

The
Free Presbyterian Magazine
and Monthly Record

Vol. 77

May 1972

No. 5

Prayer

The Apostle Paul at the beginning of his first epistle to the Thessalonians told them that he made mention of them in his prayers and at the close of the epistle gave them this exhortation: "Brethren, pray for us." In this way he was teaching them the importance of prayer-fellowship among the brethren. It is at the Throne of grace that the true people of God meet. In the very same place where the Lord Himself meets with them, there they meet with one another. If, then, prayer was so vital to the life of the church in the Apostle's day, is it not equally so in ours?

Today there is much outward stir in religion, both within and outside of evangelical circles. Some of this activity may be proper and useful while much of it is very wide of the mark. It is right that the Church should be very concerned for those who do not have the Gospel and do all in its power to convey to them the message of salvation without which sinners cannot be saved. Much of the present-day activity of the visible Church, however, is taken up with social issues to the neglect of the real task of spreading the knowledge of the glory of God among men. But even where the proper task of the Church is adhered to, how much of the effort expended is wasted in fruitless endeavour, and all because insufficient emphasis is laid on the need for importunate and prevailing prayer.

"I will yet be enquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them" is still as true as when it was first uttered. We may wonder why there are so few awakened to a knowledge of the truth even where the gospel of God's grace is proclaimed in its fullness. Why is it that there is so little evidence of growth in grace amongst those who are already in the kingdom of Christ? The answer is the same

in both cases—the lack of secret importunate and prevailing prayer.

Why is it that spiritual life is at such a low ebb in days when Christians have more outward helps in religion than in other days? Why is it that fellowship among true believers instead of increasing as the day darkens is diminishing? Why is it that Christians grow more worldly-minded, less spiritually-minded, than in days past? The answer again must be—the lack of importunate and prevailing prayer.

At the door of the church of God today must be laid this charge—its neglect of the Throne of Grace. The truth is that secret prayer is not indulged in today as it was by the Fathers in former days. This is a fault which has the most serious consequences, not only with regard to the life of the Church as a whole, but also with regard to the life of the individual believer. What is the call to the Church then in these circumstances. It is the same as that given to the Church at Ephesus—"Remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent."

What need there is in our day for the true people of God to betake themselves anew to the Throne of grace earnestly and perseveringly. When the people of God are found frequenting the Throne of grace as diligently and as importunately as believers did in a past generation, the fruits of that prayer will be seen in the renewed vigour and prosperity which will be imparted by it to the church of God. The result will no doubt be the ingathering of many souls into the kingdom of Christ. May we, then be stirred up by divine grace to call upon the Lord, in order that we may obtain the blessing which we so much need.

Synod Sermon

by Rev. Robert R. Sinclair

(Continued from page 109.)

Text: 1st Corinthians, Chapter 15, Verse 58.

The question now arises as to Paul's maintaining by virtue of Christ's resurrection, that all in Christ who are asleep in the dust of the earth, shall at His coming be made partakers with Him of a glorious resurrection, and of a glorious body. This chapter deals

with this wonderful, mysterious, matter—the nature of the resurrection body of believers. I'm not going into that, except so far as to say that it is here in the Bible, in the doctrine and the teaching of the Saviour, and in the Apostolic doctrine. Bound up with the resurrection of the Lord of Glory, there is the future resurrection of believers and that to possess a glorious body, a spiritual body. The souls and bodies of believers, at the coming of Christ, are to be united one to another, and they who shall be alive at His coming shall be changed. The Apostle maintains all this in the chapter. Part of a verse in connection with Christ's resurrection states, Christ has "become the first fruits of them that slept". That's the second part of the verse. The Apostle here links up the resurrection of the Lord and the resurrection of His people. He goes back to what was true in Israel in regard to the harvest, and what was practised in Israel at the harvest. When the harvest was ripe, they were required to take the first ripe sheaf and to wave it before the Lord. That sheaf was the evidence and the token of the fact that there was a whole harvest to be gathered in. That is how I understand the reference here. Christ was the first fruits, and as Paul says later on, "afterward they that are Christ's at His coming". That's it, friends. There is no separation between Christ and his people; there is no separation in life, and no separation in the matter of resurrection. If you read the sixth chapter of John there you have the Saviour saying, "Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day". Now you'll get that I think four times in that one chapter. Christ maintains that they who are His and who believe in Him, that He is not only concerned with their souls, He's concerned with their whole personalities and persons, and with their bodies as well. "I will raise him up at the last day." By virtue of Christ's rising, all those who are in Christ shall be blessed with a glorious body to enter in finally into "the Holiest of all", and to be capable not only as to their souls fully sanctified, but also as to their bodies, of standing there in the glory of the everlasting Kingdom and that before the "throne of God and of the Lamb". That's what he maintains here. He says in the chapter, "Behold I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible". That is, the dead asleep in the dust of the earth, Christ's people.

