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THE SOUL SATISFIED

Sermon preached by the late Rev. Neil Cameron, in St. Jude's Hall, Glasgow, on Wednesday, the 4th December, 1929, and hitherto unpublished by a hearer. We remember hearing this Sermon. — Editor.

“My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips” (Psalm 63, 5).

We have here in this Psalm which was composed by David in the Wilderness of Judah and that must have been (according to one sentence in the Psalm) when he had to flee for his life from his own unnatural son Absalom because we find that he mentions near the end of the Psalm that he was a king at the time. He was not crowned king of Judah nor of Israel when he had to flee before King Saul, and he says here at the beginning of the Psalm that he was hungering and thirsting not after his crown, his palace, or his kingdom, but God. He says here: “O God, thou art my God; early will I seek Thee; my soul thirsteth for Thee, my flesh longeth for Thee in a dry and thirsty land where no water is”. That was his experience. Then he goes on to say what he really wished to see and that was the “power and glory of God”. “To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen Thee in the sanctuary”. An honest prayer in the heart of a man that desires God's fellowship above every other thing in the world. Although he was in danger of losing his kingdom and life, he prays neither for his life nor for his kingdom but that he would have the fellowship of God for ever.

Then he goes on to show the reasons why he desired so much to enjoy God, His communion and His fellowship — “Because Thy loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise Thee”. It was better for David to lose his natural life than to lose the loving-kindness of God. There were many since that day who were of the same mind (many of them in Scotland) who preferred

to lose their natural life than to lose faith and the loving-kindness of God. In order to meditate on these words for a few minutes, we shall notice, first of all, "My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise Thee with joyful lips". That is two things in connection with these words.

1. The satisfaction that the immortal soul of man may have (and many have had) in the enjoyment of God. He says here: "My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness".

We shall notice, in the second place, a few of the reasons why the people of God in the world — and even those who have got the means of grace — should live in expectation of enjoying this extraordinary favour, for this is a favour that can dry up the carnal enjoyments of this world, and make them just an abomination to those who would enjoy God in Christ and the Spirit as their own God.

(1). We have to mention some things as regards how the Lord satisfies man's soul. We are gathered together here today purposely to acknowledge in thankfulness God's goodness for providing for our bodies. It is a Harvest Thanksgiving Day and that means that we have many, many reasons why we should thank God in face of all our ill-deserts, how He is providing for us, notwithstanding how provoking we are as a people and as a nation.

We shall notice (1) how God satisfies the soul of man. Man's soul must be emptied of the fullness of it. See, when a vessel is full you cannot put anything more in it, and when men are fully satisfied with their own condition there is no place in them for the blessing of God, and if they go on in that condition, full of the world in their heart and in their mind, they will go to eternity without knowing anything of what those realise of whom the text speaks.

God empties the soul of man. It is written concerning Moab:—"Moab hath been at ease from his youth, and he hath settled on his lees, and hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel, neither hath he gone into captivity; therefore his taste remained in him, and his scent is not changed". They were fully satisfied with themselves, with the "carnal mind that is enmity against God and which departs from Him", and you who are in that condition you do not need to expect that you will know anything until you will be emptied of that.

See, God empties His people. He awakens them by His Spirit to a realisation of the awful corruption that is in them and they immediately begin to depart from these things and turn away. They cease to be satisfied with themselves, they cease to be satisfied with the pleasures of sin in the world and cease to be satisfied with all the good things the world can give without God. Until there is this, you can never expect to know anything at all about

the enjoyment, the exceeding great enjoyment of those who are truly God's people.

You must be emptied of yourself, you cannot be satisfied with yourself. You cannot be satisfied with the fullness that is in you, in your heart, in your mind, and not only that, there must be a sense of your need, your need of being filled with all the fullness of God (and, however much that may be in this poor generation — a poor sinner made to feel his own poverty and emptiness) and when a sinner feels this, he is "filled with marrow and fat", the best things that are known in the world for supporting the body, and this means the best things that are known in time or eternity to satisfy the soul, so that they are a people who are emptied of this and who realise how poor they are. They have nothing that they can bring to God, nor offer to Him, nothing that can satisfy their own conscience and nothing that can satisfy their own conscience and nothing that can satisfy the claims of God's justice upon them. Whatever way God may take to do it — He may do it in a moment as He did in the case of Saul of Tarsus; he may take a long time doing it — it will come to this that the poor sinner realises that he has nothing that will stand at death and at the Great Day and that he needs what is greater than the whole material creation. Offer the whole material creation to a poor sinner that is convinced of his real condition as a guilty sinner and he will spurn the idea. He cannot be put off with the whole world instead of having an interest in the salvation that is in Christ; he must have Christ, to be without Him is death.

II. It is to such sinners that are truly convinced of what the Scriptures declare concerning them as regards their state and their nature and also how impossible it is for them to think even one good thought that would reconcile them to God, that God the Holy Ghost — who leads this man through His own Word — begins now to reveal to the sinner the fullness that is in Christ. The poor, empty, guilty sinner begins now to see in the Scriptures that there is in Christ all that he needs for time and for eternity. If the sinner now could get Christ, this is the thing above all things when the sinner realising his ruined condition and the claims of God against him, to find Christ, and to get out of his fullness "grace for grace". Nothing else will do, and it is the Holy Spirit, my friends, that points the eyes of the sinner to see in God's Word not a dream nor a vision but reveals to him Christ as the Saviour of the Lost, as I heard of a weak-minded man that was up near Inverness. He was so weak that sometimes he would break out laughing in the Church. He never did it in an irreverent way. This day in the middle of a sermon — on a Communion Sabbath — he began to laugh and of course the minister knew well that the man was not responsible and that he had some occasion. He

sent for him the next day and he asked him: "Why were you laughing yesterday". "Oh", he said, "I saw Christ yesterday". "Where did you see Him?" "I saw Him in the sermon, the Word of God. I did not see any picture nor anything of that nature but I saw Christ in the Glory of His Person and Finished Work in the Scriptures as these were set before me in the sermon", and that is the way it is.

See, man, when God the Holy Ghost points his eye and gives him to see in the looking-glass or mirror of God's Word Christ in the Glory of His Person and Finished Work as the Holy Ghost sets before the sinner there, it is there that the sinner sees Him, it is there that the sinner desires to have Him, this Christ of the Scriptures, not a false Christ, the True Christ, the Son of God who was sent by the Father in His infinite love — to save lost men — into this world and who came in His own infinite love to obey and to suffer and die for guilty men, and who rose again and ascended to heaven and is now at the right hand of God as the Great High Priest of His Church pleading on the merit of His own blood, the forgiveness of sins for perishing sinners. It is the Holy Ghost which reveals Christ in the Scriptures, not only in the Scriptures of the New Testament, but down through all the Scriptures of the Old Testament, the Priesthood, the Altar, the blood shed. He sees Christ in all these as typified in them but he sees Christ in the finished work of Calvary without any shadow at all as the better thing that the Apostle, or the Holy Ghost, says was to come, comes in the soul of a sinner when he realises his own ruined condition and the wrath that he is under and the guilt that lies upon him, and sees in Christ all that he needs to satisfy him, Divine justice and his own conscience, he begins then to hunger and thirst after this Christ, to have Him as his righteousness. You find that it is to such that the promises of God's Word are given. You cannot find promises in the Scriptures at all to men that are at ease in Sion but you find promises to those who are "hungering and thirsting after righteousness". "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be satisfied, or filled", and wherever that is, wherever there is a hungering and a thirsting after getting satisfaction in Christ Crucified, you may rest assured (as sure as God says it) wherever that creature is on the face of the earth that has got a hunger and a thirst in him that nothing can satisfy but Christ as his righteousness and also as his sanctification (because these two things are not separate at all) that he will be filled.

We cannot at all, my dear friends, accept as godliness men who say that they are Christians and that they are Christ's and show that they have no hunger after holiness but hunger after the vanities of the world. That is only a delusion but those who are

truly hungering and thirsting it shews life there for there is no such thing in any dead creature as hunger and thirst and God's promise is to that life that has a hunger and thirst after the righteousness of Christ and after holiness; "it shall be filled". It is that that we have got in our text: "My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness". See, when one is satisfied you cannot take more. There is a satisfaction in Christ Crucified to a poor guilty sinner that is enabled by grace to receive Him at his own Word, as his own personal Saviour. There is a satisfaction there that the poor sinner can say: "This will do for me for time and for an endless eternity". He speaks here about the nature of this satisfaction that the sinner receives in the moment God bestows faith on him, or as we have it in the Shorter Catechism: "Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace whereby we receive and rest upon him alone for salvation as he is offered to us in the gospel".

