effectively replaced by pope and priest, the one effective sacrifice of Calvary by the mass, and the grace of God by the ministrations of the church.

Church of Scotland Evangelicals must be unequivocal in their opposition to Roman dogma and pretensions and in recalling their Church to full commitment to the biblical emphases of the Reformation. Can they expect success in reformation if they endeavour to journey together, however disagreeably, with Protestant liberals or Romanist conservatives as if all were basically on the same pathway? *HMC*

Church Information

Nurses needed at Mbuma

Qualified nurses, preferably with midwifery experience, are required at Mbuma Mission Hospital. At the moment the staff are under-strength and when Dr Snoek is settled there, God willing, the workload will increase and there will be a need for more nursing support. Please apply in the first instance to Rev J R Tallach, F P Manse, Raasay, Kyle, IV40 8PB.

College and Library Fund

By appointment of Synod, the first of two special collections on behalf of the College & Library Fund, is due to be taken in congregations during June, DV.

R A Campbell, General Treasurer

Acknowledgement of Donations

The General Treasurer acknowledges with sincere thanks the following donations:

Bookroom Fund: A Friend, £40 per KJH.

Eastern Europe Fund: A Skye Friend, £100.

Jewish & Foreign Missions Fund: North Uist Sabbath School, for John Tallach School, £100.

Legacy Reserve Fund: Anon, Ps 72:19, £10; Anon, Glasgow; both for Texas Church & Manse Building Fund, £50.

Congregational Treasurers acknowledge with sincere thanks the following donations:

Fort William: *Congregational Funds:* Anon, £200 per FF.

North Harris: *Communion Expenses:* MM, Cluer, £20; MHG, £20; Anon, Tarbert, £10; Anon, £20; Anon, £20. *Door Collection:* Anon, £20.

North Tolsta: *Communion Expenses:* A Friend of the Cause, £20; £20. *Repair Fund:* Anon, "In memory of loving parents", £40. *Where Most Needed:* MM, Dun Berisay, £10; MM, £10 per Rev DC; Anon, "In memory of our beloved parents", £20. *TBS:* Anon, £20.

North Uist: *Congregational Funds:* Anon, £100.

Portree: *Bus Fund:* AM, £20. *Communion Expenses:* DM & AM, £100; Anon, £20; J & NM, £30 per SYM. *Congregational Funds:* MM, £40 per FM. *Door Collection:* A Friend, £10; £8; £10; A Friend, £10 per SYM. *Sustentation Fund:* A Friend, £25; £25; £20; A Friend, £25 per SYM.

Shieldaig: *Sustentation Fund:* Anon, "In grateful memory of a loving husband & father", £100. *Where Most Needed:* Kyle Friend, £20 per DMC.

Staffin: *Door Collection:* CM, Staffin House, £50.