He says, "We shall be changed". That is a reference, as far as I understand it, to those who shall be alive at His coming. They shall be changed "in the twinkling of an eye".

Then there are three references by the Apostle to victory. One reference to victory is a reference to Old Testament Scripture, and that reference is in these words, "Death is swallowed up in victory". I'm quite conscious of the profundity of that statement, very personally conscious of it, and it is better for some of us to take a simple view of profound statements. If we have, as we profess in this Synod to have the faith of the Gospel, then we'll know enough about this wonderful truth without going beyond our depth. "Death is swallowed up in victory" as the Scripture says. Christ says that in the face of all the Church, at the last trumpet, death will be vanquished as far as they are concerned. It's vanquished as far as they are concerned. It's vanquished already in the Person of Christ, and it shall be "swallowed up" and made an end of by the victory that the Church of God will have in their personal and individual resurrection at the last day.

The second reference to victory is by way of challenging questions. "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" These questions are a reference to the ultimate that the Apostle was seeing, according to the revelation he got from the Lord in truth and in faith. This is a challenging question. "O grave where is thy victory?" Where is the victory that Satan thought he had over the whole of mankind? The consequences of sin were that "by man came death". But where is that victory today regarding Christians? That victory has been taken from death, and the sting has been taken out of death by virtue of the resurrection of Christ, and it shall be taken out of death at the resurrection of the Church at the last day.

The third reference to victory is this: "Thanks be to God, Who giveth us the victory through out Lord Jesus Christ." That is it, friends. There will be praises and thanksgivings resounding in Heaven, and that before the "throne of God and of the Lamb" by a multitude that no man can number out of every nation and kindred and tongue and people. And surely this will be in it, not only thanksgiving to the Trinity for covenant love and for redemption, but also thnaksgiving for the victory over death by the Son of God on behalf of His people, and thanks for the victory that they themselves experienced on the resurrection morning, which fitted

them and prepared them for the glory of Heaven. Victory! victory! victory!

In all this, you have consolation for the Church of God of whom we read that they are "begotten again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven." That is *where* this inheritance of everlasting glory is. It is in Heaven reserved there, and all this which the Apostle maintains against damnable heresy, is the basis of the encouragement to the people of God, who have been given a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Their hope, according to all this, will be satisfied, and will be realised at the last, and throughout an endless world.

At the time at my disposal, I would like now to come to what stems from the maintaining of a damnable heresy such as this, and maintaining of the truth regarding the resurrection of Christ and His people. There are two things in the wide application. The Church of Christ is confronted today with the positive rejection of many of the fundamental truths and realities and doctrines of the faith. I hinted already how the resurrection, the denial of it, impinges on the belief in the infallibility and inspiration of the Scripture. You can go through every doctrine and every truth, starting at the resurrection, and going backwards and forwards and you'll not find a doctrine of the faith, but is affected and undermined by this damnable heresy. The Church is confronted with this today. The Confession of Faith is to be overthrown, and some kind of substitute given in its place of some outline of the 'substance' of the faith. On the other hand, there is laid upon the Church today, the duty and the obligation of maintaining, not only the physical aspect of the glorious resurrection of the Divine and holy Saviour, but all the other doctrines of the faith, which are inseparably bound up with that. That is upon the shoulders of the Church.

Now, I come for a little while, secondly, to the three-fold exhortation. "Therefore," after all this, because of all this, "therefore," be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." "Steadfast"—stead, a place; fast, firm. That's what the dictionary states. Where is the Church today? Where is the place of the Church? In the area of Divine Truth. In the area of the Divine Word of God. The Church's place is there, and the Church is to be

firm in that place and in that area, and to be steadfast in faith upon Christ in His Holy Word. Faith upon Christ is that which the Church needs, and faith in His Word, in which, and through which, the glories of the Divine Saviour are revealed to us. Do you believe so much of the Bible? Some may answer, "Yes". The thing is my friend, that there can be no such thing as a belief in part of the Bible, as it reveals Christ to us. The Bible is a Divinely given, inspired, means whereby the Church comes to have faith in a Person. Never forget that as far as the Gospel is concerned, belief in the Truth is one thing. Belief in the Person of Christ, in His actual death, in His actual resurrection, is of the very essence of faith, and is absolutely essential and vital to salvation. It is required that the Church of God be steadfast in the area of Divine Truth, and to resolutely adhere to Divine Truth as the very life of the Church's existence.