When God, my friends, enables a poor sinner to receive Christ in the offer of the Gospel it is God's offer to the perishing sinner and especially to the sinner that is conscious of his need. When he is enabled to receive Him he will get what will satisfy the claims of God's justice, and the Peace of God comes in to the immortal soul. If you were to ask that sinner who sees Christ as his own Saviour if he were satisfied he would say:— "I am satisfied with Christ in the salvation that is in Him, satisfied with His righteousness, satisfied with His Finished Work", and this is true, my friends, of all. David says concerning it that it is like a man being "satisfied with marrow and fat". That is (as I have already said) the best things known among men — "marrow and fat" — and this moment (there never has been anything in heaven nor in earth like it) that a poor sinner who may have been days and months afraid that he would be in hell for ever, and through Christ Crucified and offered in the Gospel, receives the satisfaction that is of such a nature that no creature ever got more satisfaction than he gets and never got anything so sweet.

See, my friends, men in their natural state look upon true godliness as being a morose thing, a sad sort of thing and a thing in which there is no pleasure at all. Ah! my friend, you are greatly deceived. There is more pleasure in one moment of "Peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, Peace through His blood, the forgiveness of sins"; there is more pleasure in one moment of it than the world had since God created the carnal world. It is only a false peace — the pleasures of sin. Those who have never tasted of the "fatness and marrow" of God's grace know nothing whatsoever about what the happiness and the consolation is, as we have it "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love". There is something that language is too weak to express and which it cannot convey what actually the satisfac-

tion is, that the poor sinner that receives Christ enjoys.

I heard once from a godly woman that the servant of God that was up in Fort Augustus (Reverend Francis McBain) was preaching in Plockton. He was describing the extraordinary joy that the soul had that came by faith into possession of Christ, and of God in Christ, as his own portion for eternity. He said that there were three looking at the sinner that was rejoicing with envious eyes and these three were the devil, the world and the flesh. He said that the devil said to the world: "Wait you till I will go after him, I will put an end to his rejoicing". "Oh", said the world, "wait you till I will go after him and I will make it bitter for him", but, said the flesh: "Wait you two till I will begin and I will make it more wretched for him than the two of you". You find in the case of the Apostle Paul who knew what the meaning of these words were — a man to be "satisfied with marrow and with fatness", the best things that ever have been heard of — how that man, not by Satan, nor by the world, but by his own carnal nature — had to cry out "O wretched man that I am", after enjoying being satisfied with the marrow of the Gospel, of the Love of God in the Gospel, satisfied with the Covenant of Grace and with all that that Covenant contains. I have noticed in the sermons of the Divines of the Second Reformation (such as Samuel Rutherford and these men) a note that they used to say in preaching (that I never heard in the pulpits in our day) and especially Samuel Rutherford: "If you are satisfied with the Covenant of Grace and with God's way of salvation to perishing men through Christ and Him Crucified, the Covenant of Grace is yours"; to be satisfied shews that it has become yours already.

Well, my friends, here we have David stating about being "satisfied with marrow and fatness". I desire to notice two or three things about the Covenant of Grace.

The sinner is fully satisfied with the order of the Covenant of Grace. See, the unconverted sinner has got many things against the order of God's way of salvation. He would like to have a share in the work himself. He cannot be reconciled to be saved as a ruined sinner without any merit or anything at all in himself that draws God's mercy to him. You see the sinner that looks at the order of the Covenant of Grace sees that this is the order of it that "God commends His love to perishing men in that while men were yet sinners Christ died for them", and that it is not at all a good man or a good woman that God justifies but an ungodly man, a sinner that never did anything but sin.

If I were to enter into that (which I am not going to do) I think very plainly that that is at the root of the determined opposition to the Covenant of Grace that men are not satisfied that the glory should be God's and the shame their's, but those who are taught

of God are fully satisfied with the order of it and it is true of them what God says in another place: "Thou shalt not lift up thy head any more with shame in the day that I shall be reconciled to thee". They are satisfied with that "that shame and confusion of face belongs to them but that mercy, grace and truth and righteousness belongs to the Lord their God". They are fully satisfied with that, that the glory will be His and nothing of it theirs, and that is one reason why they cannot depart from the order of God's Covenant when other men want to set up men as something great and honourable and good. That is really where those who are going to be saved by the Covenant of Works and those who are going to be saved by the Covenant of Grace differ, and see the order of it — nothing good in them. They accept God's character as to their state and nature, and they accept God's character as regards His mercy, pity and free love to perishing men and that it is altogether on account of what God is in himself, and not on account of anything that is in them. There is order in all things.

(2). They are again satisfied with the stability of the Covenant of Grace. They are not Arminians. They do not believe that a sinner who is born again and is united to Christ by faith may perish eternally. They do not believe that, who are satisfied with this "marrow and fatness". They are satisfied with this "that the mountains shall depart and the hills shall be removed" but God will not depart from those to whom He is reconciled in Christ and that gives them satisfaction. It will not do for them at all that it will be the last act of their will that will fix their destiny for eternity. They look upon God who is reconciled to them now in Christ as unchangeable as God Himself, far more so than the mountains or hills of this world. They are satisfied with that. I am not saying at all that they are sure that this Covenant belongs to themselves many a time but I am saying that this Covenant is as stable as the Throne of God. "Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face". They see that as stable as the Eternal God Himself.

We shall notice further in connection with this that they are quite satisfied again with the conditions of this Covenant, quite satisfied. They are satisfied with this that no sinner shall be saved but a sinner that must forsake his sins — satisfied with that — and when I make use of "condition" here it is not because I mean what very often is the meaning of condition. It is not a condition which they can fulfil but a sinner that is saved from his sins in the world, that is done with sin. Those who are not satisfied with that condition, who must have their carnal pleasures and religion along with it, this shows that they are not satisfied with the conditions upon which God offers to save a sinner: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let

him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon". They are fully satisfied with that and their prayer is to God that He would save them from their sins, save them from committing sin and that he would save them from the sinfulness of their nature which appears in their thoughts, in their desires and affections and such things. They want holiness. They are quite satisfied with what God says: "Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord" wherever that is true of them.

I desire to notice one other thing about this Covenant of Grace, i.e., they are satisfied also with the nature of the Covenant. See, the Covenant of Works was made between God and man and this Covenant was hanging upon, or based upon, what man would do if man would give obedience and whether man would continue to give that obedience. You see whenever man failed, the nature of that Covenant was that it was broken and would never be made up. No sinner will ever see heaven by his or her works. That is done for ever but the nature of this Covenant is that God made it, not with man at all, but He made it with God His own Son. God, the Father, made this Covenant with His Son and that in order that He might take the place of the guilty sinner and that He would render an obedience to God's law and justice, and the satisfaction of His sufferings and death which God required in order to save a sinner, and the nature of it is this that those who receive Christ as their Covenant they are not hanging now at all upon every sin they commit. One sin brought the whole race to an estate of sin and misery, brought them for ever and ever to eternal punishment for anything that they could do. That is true today. That is not the nature of this Covenant at all. The nature of it is that it was Christ that stood in man's place and that He finished the work that justice and law required in order that man might be saved and when the sinner receives Christ by faith every sin that he commits does not at all break this Covenant for them. If that were so no sinner could be saved. God's people sin as well as others. It is not, my friends, upon their own goodness or their own works (although they certainly have them), but in their hearts, words and conduct they are different to the people of the world. As I said already they desire holiness, they desire conformity to God's law and the Gospel, but you see, my friends, it is not at all of this nature that if that sinner is justified freely by grace through the righteousness that is in Christ Jesus, if that sinner were to commit sin after that, that he would be gone. See, the nature of it is that God forgives sin to the sinner freely through the merits of Christ's blood and He will continue to forgive that sinner to the last breath the sin of his nature and of his thoughts and words and actions, and Christ gives of the Holy Ghost, or the

Spirit of Christ, to the soul that is united to Christ that although he sins he goes again and again (I do not know how many times a day he must go) to God confessing sin, imploring forgiveness and mercy through the blood of Christ, and the nature of the Covenant is that he will receive this. I read in the writings of Thomas Boston a very wonderful thing in connection with that. It was the opinion of the Divines that when God forgives sin he forgives all sin — oh great forgiveness. Thomas Boston did not contradict that at all but said that when God forgave sin to the sinner that He forgave him all the sins that he committed and that he would commit and that were in him, but he said that Christ was a guarantee to God for that sinner, that He would bring him to repentance right on to the end of his days in the world and to confess his sins and to implore mercy of God; that this thing was not at all in the hands of the sinner himself. It is Christ that has bound himself by the Covenant of Grace to God the Father, that all the sins that the sinner who has been justified by faith and forgiven, and a righteousness imputed to him that is perfect, for Christ bound himself to bring that sinner to repentance right down to the end of his days in the world, and we agree with that. It may be proved from Scriptures how this is true. Take, for instance, one case. There was David, a man of God, and it seems that he had no feeling for about a year at least about the awful sins that he committed until Nathan was sent to bring him to repentance, and when God, my friends, sends a scripture truth it awakens the conscience of the sinner and causes him to go to his knees to confess sin to God, as Boston said that Christ is bound in the Covenant of Grace to see to it that the sinner to whom God forgives sin will repent and go to God for mercy, and that is the nature of it.

We shall notice in the last place just a word or two as to why the people of God should expect this, expect all the blessings of the Covenant of Grace and why this is set before poor sinners by God as the only way of salvation and offered in the Gospel to "Whosoever will", and remember you ought to plead with God that He would make you willing by His own Spirit in a day of His power. We are only going to mention two or three things just now.

First, man ought, my friends, to look for this satisfaction and especially those who are called for that is really what reveals election. No one knows until the effectual calling of the Spirit makes it known in the world. That is true especially of those who are called. It ought to encourage sinners and that is when God promises in His own Word to satisfy those (as I said already) who "hunger and thirst after righteousness". There is no use offering food to a man that has no appetite nor water to a man that has

no thirst, and that is the way with the sinner, he has no need of Christ, no sense of his need, like a man that does not know what it is to be hungry — quite full — and that does not know what it is to be thirsty; but where grace is — hunger and thirst — God attaches a promise to that, that the sinner shall be filled, and if you have that, my friends — a hunger — (and you know what hunger means in the body) there is a hunger in the soul that nothing can satisfy but Christ and a thirst that nothing can satisfy but the offer of the Holy Ghost, you may rest assured that that will be filled. You will be satisfied for God promises it. His promise will not fail.

I desire to notice further in connection with this that God also reveals that it was for such that He made a provision in the Gospel, for the poor, for the needy, those who have nothing, who see they are going to eternity for ever and ever, nothing where-with they will meet death or the Great Day of Judgment if they shall be without Christ, and that is an experience that is even in the world of God's child. While those who are conscious of this you find that they are called in the Scriptures to "come to Christ", and that there is a promise attached to their experience: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price". What does that mean? It just means that God is offering salvation freely to the man who is thirsty and hungry and has no money, nothing by which he can buy these things. God offers freely. Well, that is what he needs, wine and milk, bread, all that the immortal soul needs is offered freely. It is offered to the person that is hungry for it and that is thirsty, and I desire to notice this that He invites sinners to come to Him, What is the meaning of the words? "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest". See, it is impossible for a man to be carrying a heavy burden and not to feel weary carrying it. It is impossible for you to find a man like that who will say that he does not know what it is to be weary who will have a load physically. Well, it is impossible spiritually to find a man or woman who fits in with that text that is "weary and heavy laden", weary seeking Christ like the Church in the Song of Solomon and having a load of guilt; it is impossible for a sinner conscious of that (and where that consciousness is) of a heavy load of sin, up from your youth to this day and the efforts you have been making to get this load off. He invites you to come to Him and He will give, He says, "rest". Oh! do you think that Christ will not stand to His own Word? Where a poor sinner has a load of sin that he is afraid will sink him to hell and that is weary carrying that, do you think, my friend, if he comes to Christ, looks to Him, He will fail in His Word that that sinner

will not get rest? Never! His Word will never fail.

I desire to notice another thing and that is to those who are truly God's people. They have had past experience: "That I Thy power may behold and brightness of Thy face as I have seen Thee heretofore within Thy holy place". See, they have past experience of what really they want, as you find David praying for it in the 51st Psalm: "Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation", and that means that David by his own body deprived himself of the joy that he had in God's salvation in the past and he was praying now that God would restore it to him, and oh alas, how often we are guilty of depriving ourselves of the joy of God's salvation which I believe all that are saved tasted of one day and thought that they would never lose it. It is not upon Him that you will lay the blame but on yourself and your own unsteadfastness and your own folly that caused all that you have to endure in the way of walking in darkness and having no light in the world.

In conclusion, my friends, whatever afflictions those who have tasted that "Lord is gracious" may have, or who are satisfied as "with marrow and fatness", this is true of them they can never accept any more of the character that the godless world give to God. They will not accept that He is austere and that will be the pang of it when they feel that they are without Him, without the favour of God. They cannot allow any one to say anything about Him but that "the Lord our God is merciful, and He is gracious, long-suffering, and slow to wrath, in mercy plenteous". They know His character even in the darkest hour and we believe this that that is a part of the grief they have when they are afraid that they caused Him to hide His face for ever on account of their sins that they are going to lose such a being as God is, to lose Him as their portion, to lose Him for eternity.

STUDIES IN THE LIFE OF THE APOSTLE PAUL

IV — Saul Returns to Jerusalem

(a) His Departure from Damascus

As we noticed, in our last study, Saul returned to Damascus, refreshed and strengthened by his period of solitude and communion with God, to take up the work there, where he had left off. Once more he would be found in the synagogues of that thriving city, holding forth the word of life, hoping, perhaps, to see much fruit in that place. As usual, however, the great Enemy of souls was not slow to rouse up the opposition to such a good work as Saul was then engaged in, and thus we read, in Acts, chapter 9, at verse 23, "And after that many days were fulfilled,

the Jews took counsel to kill him: but their laying await was known of Saul . . .”

As with the Master so often, so now with this noble servant: **‘the Jews took counsel to kill him’** — they laid their plans; they plotted and schemed; but, as with the Master also, all this was made known to His servant, and so, with the help of his friends and companions, the disciples of Damascus, he escaped out of their hands. The gates of the city were watched, night and day, but somehow, somewhere, and sometime, **‘the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket’**.

It was a night in his life, which he was never to forget. Long afterwards, when writing his second letter to the Church at Corinth, he makes mention of this escape from Damascus. Speaking of the things which he had suffered gladly, for Christ’s sake, he gives a long list of perils and trials, but then, as if in a category all by itself, he goes on to elaborate this particular infirmity in the words **‘In Damascus the governor under Aretas the King kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me: and through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands’** 2 Corinthians xi, 32, 33. The Keeper of Israel, the God of his fathers, was truly the God **‘that slumbers not nor sleeps’**, as Saul made his miraculous escape that night. His protecting love and care surrounded him, as with a shield. How good it would be for us all to know the blessedness of such a hiding-place! May we realise that there is no true safety for any one of us, save in the secret place of the Most High, and under the shade of the Almighty. May we learn that this is true, not only in respect of our spiritual standing as lost sinners of Adam’s race, but also in respect of our daily life in Providence.

Has it ever occurred to you that Saul must often have thought of the strange, and unexpected way in which he both entered and left Damascus at that time in his life? He had gone there, proud Pharisee that he was, with one aim in view. His manner of entry into the city certainly did not live up to his previous expectations — **a blinded man, led by the hand of another**: his manner of exit now could hardly have been that which he might have envisaged at times — **a fugitive, hidden in a basket**, let down from a window on the city wall, under cover of darkness! Yet, in both, his footsteps were ordered by the Lord, whose **‘way is in the sea’**, whose **‘path is in the great waters’**, and whose **‘footsteps are not known’**. The LORD was in all these varied circumstances. Saul was learning that he could no longer **‘glory in the flesh’**; from this time forth he is to glory only **‘in the LORD’**.

It may be difficult for us sometimes to see God’s hand in control of our various circumstances in life, if we are of this blood-bought people, yet let us seek the more to leave ourselves and all our

ways, in His safe keeping and control. **He knows the end from the beginning.** The unlooked-for turn of events is never outwith His infinite knowledge, and the promise to His people is sure that all things will work for their good.

(b) His Arrival at Jerusalem

Saul reached Jerusalem in a very different frame of mind from that in which he had left it, but how many in the city were to know that, far less to believe it? Saul himself knew; the disciples at Damascus knew; would their counterparts in Jerusalem also know? Time would tell. News did not travel so fast then, as it does now. Saul had made a name for himself among the disciples at Jerusalem — not, alas, as a friend, but as a sworn enemy of all that they held most dear. When Saul arrived, he had no mind any more to seek out his former companions of the Sanhedrin and their kind, but rather to seek out those very people, whom before he had sought to destroy, and so we read in Acts. **‘And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple’** (Chap. ix, verse 26).

What a disappointment this must have been to Saul! **He had come back**, filled with the joy of believing, a humble penitent sinner, saved by divine grace, with the seal of God’s favour in his conscience, with the encouraging knowledge of work well done for the Master in Damascus, and now, with **fresh zeal and enthusiasm, to begin, at Jerusalem also, to show forth from the Scriptures, that Jesus was the Christ.** Then this new trial awaited him; this discipline through which he must pass, before he could rejoice, in brotherly love, with the church that had been left at Jerusalem, after his own work of destruction and scattering had passed over it like a wave of the sea. **He did not give up at the first attempt:** from the use of the imperfect tense in the original, **it is clear**, when he ‘assayed’ to join himself to them, **that he kept on trying**, after the first rebuff. He repeated his efforts until, in God’s own wonderful way, Barnabas stepped in, to smooth over the difficulties in the way and bring success to Saul’s yearning for a place among the despised followers of Jesus. There is no question, we believe, of Saul here seeking, in any Pharisaical spirit, a place above his fellow disciples, albeit he had his own divine warrant and commission to go unto the Gentiles and preach among them the unsearchable riches of Christ. The obstacles in his path were such as arose out of a natural fear of one, who, but lately, had caused such havoc among their number. The brethren could not easily be convinced that the change was genuine. **Saul had need of patience:** we believe that he would receive it for the hour of need.