Now, "Immoveable". That's the next thing. You have a good example in the Apostle Paul here. Well could he afford to give this exhortation not only to be steadfast, but to be immoveable. This is the matter that is raised again and again in the Apostolic writings and in the Church. "Be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel." The Church today is to be immoveable as far as all the erroneous doctrinal influences of today are concerned. However widely held error, and damnable heresy are, the Church is told here to be unmoved. That's not what can be termed an exhortation without necessity. There are none of these things without reason, and when the Spirit of God by the Apostle is commanding you and me and our Church to be unmoved as we face all the winds of erroneous doctrine that are propagated and held widely and strongly, the Bible means what it says. You and I are exhorted to be immoveable. We are not to be moved. We are not at all to be compromising. We are to guard against being doubters. We are to guard against going back in regard to any of the fundamental doctrines of the Word of God. As far as we are concerned tonight with this central doctrine of the resurrection of Christ and of His people, we are to be immoveable, friends, whatever the world and the professing church may think of us. We are to be immoveable as a remnant in the midst of a large majority who are drifting down the broad way of error to everlasting destruction, unless a day of power and mercy will come to them. We are to be immoveable as to all that the Word of God maintains in regard to the physical

resurrection of the Holy and Blessed Saviour and the resurrection of His people.

Now I come to the third part of the exhortation. The Apostle exhorts the "beloved brethren" to be "always abounding in the work of the Lord". Now Christ has risen, and has gone to Heaven. His people are going to be raised, and those who have that hope are to be "always abounding in the work of the Lord." What work? Well, briefly, first of all, as far as the Church is concerned, preaching the Gospel. What Gospel? That Christ died and rose again. That is at the centre of the Gospel. That's the work of the Lord—to declare to a lost world that there is a living Saviour set forth in the Word of the Truth of the Gospel, Who says, "Because I live, ye shall live also". Then there are practical activities. The work of the Lord involves practical activities in every avenue of the Church's Scriptural activities—the preservation of the Church, and the extension of the Church and Christ's kingdom in this world. These activities are varied and many. There is to be practical devotion to the worship of God and practical application to the government of the Church according to the Word of Truth. There is to be practical administration of discipline in the Church of God, which is to be Scriptural discipline, preserving the Church from impurity, and cleansing it from what might be impure. There is to be a practical undertaking of works of faith and labours of love. There is to be practical provision for the training of the ministry, and a cheerful regard to Christian giving for the support of the Church and the Cause of Christ. You see there are many and varied matters that devolve upon the Church with regard to practical devotion to the Lord. "Always abounding in the work of the Lord." Prayer! Labouring in prayer is the work of the Lord, and from the Lord in relation to the Lord. Praying for what? Praying for the Holy Spirit to come to you and me, and to come to every family among us, and to come to every congregation among us, and to come to us as a Church at home and abroad. That is how you and I and ministers and elders and office-bearers and those that fear the Lord among us should be constantly engaged. That is "abounding in the work of the Lord". We're not trying to be pharisaical or legal or anything else of that kind, but to be spiritually truthful and honest and practical. Every day that we open our eyes we ought to be praying in the name of the Divine Redeemer that the Holy Spirit would be poured down upon us from on high, on our own souls

and on those around us, on our congregations and on our Church at large. The Lord says, "When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." I remember once at Stoer saying, if we're not getting the open reward, the secret praying is not there. If we be in secret, then the Lord's Word will be fulfilled, and the reward will come. Now, what more? Personal witness. "Always abounding in the work of the Lord." How do you witness for the Divine and risen Saviour? Not by a superficial godliness, but in a meek, quiet, firm, strong, humble, spirit and frame of mind, taking Christ with you wherever you go. Let it be known by the world that each one of us who professes the Name of the Lord, whether ministers or office-bearers or members, are Christ's. Let it be known by all sections of the world that we are on Christ's side, and that we are for Christ's Word and Christ's Gospel, and all that is connected with the glory of the Divine Redeemer, including the fact that He rose again from the dead. Our Saviour is alive, and "alive for evermore", and He has "the keys of hell and of death". "Always abounding in the work of the Lord." Let us be willing to work for the Lord. Let us seek to be willing, to have a willing heart and a willing mind to work for the Lord. Let us be seeking the Divine strength and receiving it, abounding in strength for the Lord, and not for another. "Always." 'Oh well, you know, things are not very encouraging,' some will say. 'They're not very encouraging in my area of the Church of Christ.' There was a time when the Lord Himself was preaching the wonderful truths about the sufferings and death that were to be His, and there were professed disciples there, and they murmured and then went back to walk no more with Him. There were times when the Lord experienced things of a discouraging nature in His sojourn through this world. "Always abounding in the work of the Lord." Certainly in the day of prosperity spiritually in the Gospel, and also when you meet days of adversity. Seek to abound in the work of the Lord, come what may. "A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation: I the Lord will hasten it in His time." That is a precious Scripture. If you are on the Lord's side, and if you have the enemies of the Truth at the door, if you've got love to Jesus and love to the glories of Jesus, you're going to follow in the footsteps of the Apostle, and maintain the Truth in the good day and in the

dark day, in the sunshine and in the darkness. "Always abounding in the work of the Lord."

Now here is the encouragement briefly. "Forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." First of all, the purposes of the Lord are being fulfilled through the instrumentality of the Church, and I mean our Church. There are other churches, and they are used as far as the Lord's purposes are concerned in the world too. But the fact is that the purposes of the Lord are being fulfilled. "Forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." Because of that, what does the Lord say about one of the primary matters that the Church handles, the Word of God in the Gospel? "My word shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." "Forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." There are people who are being built up in their most holy faith in our midst by the doctrines of the Gospel. There are people who from their experience can testify that they have been nourished in the faith of the Gospel in our midst as a Church. There have been conversions. There have been sinners brought to Jesus. There are sinners being brought to Jesus in the midst of the Free Presbyterian Church by the grace of Heaven and by the power of the Divine Spirit. Do you know that? It is an encouragement that we know that. Our labour is not "in vain in the Lord." We know that as we stand in this pulpit, that there are souls being brought to Jesus in our congregations. You have this encouragement as a Church, as ministers, as elders, as those who fear the Lord and seek that the Lord's work would be going on. Your labour is not in vain, not empty, not without fruit, not without glory to Christ, and that is all of the Lord. They who labour for the Lord are in the Lord. They are under His Divine favour and blessing. The work and the labour of the Church is not empty and fruitless as the Lord is in it all. However limited, the evidences are that the labour of the Church "is not in vain in the Lord": they are there. That is the encouragement, from and in a risen Lord at the right hand of God in Heaven.

Labouring for a Saviour who has not risen! Oh friend, no, no. That's not the Church we belong to at all. We're exposing damnable heresy and maintaining the truth of the glory of Christ. "Therefore," on this account, "be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know

that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." May the Lord bless His Word.

The Diary of Dugald Buchanan

Period VI—From August 1745 to December 1750

(Continued from page 113)

At some seasons I found great desires after the Lord upon remembering my former communion with Him, and therefore said, "I will return to my first husband, for it was better with me then than now." And although my soul was almost sunk in final despair I could not be kept from venting my grief to the Lord in the following strain, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? How long shall I find murmuring, rebellions, revenge, covetousness, slothfulness, and unbelief within my soul? Oh! how I love the image of Jesus and fain would I have it engraven on my heart and walk, for there is no soundness in my flesh, neither is there rest in my bones because of my sin. O Lord, all my desire is before Thee knocking at the door of my iron heart by Thy word and providences, but I find my heart bolted against Thee by Satan and unbelief. O Lord! if I could, I would open unto Thee. But Oh! I am bound hand and foot as in fetters and chains of brass. Oh! now I am like to break my heart when Thou art standing without, and the devil and my own lusts within. I see Thy beauty and hear Thy gracious words, and yet cannot shake off my chains to come at Thee. I can as easily overturn the course of nature, remove mountains and raise the dead as open to Thee. O Thou who has the keys of hell and of death, wilt Thou not open to Thyself and stand no longer reasoning with a man in chains? Every knock Thou givest aggravates my grief and longing, and wilt Thou leave me thus? Surely Thou hearest my groaning and seest the moving of my bowels towards Thee, yet out of this bondage I cannot get. But though I have brought all this upon myself, whether shall my covenant with death and hell or Thy covenant of grace be disannulled? Lord, deliver me, and let the gates of brass and bars of iron be broken in sunder by Thee. Thou wouldst not destroy a righteous Lot in Sodom, and wilt Thou destroy or