In the life of the believer, and particularly in the early days after his conversion, there are special times when he must exercise patience, as he awaits upon the Lord, to make his way straight before him, **particularly in regard to his relationship to those who have been in Christ before him.** Is he to be received by them, as a brother beloved, as one in whom the change, wrought by saving grace, is clearly evident? Or are they to have their doubts about him? Such a juncture in a believer's life is one of great importance to him. He knows not, perhaps, how it will fare with him, as he goes forward, 'assaying to join himself to the disciples', but as he goes, he utters many a short ejaculatory prayer for guidance, for strength, for comfort, and above all, for grace to acquiesce, if, at first, the way is hedged up with difficulties, and finally, for grace to persevere. **'As for God, perfect in this way'** (Psalm xviii, 30).

If our hearts be right with God, then all will be well in the end, although we may, like Saul, have our disappointments at times. Let each of us so examine himself or herself that we shall be more and more convinced that **our times are wholly in His hands**, and that, if we, by His own grace, shall leave ourselves wholly in His hands, then He in His turn, **shall surely perfect that which concerneth us,**

(c) Barnabas, a Son of Consolation

The Lord had a purpose of grace toward Saul so that, when his own efforts to find favour with the disciples at Jerusalem had sadly failed, **one was raised up to plead his cause**, one of whom we afterwards read that **he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith** — **'Barnabas** (which is, being interpreted, the son of consolation) **a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus**'. How Saul's heart must have warmed towards him, as he **'took him, and brought him to the apostles'** (verse 27). If we are to regard the last word in its strict interpretation, then we must see a distinction between **'apostles'** in verse 27 and **'disciples'** in verse 26. The latter were the believers in Jerusalem, followers of Jesus. They could not believe that Saul was truly converted, but now Saul is introduced, through the good offices of Barnabas, to the apostles, then in Jerusalem, presumably Peter and James, at least. He is now before the men, who had heard the original call of Jesus, **'Follow me and I will make you fishers of men'**, and who had had the great privilege of being with the Redeemer in the days of His earthly ministry. Barnabas speaks on his behalf. Barnabas is his sponsor: he espouses the cause of Saul of Tarsus, at a time when others of his own persuasion were sceptical of him. What noble service Barnabas rendered that day! He proved himself to be, for Saul, a true son of consolation.

The inspired writer gives us in one short verse the sum of his

speech that day — a speech which, by the blessing of the Lord, won over the apostles and through them, the disciples, until all were found at the end of the day, rejoicing in the Lord together. **Barnabas made three vital points in his speech that day — three points to which we may briefly refer:**

- (i) **He had seen the Lord in the way.**
- (ii) **The Lord had spoken to him.**
- (iii) **He had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus.**

(i) The wonder of the revelation to Saul on the Damascus road is summed up by Barnabas in these few words.

Truly, **his eyes had seen the King in his beauty** — the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ had shone into Saul's heart that day: he had, not only seen the Lord but also seen himself and what a sight that had been! **Saul was never the same man again; 'changed into the same image, from glory to glory'** (2 Corinthians iii, 18).

(ii) Not only had he seen the Lord in the way, but also this — that same Lord, great in power and in might, had spoken to him. **A voice from the excellent glory** had sounded in the depths of his soul; fear and trembling had laid hold on him; yet it was also the voice of His loving kindness to Saul — the voice of love. The Lord had spoken with power — the voice which once had shaken the earth, now shook Saul's soul. Yet in the end, the voice was one which spoke of peace and forgiveness and joy in the Holy Ghost. Jesus had spoken to him — as He had spoken to Cleopas and his companion on the Emmaus road — and surely, Saul too, at the end of the day, knew something of a burning of heart such as these two had.

(iii) The fruit was not long in sprouting forth. Barnabas could go on to make his final point — **Saul had preached boldly the very faith which he once sought to destroy**. The record of that preaching stands clear for all to see in the verses already dealt with in one of our former meditations. Out of the fulness of his heart, Saul spoke.

So Barnabas closed his speech. The outcome? Read it now in verse 28 '**And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem**'.

Saul had been received into the number of the disciples at Jerusalem; '**with them**' — with whom, but with the apostles and the disciples; with the church of the first born. The apostles' fears and doubts, the disciples' suspicions — all were greatly overcome, and both they and Saul found peace and fellowship at their common Redeemer's feet.

O, beloved, **who would not like**, some day, if the need arose, to act the part of a Barnabas to some other child of God in

similar circumstances? God grant to us the needed grace, the noble-heartedness, the true humility, the gracious leading of the Divine Spirit for any such hour!

On the other hand, let us also seek for some spiritual counterpart, in our own experience, to the testimony of Barnabas regarding Saul. Have we ever **'Seen the Lord in the way'**? If we never meet Him 'in the way' here below, as Saul met Him, we shall never know the joy of meeting Him in peace at the right hand at last. Have we ever **known the Lord to speak unto us**, as He spoke to Saul in the way? Have we never heard Him say, **'Thy sins which are many are forgiven thee'**? If we never come to hear the voice of His lovingkindness here below, we shall never hear Him say at last, **'Come, ye blessed of my Father . . .'** We need not be of those, like Saul, who **'preach boldly'**, but we must all become followers of that same Jesus in such a way that our lives shall **'speak boldly'** for Him, if we are to be with Him in His glory.

May we take these precious lessons to heart daily! **One final word** now, by way of an **appendix**, before we close our present meditation. Although these studies are primarily based upon the narrative in Acts, any reference from Paul's own pen, in the epistles, which may throw some light upon the narrative by Luke, is welcome as a help. One such passage in Galatians, which may give another view of the basic subject-matter of this present study, may well be quoted here. We refer to Paul's own statement:

'Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days' (Gal. i, 18).

'I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter'.

It is generally agreed that these words refer to this time in the apostle's life, when **'Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles'**. If we take these two statements side by side, what a wonderful insight we seem to get into the ways of the Lord in His dealings with His people. In Acts, the inspired historian gives us the details of the **ignominious escape from Damascus**, the **suspicions of the disciples at Jerusalem**, the **unsuccessful effort to be accepted at face value**, and finally the **good offices of Barnabas** — in Galatians Paul simply says, **'I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter'**; he saw Peter indeed, achieved his mission and spent some fifteen precious days with him, but how much more was involved in all this, than Paul reveals to the Galatians! **'To see Peter'** — the word which Paul uses is not the usual verb for seeing someone or something; it is a **technical word**, used primarily in a special sense, a word from which our own word **'history'** is derived. Paul says he went up — to **interview Peter**; to **get to know him**; to **ascertain facts from him**, or **some such thing**, as did the ancient historians, when probing into matters relative to their own studies. We are left to supply what Paul and Peter spoke about during

these precious fifteen days — who can ever say, on this side of eternity? Yet one thought may suffice — **one subject would fill their conversation, their mind, their heart; Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God.**

Peter would have so much to tell of Jesus, that Saul, we may verily believe, would not feel the time long in his company during these fifteen days. Have we never felt it good to go and see some aged saint, some gracious godly soul, with whom we could have sweet fellowship, and from whom we could learn so much? Let us seek out every opportunity, then, to visit such, for truly our labour in such connection will not be vain in the Lord.

ROME AND REUNION

Evidence of Rome's design for the gradual submission of the Protestant Churches. "Interconfessional Co-operation" in 1968 shown to be in harmony with Rome's plan outlined in 1894.

(Issued by the Trinitarian Bible Society)

(continued from page 86)

Need for Protestant Vigilance

It is time for Protestant Christians to consider every aspect of this development and to recognise it in its true character, as the highly successful accomplishment of an important part of Rome's design to recover her dominant position in areas which were once emancipated from her influence.

Those who are disturbed by the readiness of nominally Protestant leaders to gravitate towards Rome are sometimes perplexed by the assertions, now often made, that Rome is reforming and Protestants should forget their old animosities and labour for the "reunion of Christendom". In fact, the Church of Rome has laboured assiduously since the Reformation to bring England back into her fold, and this endeavour has been intensified during the last hundred years. It must be remembered that when Rome speaks of "reunion" she means "submission". Clear proof of this can be seen in the statements of prominent Roman Catholic authorities, and evidence of this kind may carry more weight than any Protestant appraisal of Rome's position.

Submission the only basis of re-union

Cardinal Vaughan wrote, "There can be only two bases of Reunion so far as doctrine and authority are concerned: (1) **Compromise**, that is, federation and mutual recognition; (2) **Submission**,

that is, individual or corporate absorption. The first is inconsistent with the Divine constitution of the Church; there remains only the second.