disregard my secret groans and desires of redemption in the midst of such abundance of wickedness? for it is not merely desires of peace and rest, but desires of purity and holiness which are here. And who begat these desires? Doubtless Thou art Their Father, though Thou acknowledgest them not at present. And wilt Thou stand and see these desires choked by filthy lusts? I'll venture to say, it is Thy grace, for what else can I call these desires? O Lord, shall the cries of lusts prevail more to keep Thee away than the groanings of my soul to bring Thee to my deliverance? Shall not the blood of Christ speak better things than that of Abel? O Lord! hast thou forgotten to be gracious, and wilt Thou be favourable no more? Is Thy mercy clean gone? Is there no help in God for my soul? Hast Thou but one blessing, O my Father! or hast Thou once blessed me, and shall I be for ever cursed? O Lord! Thou hast not ceased to be a reprover unto me, and wilt Thou cease to be gracious? Unto Thee, O Lord, belongs mercy, though I have rebelled against Thee and have not obeyed Thy voice, therefore the curse that is written in the law of Moses, Thy servant, is come upon me, and Thou hast confirmed his words which he spake, "for I am this day a curse and reproach unto Thy ways and people, and my life hangs in doubt before me. Yea, I am wearied of my life since Thou hast departed from me." Yet, O Lord, Thou art just in all that Thou hast brought upon me. O God! hear my prayer and supplication which I present before Thee, not for my righteousness but for Thy great mercy, and cause Thy face to shine upon my soul that is desolate, for the Lord Christ's sake.

There are a few drops from the fountain of my heart, for such thoughts were my meditation all the day and yet the power of sin remained. I could not believe that I had any grace, though I have since been made to see that it was at the bottom of these desires. But I could not go to my knees with these petitions, for if I did I was sure to have Satan roaring upon me again; but when I got my soul vented in private thoughts, either by the way when alone or when about my ordinary affairs, then I escaped the rage of Satan. But the wrath of Almighty God lay hard upon me, the poison whereof drank up my spirits. But Oh! what are two years or millions of ages in this situation to everlasting horror and separation

from God, and that in such a manner as was never conceived or felt by any while in the body. I would rather be a chained slave during life than be a slave one day to such filthy lusts. Oh! may that grace of God be for ever praised and adored which hath made me Christ's freeman.

In June, 1750, I began to search the Scriptures more carefully to see if there was any of the saints ever in the like condition, which might be a ground of hope to my soul, and then I found it written in Hosea, "I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger. I will not return to destroy Ephraim" and God's great grace manifested in not returning to destroy him by executing the fierceness of his anger. So I thought that I would search out the iniquity of Ephraim so far as recorded and compare it with my own case. And I found that he counted the "great things of God's law a strange thing to him," etc. And I said, "if Thou, Lord, shouldst take him by the arms teaching him to go as a child, his first journey will be to Egypt, Assyria, or any way rather than to Thee, his God;" and shall not Thy soul be avenged on such a person or people as Ephraim?

"I will not," says God, "return to destroy Ephraim, for I am God and not man." Therefore Ephraim and the rest of the sons of Jacob are not consumed. "I have smitten him in the way of his covetousness and was wroth, but now I have seen his ways and will heal him and restore comforts."

O! Lord, this is amazing grace beyond the expectation and hope of Ephraim. "Yea, righteous art Thou when I plead with Thee, yet let me talk with Thee of Thy judgments." Wherefore hast Thou threatened such grievous threatenings against Ephraim since Thou art thus resolved to deal graciously with him, saying, I will not execute the fierceness of my wrath. "Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spoke against him I do earnestly remember him still, therefore my bowels are troubled for him," etc.

O! the love, the grace, and bowels of compassion that God manifests in this instance of Ephraim is beyond all thoughts or expression. But although I endeavoured to make a close application of all this to my own case, yet my soul refused to be comforted; God's time to comfort me was not yet come. "Who is he that saith and it cometh to pass, when God commandeth it not?"