"Our hopes of a **gradual submission** by an ever increasing number of Anglicans rest on the following evident facts:

1. The growing realisation of the **Catholic** and therefore non-national character of the Church of Christ, and the increasing distrust of national limitations in the idea of religion.

2. The growing appreciation of Catholic doctrines and devout practices . . . The doctrines of the Catholic Church, which had been rejected and condemned as blasphemous superstitions and fond inventions, have been re-examined and taken back, one by one, until the 39 articles have been banished and buried as a rule of faith. The real presence, the sacrifice of the Mass, offered for the living and the dead — sometimes even in Latin — reservation of the sacrament, auricular confession, dispensations, extreme unction, purgatory, prayers for the dead, devotions to our Lady, to her immaculate conception, the use of the rosary, and the invocation of saints, are doctrines taught and accepted, I am told, with a growing desire and relish for them, in the Church of England . . . All this speaks of a change and a movement towards the Church that would have appeared absolutely incredible at the beginning of this century.

"What is still more remarkable is that the movement has been stronger than the rankest Protestantism, stronger than the bishops, stronger than the lawyers and the legislature . . . The movement continues and spreads, lodging itself in Anglican homes and convents, in schools, churches, and even cathedrals, until it is rapidly covering the country. Has there ever been seen a more marvellous change, and this within half a century!

Roman supremacy

"Our hope of Reunion is also based on the better acquaintance which is growing up with the divine constitution of the Catholic Church. People are beginning to realise the non-national character of the Papacy; that it is no more foreign in its character than Christianity itself, of which it forms an integral part as its visible head and centre; that the **Roman supremacy** is not a despotism or a one-man absolutism, but a beneficent institution founded by Christ Himself, as a guarantee of liberty and as a pledge of unity . . .

"Our hopes rest on a growing acquaintance with our past history, the opening up of our records, the increasing fairness of writers and readers, the dropping away of ancient prejudices, etc.

"Lastly and principally, our hopes rest on the wonderful mercy and love of God; on the prayers of the Blessed Virgin, of St.

Peter, and of the Saints and Martyrs of England . . . Would that our Anglican friends could prove to us and that we could recognise their orders! — not indeed for any benefit they could be outside the unity of the Church, but because they believe their conversion would thus be rendered easier.

“Finally, we beseech our Blessed Lady, whose dowry England is, may give them light to see and fortitude to make the needful sacrifices which are required of those who are mercifully called to return to the Church of their fathers.”

Minor concessions to weaken Protestant opposition

Those who advocate “dialogue with Rome”, co-operation with ecumenical movements which make overtures to Rome, and “Common Bible” projects involving co-operation with Roman Catholic scholars, would do well to consider the Cardinal’s words. He was in a position to know Rome’s policy at the beginning of this present century, and he spoke freely of these things to a great assembly of Roman Catholics, and his words were reproduced by a Roman Catholic publishing house. His words make it quite clear that the deliberate policy of the Roman Church was to make a series of concessions in order to break down Protestant opposition, and the willingness of nominal protestants and evangelicals today to co-operate with Rome in projects of various kinds is an indication of the large measure of success with which Rome’s policy has been carried out. Rome might well regard the capture of the great national Bible Societies as the crowning climax of a very successful century of planning, propaganda and promotion.

Among the “concessions” has been the relaxation of the restrictions upon the possession and reading of the Scriptures, but Rome has safeguarded her own interests by ensuring that versions approved by the Church are set forth with notes, illustrations and other material designed to give a prominent place to doctrines and practices which have no warrant in the actual text of Holy Scripture.

THOUGHTS ON THE PSALMS

by Rev. Alex. McPherson

(continued from page 84)

PSALM ONE HUNDRED AND ONE

Verse 16. “When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory.”

Not only will the Church acquire fame and influence when God revives it, but He, Himself, will be glorified, and this is what the Church would desire. No-one can justly claim to be a saved sinner

who does not wish that God may be glorified through saving him. The coming of God's Son to earth was celebrated by angels as not only bringing peace on earth, but, "Glory to God in the highest." And Jude rejoins: "To the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen."

In this verse, however, it would appear that there is a special reference to the glory of the Lord as the fulfiller of promises. Under the strain of the long wait for deliverance, some would be complaining, "God hath forgotten to be gracious." But no! "O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me. — Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me" (Isaiah 49, v. 15, 16). God kept his word, and He will keep it. "Hath he said and shall he not do it? hath he spoken and shall he not make it good?" He will keep his promises to individuals and Church alike. He will be glorified in the way He keeps his promises, and at the time when He will fulfil them. Does this warm your heart in this day of blasphemy and rebuke?

Verse 17. "He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer."

It is part of his glory that He manifests Himself as the prayer-hearing God. In Babylon and in Judea the poor Jews were resorting to prayer. In the latter place the literal poor who had been left behind as not worth moving, mourned amidst the ruins of their city and province. Sorrowing captives beside the rivers of Babylon might have been better off materially, but could take no pleasure in their possessions while they were in a strange land. But they were alike destitute spiritually. They had no comfort of soul; they could say, "Thou hast removed my soul far off from peace: I forget prosperity." A deep sense of sin put them to their knees. Such will God always hear. Christ heeded such. He despised and despises none who acknowledge their sin and seek grace and mercy.

Verse 18. "This shall be written for the generation to come: and the people which shall be created shall praise the Lord."

This fact of the divine kindness to the destitute is to be recorded for the sake of future generations. "The poor shall never cease out of the land," so blessed be God's name for this assurance of the ear of the Lord being ever open to their cry! Then when the time came for Israel to be recreated a nation, they would praise God for it. Ezra 6, v. 2, tells us how they kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with joy: for the Lord had made them joyful. After ages would also praise Jehovah's grace, and we should do

it also for reviving and preserving his cause again and again. The facts of our own origin as a branch of the visible Church deserves to be often remembered, and the Lord's mighty and merciful dealings in the past should stimulate hope for the future.

Verses 19, 20. "For he hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary; from heaven did the Lord behold the earth; to hear the groaning of the prisoner; to loose those that are appointed to death."

Here was a man who knew that God dwells in heaven. At this time the earthly sanctuary was in ruins. God had forsaken the people who had forsaken Him, and Sion was, for the time being, not his seat. His true sanctuary is heaven. "Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool; where is the place that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?"

But what is the high and lofty One looking at as He surveys earth from the height of heaven? It is at the prisoners, those doomed to chains and hardships until their time comes to die. Here we are given another glimpse of the state of some of the Jews at this time. Some were ekeing out a living in their own desolate land with no future as far as man could see. Others like the psalmist were dying in distant Babylon. Yet to such the Lord was looking. Not upon the princes and nobles, and the rich and great, and all who counted themselves important, but to groaning prisoners who knew that it was for sin that their sorrows lay upon them. How great is God's grace! It is our nature to pass by the heart-rending sounds of the prison-house lest our feelings should be wounded and our minds depressed, but the Lord has an eye and ear for these sights and sounds that have anything spiritually healthy about them, however doleful they may appear to others. "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word." When sinners feel their bondage, bemoan their sins and cry to God, the time of their deliverance is near.

Verses 21, 22. "To declare the name of the Lord in Zion, and his praise in Jerusalem; when the people are gathered together, and the kingdoms, to serve the Lord."

When the Lord does deliver, then his name is praised and his character is made known by the beneficiaries as glorious. The returned Jews did so. The Church of the New Testament has still more reason to do so seeing that the Redeemer has opened the prison-house of sin's bondage and sent forth those who sat in darkness and in the shadow of death. "Liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound," is the consequence of the proclamation of the Gospel.

Then in a great outreach of faith, the psalmist beholds the time

when all the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord, and when the whole earth shall be full of his glory. The majority of earth's inhabitants shall rehearse the goodness, wisdom and power of God in building up the spiritual Jerusalem. They shall talk of all his wondrous works done in mercy and grace. In this and other ways they shall serve Him.

A LONG JOURNEY FOR A BIBLE

(from *Christian Treasury*, 1st January, 1868)

Two men came one night to Mr Ellis, the Missionary of Madagascar. They had walked a hundred miles out of their way to visit him.

'Have you the Bible?' asked Mr Ellis.

'We have seen it, and heard it read,' one man said, 'but we have only some of the words of David, and they do not belong to us, they belong to the whole family.'

'Have you the words of David with you now?' asked Mr Ellis. They looked at each other, and would not give answer. Perhaps they were afraid; but Mr Ellis spoke kindly to them. Then one of the men put his hand into his bosom, and took out what seemed to be a roll of cloth. He unrolled it; and, after taking off some wrapping, behold, there were a few old, torn dingy leaves of the Psalms, which had been read, passed around, lent, and re-read, until they were almost worn out! Tears came to Mr Ellis's eyes when he saw them.

'Have you ever seen the words of Jesus, or John, or Paul, or Peter?' asked the Missionary. 'Yes,' they said, 'we have seen and heard them, but we never owned them.'

Mr Ellis then went and brought out a Testament, with the book of Psalms bound up with it, and showed it to them. 'Now,' said he, 'if you will give me your few words of David, I will give you all his words; all the words of Jesus, and John, and Paul, and Peter besides.'

The men were amazed and delighted, but they wanted to see if the words of David were the same in Mr Ellis's book; and when they found they were, and thousands more of the same sort, their joy knew no bounds. They willingly gave up their poor tattered leaves, seized the volume, bade the Missionary goodbye, and started off upon their long journey home, rejoicing like one who has found a great spoil. Did not these men prize the Bible? And had not they found a Treasure?

HENRY TANNER

In the year 1743, George Whitefield had resolved to go to America, and had engaged his passage in a ship that was to sail

from Portsmouth; but, as the Captain afterwards refused to take him, 'for fear of his spoiling the sailors,' he was obliged to go to Plymouth. While staying there, he frequently preached; and an attempt having recently been made to murder him in his bed, much attention was excited, and many thousands flocked to hear him. While he was one day preaching Mr Tanner, who was at work as a shipbuilder at a distance, heard his voice, and resolved, with five or six of his companions, to go and drive him from the place where he stood, and for this purpose filled their pockets with stones.

When, however, Mr Tanner drew near, and heard Mr Whitefield earnestly inviting sinners to Christ, he was filled with astonishment, his resolution failed him, and he went home with his mind deeply impressed. On the following evening he again attended and heard Mr Whitefield on the sin of those who crucified the Redeemer. After he had expatiated on their guilt, he appeared to look intently on Mr Tanner, as he exclaimed with energy, 'Thou art the man!' These words powerfully affected Mr Tanner; he felt his iniquities to be awfully great; he cried, 'God be merciful to me a sinner!' and he was heard.

LOOKING UPWARD

(extract from John Berridge)

Pray frequently, and wait quietly, and the Lord will make your way plain. Jesus trains up all his servants to waiting; and if you are called to the Ministry, He will exercise your soul beforehand with sharp conflicts.

Joseph must be cast first into a pit by his own brethren, then into a prison by his master, before he rules the kingdom; and David must be hunted as a flea upon the mountains before he gets the sceptre. How can you tell what others feel, unless you have felt the same yourself?

How can you sympathise with a prisoner, unless your own feet have been fast in the stocks? How can you comfort those who are cast down unless you have been often at your wit's end?

Expect nothing but conflicts day after day, to humble and prove you, and teach you to speak a word in season to every one that is weary. This is, indeed, the high road to the kingdom for all; yet a minister's path is not only narrow and stony, like others', but covered also with bushes and brakes; and if you labour to remove them by your own hands, they will quickly tear your flesh, and fill your fingers with thorns.

Let your master remove them at your request; and remember it is always his work, as it is ever his delight, to clear our way and lead us on, till sin and death are trodden down.

Undertake nothing without first seeking direction from the Lord; and when anything offers that is plausible and inviting, beg of God to disappoint you, if it be not according to his mind. You cannot safely rely on your own judgment, after God has told you, 'He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool'. This advice relates to all important changes in life.

Go nowhere, settle nowhere, marry nowhere without frequent usage of this prayer.

POSADH AN ANAMA RI CRIOSD

Leis an Urr. Eideard Pearce (A.D. 1672)

(Air a leantuinn bho t.d. 89)

Seadh anam, tha'n so misneachd gu leoir air do shon, a dh' aindeoin cho salach, peacach, agus neo-airidh 's a tha thusa. Agus gu bhi cur nì's motha ri do mhisneachd fathasd, biodh fhios agad gu'n do ghabh Criosd aireamh mhòr sluaigh a bha anns gach dòigh cho salach, peacach, agus neo-airidh 's a tha thusa. Ciod a tha thù smuaint eachadh de Mhanasseh, a bha ri druidheachd, agus 'n a fhear iodhol-aoraidh? Ciod a tha thù smuainteachadh de Phòl a bha'n a fhear-geur-leanmhuinn agus na fhear labhairt toibheum? Ciod a tha thù smuainteachadh mu Mhuire Magdalen anns an robh seachd deamhainn? Ciod a tha thù smuainteachadh mu Ràhab a bha na striopaich? Ciod a tha thù smuainteachadh mu'n àireamh mhòr dhiubh-san a cheus Criosd, ach an deigh sin a chreid? B'e peacaich mhòr a bha annta-san uile, ach gidheadh ghabh Criosd iad ann an gàirdeanan a ghràidh. Ciod a tha thù smuainteachadh de'n chùntas dhubh de pheacaich ann a' measg nan Corintianaich, a tha air an ainmeachadh ann an I Cor. vi, 9, 10, a bha na'n luchd-striopachais, na'n luchd-iodhol-aoraidh, na'n luchd-adhaltranais, na'n luchd-macnuis, na'n daoine a tha cionntach do neo-ghloine mhì-nàdurra, na'n gaduichean, na'n daoine sanntach, na misgeirean, na'n luchd-anacainnt, na'n luchd-fòirneirt, na'n seorsa sin? Ciod a tha thù smuainteachadh do'n mhùinntir a bha "eu-céille, eas-umhail, air seacharan, a deanamh seirbhis do iomadh gné ana-miann agus an-toilean, a caitheamh am beatha ann a mì-rùn agus am farmad, fuath-thoillteanach agus a toirt fuath da chéile?" Titus iii, 3. Is cinnteach gu'm bheil iad so cho salach, cho peacach, cho neo-luachmhor 's a tha thusa, agus aig an robh uibhir gu seasamh eadar Criosd agus iadsan agus a tha agad-sa; agus gidheadh thuair iad gràs ann an sealladh Chriosd, air dhoibh amharc Ris. Dà-rìreadh cha'n eil anam a nis air neamh, nach robh a thaobh nàduir anns a h-uile rathad cho salach, peacach, agus neo-airidh air Criosd agus a tha thusa. Luidh iad anns an aon truailidheachd, dh'aonagraich siad iad

fein anns an aon pheacadh, bha iad air an lionadh leis an aon spiorad cur an aghaidh Dhé agus a dhòighean, agus a thà thusa a deanamh. Seadh agus bha àireamh do-labhairt dhiubh cho salach agus cho peacach 'n an cleachdaidhean mar an ceudna agus a thà thusa; ghiùlain iad a mach peacadh agus naimhdeas a' nàduir cho mòr ann an aghaidh Dhé agus Chrìosd, agus a rinn thusa; agus gidheadh ghabh Crìosd riutha ar neo cha bhiodh iad ann a' neamh. Ann am focal, 's e th'ann a' neamh, mar a tha neach a toirt fa'n ear, tigh làn de mhiorbhuilean saor ghràs Chrìosd. Tha Manassah iodhol-aodhrach, a' measg fìor luchd aoraidh Dhé. Tha Saccheus geur-leanmhuinneach a' measg spioradan na'm firean air an deanamh foirfe. Tha Saul toibheumach a' measg armailte de ainglean a toirt cliu, a moladh, agus a seinn halleluiah do Dhia agus do'n Uan. Agus an sin tha Muire Magdalen, aig an robh seachd deamhain, a' measg naoimh an Tì is Airde, a tha air an lionadh eadhon gu cur thairis le seachd spioradan Dhé. O! cò, uime sin, a bhiodh air a mhì-mhisneachadh? Seadh, anam, cha'n eil t-uile shalchar, do pheacadh, do neo- airidheachd a deanamh, ach mar gu'm b'eadh, dha do dheanamh freagarach air son Chrìosd agus a shaor ghràs. "Tha m'fhalamhachdan peacach agus mo neo-airidheachdan," thà **Rutherford** ag ràdh, "dha do dheanamh freagarach air son Chrìosd agus a ghràs." Tilg thu fein, uime sin, gu h-iomlan Air, a dh'aindeoin na h-uile nì, gu'n a bhi cur an teagamh gu'n gabh E riut.

VI. Is ann dhe leithid so a tha cridhe Chrìosd, agus tha E air a shuidheachadh cho mòr air pòsadh ri peacaich, agus nach mòr gu'm bheil nì eile anns am bheil E gabhail tlachd agus a deanamh gàirdeachas na ann am pòsadh eadar Esan agus iadsan: agus O, cia cho mòr a bu chòr dha so ar tarruig agus ar tàladh dha ionnsuidh! Na'm faiceadh tù duine òg a deanamh gàirdeachas co-cheangailte ri pòsadh eadar e agus a leithid so de neach dha robh gràdh aige, dh'fhaodadh tù gu math tighinn a dh'ionnsuidh a cho-dhùnaidh gu'n robh a chridhe gu mòr air a shuidheachadh oirre. Agus nach eil e mar so ann an so? Tha Crìosd a deanamh gàirdeachas ann an sealladh pòsaidh eadar E Fein agus peacaich; agus cia cho mòr 's a tha so a dearbhadh a chridhe a bhi anns a ghnothuch! So bheir mì dhuibh ann an trì nithean.

1. Is e so a' nì anns a d'rinn E aoibhneas agus anns an do ghabh E tlachd bho'n uile shiorrruidheachd. An uibhir so tha E Fein ag innse dhuinn; "An sin," 's e sin bho'n bhith-bhuantachd, "bha mise aige mar neach a dh'altrumadh maille ris; agus bu mhì a thlachd gach là, a deanamh gàirdeachas 'n a fhianuis an còmhnuidh; a' deanamh gàirdeachais anns a chuid a dh'àitichear d'a thalamh, agus mo thlachd maille ri cloinn nan daoine." Gnàth. viii, 30, 31. 'S e so briathran Chrìosd agus annta tha E'g innse dhuibh c'àit an robh E, agus ciod a bha E deanamh bho

shiorruidheachd; bha E maille ris an Athair, agus a deanamh gàirdeachas 'n a fhianuis: ach ciod anns an robh E deanamh gàirdeachas? Gu cinnteach, an ath nì dha Athair agus dha Fein, bha ghàirdeachas anns a chuid a dh'aitichear dhe'n talamh, agus bha a thlachd maille ri cloinn nan daoine. Thug E tlachd dha Fein ann a bhì smuainteachadh air tearnadh pheacach, agus 'n am pòsadh Ris Fein a chùim na crìche sin. O cia mar a tha so a dearbhadh a chridhe a bhi anns a ghnothuch!

2. Mar a ghabh E mar so tlachd agus a rinn E gàirdeachas ann a bhi smuainteachadh air roimh laimh; mar so 'n uair, aig am air bith, a tha anam bochd gu h-achdaidh air a phòsadh Ris, an sin tha E deanamh gàirdeachas as ùr, agus a faotainn tlachd as ùr. Uime sin tha latha a phòsaidh air ainmeachadh mar "latha subhachais a chridhe." Dàn. iii, 11. Tha latha pòsaidh eadar Crìosd agus peacaich bhochd 'n a latha aoibhneis agus subhachais do'n Athair, 'n a latha aoibhneis agus subhachais do'n Spiorad bheannaichte, 'n a latha aoibhneis agus subhachais do'n a h-ainglean naomha, agus do spioradan nam firean air an deanamh foirfe; oir tha "aoibhneas air neamh air son aon pheacach a nì aithreachas, nì 's motha na air son naoi deug agus ceithir fichead firean, aig nach eil feum air aithreachas." Lucas xv, 7. Ach thà e gu sònraichte 'n a latha aoibhneis agus subhachais do Chrìosd, am Fear Nuadh Pòsda. O 's e bhi faicinn peacaich bhochda tighinn a stigh agus dha'n toirt fein suas Dhà ann an cùmhnanta pòsaidh; is e so aoibhneas, fois, agus sàsachadh anama: uime sin tha e air a ràdh, "De shaothair anama chì e, agus bidh e toilichte." Isaiah liii, 11. Is doilgheas mòr agus trioblaid do Chrìosd, a nì a tha leoin a dhearbhadh anam, air Dhà peacaich bhochd a thàladh, agus ann an deagh àm a bhi nochdadh a ghràidh dhoibh, gu'm bheil iad a dh'aindeoin so uile a cumail bh'uaitha, agus nach dùinn iad a stigh Ris ann an cùmhnanta pòsaidh; uime sin thà E gearain mar a tha E deanamh; "Gidheadh, cha'n àill leibh teachd a m'ionnsuidhsa, chùim gu'm faigheadh sibh beatha." Eoin v. 40. "O Ierusalem, O Ierusalem, a mharbhas na fàidhean" Mata xxiii, 37. "Tha E labhairt ann an rathad gearaineach, agus mar neach a tha air a chràdh 'n a chridhe a thaobh an dìmeas air; seadh, 's e so a' nì a thug air a bhi gul mar a rinn E os ceann Ierusalem" Lucas xix, 41, 42. Feuch Aoibhneas na talmhuinn uile a gul! Agus c'ar son? Do-bhrìgh an diùltadh Air agus air a ghràdh, agus an sgrios muladach a bha a tighinn orra air son 'n an diùltaidhean so. Gu'n teagamh is e so a tha cur eas-urram air ainm, agus a tha dòrtadh tarcuis air a ghràs, agus a tha ball-dìreach an aghaidh innleachd uile ann a bhi gabhail os laimh a bhì 'n a Eadar-mheadhonair, agus mar sin nach urrain ach a bhi brònach Dhà. Mar sin air an laimh eile, 'n uair a thig anamaibh gu saor a stigh, agus a bheir siad iad fein ann an daimh pòsaidh

Ris, tha so a toirt aoibhneas agus subhachas dha chridhe. O cia mar a bu chòr dha so anamaibh a tharruig dha ionnsuidh! A pheacaich, c'ar son nach biodh an latha 'n diugh 'n a latha aoibhneis cridhe Chrìosd le bhi 'n a latha pòsaidh eadar Esan agus thusa? Chunnaic E iomadh latha bròin cridhe, agus trioblaid cridhe, thairis air do sheasamh a mach 'n a aghaidh, agus a bhi diùltadh tairgseachan a ghràidh: O leigibh Dhà a nis aon latha de dh'aoibhneas cridhe, agus subhachas cridhe, le bhi dùnadh a stigh Ris ann an cùmhnant pòsaidh.

(R'a leantuinn)

NOTES AND COMMENTS

Communists and Glasgow Schools

Some time ago it was reported that the Education Department of Glasgow Corporation were investigating the distribution of leaflets in schools in the east end of the city. These leaflets bore the imprint of the Young Communist League and called for the abolition of religious instruction, the setting up of political courses in schools and the placing of pupils on a level with teachers in a joint committee to control them. It is to be hoped that the Education Department will expose and prevent such evil action on the part of those who are avowed enemies of God and human liberty. It is amazing that in this country where such freedom for the individual still obtains, that the evil and brutal oppression of Communism as practised in Eastern Europe, has not 'opened the eyes' of Communists in Britain. Of course this is an ideology embraced by those who disown belief in God and scorn the religion of the Bible. God alone can open the eyes of the blind. Of course heresy in the Church can lead to atheism and atheism to Communism. Much evil has its rise in a backsliding Church.

Unsatisfactory Statements on Penal Reform

During a debate in the House of Lords on Penal Reform, Lord Foot (Lib.) declared that he agreed that a society which is prepared to sentence people to 30 years imprisonment, that a sentence of that kind is an absolute horror, that it is a moral outrage and a declaration of society's intellectual bankruptcy in the field of penology. What about the horror of brutal murders and life-long injury inflicted on innocent victims of callous criminals? Another speaker in the debate, Lord Soper (Lab.), a Methodist minister, said "I am heartily opposed to capital punishment, but I am even more opposed to very long-term prison sentences." He said that such sentences were an admission of failure. We would ask — failure in what respect? Dr Soper failed in the debate, as far as reported, to supply procedure and punishment consistent with his own unbiblical thinking. It is disappointing to discover that in all

the political parties in both Houses of Parliament, there are strong elements against capital punishment. Our land, and Scotland very much included, is being defiled increasingly by the sin of murder. A return to capital punishment is called for.

United Free Church and Church Union

The United Free Church of Scotland, formed in 1900, and a large section of which joined The Church of Scotland in 1929, has been considering the question of union with other churches in Scotland. At the recent General Assembly of the said Church, approval was given in a general way to some principles for a basis of union among Scottish Churches. But one truly wise decision was taken during the discussion on union. They rejected the view put forward in the document that differences in teaching were an insufficient reason for remaining separate. Whatever the doctrinal standards of the U.F. Church may be today, the principle that differences in teaching do constitute reasons for Churches keeping separate, is a reasonable principle. "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" But the most of Churches today ignore the true basis for true, spiritual union as between Churches, even the inspired Word of God and the doctrine thereof. The cause of ecclesiastical divisions in Scotland in the past and present, was and is the departure of men from belief in and adherence to the doctrines of Holy Scripture.

Welcome Views on Religious Education

A report issued in July, by The Scottish Schoolmasters' Association, on religious education, made most agreeable reading to us. The report stated that the teaching of religious education should not be separated from moral education in Scottish schools. The report proceeds:— Biblical and Christian teaching of a high standard will inculcate principles of morality more effectively than could be done by any other method. The report also rightly observes, that religious education has been seriously under-valued by education authorities and administrators, and parents and teachers. The effects of this could be traced in the declining moral standards of many young people. We trust this Teachers' Association will keep in the forefront of their activities what they have expressed so well in this report. As we know, there is a steady propaganda by Humanists in Scotland and England to eliminate religious education in the Christian faith, from our schools.

CHURCH NOTES

Grafton Communion

We are asked to state that the Communion will be held (D.V.) in Grafton, Australia, on 5th Sabbath of August.

Old Bracadale Church — An Appeal

At Portree and within the Free Presbyterian Church Manse

there on 7th March, 1969, the Deacon's Court of Bracadale Free Presbyterian Congregation met and was constituted.

Inter alia: It was agreed to ask the Presbytery to put an appeal in the Church Magazine for financial help in connection with the proposed plan to repair the old Bracadale Church, and at the same time to intimate that the Bracadale Manse Building Fund is now closed, and to thank cordially all who gave financial help hitherto. Closed with prayer.

The Western Presbytery heartily endorse this appeal.

Alfred MacDonald, **Moderator.**

John Colquhoun, **Clerk.**

Parish of Bracadale. — This Parish has figured in the ecclesiastical history of the Church of Scotland in the Highlands in the past, and was originally within the bounds of the Synod of Argyll, which stretched as far as the Island of Lewis. The first record we have of this part of Skye shows it to have been divided into two parishes, that is, Minginish and Bracadale. The church of the Parish of Minginish was at Eynort, and its ruins are still to be seen. It was here on 5th July, 1642, that the National Covenant was signed for the first time in Skye, and on 7th July of the same year it was signed in Bracadale. It was recommended by the Synod in 1651 that the two parishes be united and a church built at Loch Harport, but the union does not seem to have taken place at that time for they are mentioned separately in 1656, and both are stated to be vacant at that time. Episcopacy, however, continued to be the religion of the people in general till after the Revolution, and, according to Scott's **Fasti**, the Rev. John Bethune minister of Bracadale, was the first minister in the Island who dispensed the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, from the time of the Reformation, according to the Presbyterian form. The Church for which the appeal is made was built in 1831, and was formerly the parish church. It was built during the ministry of the Rev. Roderick MacLeod, latterly of Snizort, Skye, and is on the site of a former Church which might possibly take us back to pre-Reformation times. Mr MacLeod's ministry in Bracadale extended from 1823 to 1838, and thus he must have ministered in the previous church whatever its condition must have been until the present church was erected. It was here that he spent the most troublesome part of his ministry, but the Lord acknowledged his labours in spite of all that his co-presbyters did against him, so that his name is still revered among the descendants of those who sat under his ministry, while those who persecuted him are forgotten, and even their names are not remembered except in association with foolish episodes which bring out the mediocrity of their talents and the immorality of their lives. — **J. Colquhoun.**

Jewish and Foreign Mission Collection

The Synod appointed this Collection to be taken in August, by book where convenient. Again we have to thank our loyal people for so generously contributing to this Fund, and their generosity in the past encourages us to approach them again, in order to help to meet with our ever-increasing expenses. We have had the gospel in Scotland for hundreds of years and many have been turned from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God. This ought to make us anxious to send it to those who are less privileged than we are. Our efforts in the past have been acknowledged by the Lord in turning many of the natives in Rhodesia from heathendom, and the fruits of the gospel are seen among them. Whatever political changes have taken place in that land, the door has not yet been shut on us, and as long as the Lord keeps the door open we ought to continue our efforts. We have now a fully qualified medical man in charge of the Mbuma Hospital, and from reports received the appointment is favourably viewed by the Government, which encourages the hope that a grant may be given, but, so far, we do not get a grant, and, therefore, expenses have to be met from other sources. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." Eccles. ix, 10.

John Colquhoun, **Convener.**

Winnipeg Communion

This year the Communion will be held on Sabbath, the 7th September (D.V.), when it is expected that the usual services from Thursday, 4th September, will be conducted by the Rev. Dr R. Macdonald along with the Rev. Alexander Murray. Visitors would be made welcome. Rev. A. Murray may be contacted at Kitchen, 758 Fleet Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Opening of New Beaulieu Church

Since some years now the old Church building at Beaulieu had been considered by the congregation as inadequate and on occasions unsuitable. A new, larger and excellent Church building was recently completed which is a credit to those concerned in its erection.

On the evening of 2nd July, 1969, this Church was opened, and a service was conducted by Rev. Robert R. Sinclair, Wick. The congregation present filled the Church and additional seating had to be brought in to accommodate all who attended. Friends came from many places such as Fort William, Wester Ross and Caithness and Inverness and district.

Mr Sinclair preached from "But will God indeed dwell with men on the earth?" (2nd Chronicles, ch. vi, verse 18). Mr Sinclair dealt with some Scriptural statements relative to God's greatness and character. Then the question was proposed, Would God dwell with fallen, sinful men who merited His displeasure; when

the heaven of heavens could not contain His essential presence? The answer given to the question was "Yes". And the speaker gave in some detail an exposition of the answer, primarily from New Testament sources. God had chosen unto Salvation many of the fallen children of men. His own Son and equal was "made flesh and dwelt among us". By means of His Word, Gospel and the Sacraments and also His providential government, God did dwell with men on the earth. But it was in and with Spirit taught believers upon His name revealed in Christ, that God did dwell, and also while they engaged in worship in fellowship with one another and in their times of need and trouble, etc. God has in view, in this regard, preparing men to dwell with Him in the everlasting Kingdom, the speaker said.

Sincere thanks are extended to Mr John MacKenzie, Treasurer, and also ladies of the congregation for their activities in preparing the Church for the opening service. Rev. D. A. Macfarlane, M.A., Minister of the joint Dingwall-Beaully Congregation, at the end of the service, spoke most appropriately for such an occasion and intimated that the collection taken that evening was £475; but this sum rose to £500, before the congregation dispersed. Mr Macfarlane wishes in this notice to convey his and the congregation's thanks, to Mr Sinclair, for coming to open this Church. And may this place for public worship, be made a Bethel spiritually to many a soul.

Bookroom

Bound volumes of the Free Presbyterian Magazine and Young People's Magazine up to 1967, are now available for sale from the Bookroom, price 8/6 and 5/- respectively. Readers will appreciate that stocks of the earlier issues are limited. — Librarian.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF DONATIONS

The General Treasurer, Mr Wm. D. Fraser, 20 Daleview Avenue, Kelvindale, Glasgow, W.2., acknowledges the following donations with sincere thanks:

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On behalf of the Trinitarian Bible Society — "In memory of a beloved sister", Lochgilphead, £1.

The Publications Treasurer, Mr R. W. M. Mackenzie, C.A., 10 Beaufort Road, Inverness, acknowledges with sincere thanks the following donations:

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Mr Wm. Mackenzie, 7 Crown Drive, Inverness, Treasurer of **Aberdeen Church Building Fund**, acknowledges with thanks:— Alex. Forgie, Redding, £35 and £45; A Friend, Glasgow, £5, Friend, £2, Friend, £3 (last 3 per W. McK., junior); Alex. MacKay, Benview, Achmore, £3; London Friends, £5; Mr A. and Miss M. McK., Brackloch, £2; Mrs McD., Shiel-daig, £2; Anon., £100; C.A. and I.T., £1; Two Friends, Inverness, £2; Mr and Mrs D. McLeod, Loggie, £5; Hugh Lobban, £3; Interested, £10; Friend, Inverness, £1 (per Rev. A.F.M.); A. J. Davidson, £2, Mrs MacKay, Farr, £1 (last 2 per Rev. D. A. McLean).

The Treasurers of the following Congregations acknowledge with sincere thanks:

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Glasgow — T. McD., Eston, Sask., £50 (St. Jude's Congregation), £34 (Sustentation Fund), £30 (Foreign Mission) (all per Rev. D. McL.). St. Jude's Buses: K.M., Cardonald, £1.10/-; Anon., Glasgow, £1.10/-; "Two Friends", Glasgow, £5; "Two Friends", Glasgow (second donation), £5. Congregational Purposes: A.W., Glasgow, £2; Mrs Robertson, Leven, £1.10/-; I. McA., Glenaruel, £2; Anon., £2. Foreign Mission: Anon., £5. Repairs to Church Tower: Anon., Glasgow, 10/-; Anon., Glasgow, 10/-; Mrs R., Glasgow, £1; Anon., Glasgow, 10/-; Mrs W., Glasgow, £1; Anon., Glasgow, 10/-; Mrs McG., Thornliebank, £2. For Church Buses: Anon., Glasgow, 5/-; Anon., Glasgow, £1.10/-; Mrs McD., Glasgow, £1; Mrs McD., Glasgow, £1; Mr K.M., Glasgow, £1.5/-. College and Library Fund: Raasay Friend, £1.1.6. Trinitarian Bible Society: Anon., Glasgow, 5/-. General Building Fund: Anon., Glasgow, £1; Anon., Glasgow, 10/-. Sustentation Fund: Mrs McG., Thornliebank, £3; "Very Interested", Skye, £5 (per Rev. D. McL.); Mr M., Paisley, £1; W. McL., Inchinnan, £4; Mrs McL., Glasgow, £5.