A little after this, when reading that passage in Psalms ciii. 13, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him," I began to think upon the pity of a father for his child. I had an only child myself, and therefore thought how much compassion I would show him if he was in distress. However, this consideration afforded me no comfort. Then Absalom's case came into my mind and I saw that David was a man after God's heart, and that what was written aforetime was written for my instruction that, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, I might have hope; so I considered Absalom as a rebellious son of David, full of all wickedness and abominations, which evidenced that he was a child of the devil. Therefore his father was obliged to raise an army to defend himself and conquer his rebellious son. But at the same time it is astonishing to hear these orders, "And the king commanded Joab, and Abishai, and Ittai, saying, deal gently for my sake with the young man, even with Absalom. And all the people heard when the king gave all the captains charge concerning Absalom."

Now I considered myself as full of ingratitude and abominations, who by my wicked practices and cursed inventions has apostatised from the ways of God, and thereby declared myself to be a child of the devil. At the same time I beheld God in His holy justice mustering out awful threatenings against me in battle array, therefore was convinced that I could not stand and consequently began to look for conditions of peace, but could not in any way of thinking get any; and while I looked every moment to be swallowed by His divine fury I saw the Lord Jesus Christ, of whom David was a type, standing up to intercede for me, saying to the justice of God, "Deal gently with the young man for my sake, even with that young man by name, for he is yet alive in the midst of an oak hanging between heaven and hell, between hope and despair, and thrust none of Thy fiery darts through him, for I received the dart of my Father's wrath, the dart of the fiery law, the dart of the rage and fury of hell, and all this for him; and therefore let none touch the young man, but deal gently with him even for my sake."

O! the glorious grace I saw in this case of Absalom, the consideration of which was like to make me faint where I

stood. The sympathy of David was amazing, but O the sympathy of Christ was still greater. The latter exceeds the former as far as the manifestation of the Spirit exceeds the ministration of death written and engraven in stones. O this was not the Lord's sparing a son who served Him, but sparing a rebel, a most wicked and ungrateful son.

This instance begat some glimmerings of hope in my breast, the clouds began to dispel and the day star to arise in my heart. "It was something like light and darkness mixed together" (Zech. xiv. 6). I was now waiting for the Lord, as they who wait for the morning, but had no knowledge of pardon and unbelief being very strong, my patience was almost worn out.

Studies in the Life of the Apostle Paul

By Rev. A. M. Cattanach, M.A.

Second Series

XII

Iconium, Lystra and Derbe.

Our last study closed with the expulsion of Paul and Barrabus from Antioch, and our present one opens with their arrival in the city of Iconium, the next place of missionary activity on this first and historic journey in the Master's Service, in sowing the good seed of the Kingdom beside many waters. The Scriptural basis for our study on this occasion is Acts, Chapter 14, Verses 1—20. The three cities, whose names form the title to this article, were situated in the high upland region of Asia Minor, in a district called Lycaonia; cities of the great inland plateau or plain, as we might describe them. The 'cities of the plain', calls vividly to mind, from Old Testament times, the two wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, visited by Divine judgment for their heinous sins, with fire and brimstone from on high. In New Testament times, these three cities of the plain, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe, were visited, not by Divine judgment, but by Divine mercy, when these two heralds of The Cross appeared in their

midst, to proclaim the glad tidings of salvation. The words of *Psalm 72, verse 6* were fulfilled,

*"Like rain on mown grass He shall drop,
or showers on earth that fall."*

The barren wilderness of Iconium, Lystra and Derbe was visited with showers of refreshing from on high, and it is our present wish, as we may be enabled, to meditate a little on each city and on the events which happened there, during this first visit of Paul and Barrabas.

1. *Iconium : a city divided.*
2. *Lystra : a case of misguided adulation.*
3. *Derbe : a haven after the storm.*

Iconium : a city divided.

This populous city lay some fifty to sixty miles south-east of Antioch, rather different in government and civic administration to Antioch—Iconium was a Greek democratic city, whereas Antioch was a Roman colony. It has been observed, and rightly so, that the difference is vividly brought out in the Divine Record, in connection with the different methods of opposition to the Apostles and to their message, which were used in the respective cities. More of that anon, however. Meanwhile, as we see, from the opening verses of *Chapter 14*, Paul and Barnabus, as was their wont, "*went both together into the synagogue of the Jews*", (*verse 1*), there preached the unsearchable riches of Christ with such unction and power, ("*and so spake*" says the inspired historians; simple words, which we have paraphrased above—how often there lies behind the simple words of Scripture a wealth of hidden wonder and mystery and power!). That much blessing followed and precious fruit was to be seen ("*That a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed*" v. 1.). The mixed congregation was a feature of the time, and over and over again we read of them in the Acts: the subject matter of the Apostle preaching, which formed the basis of our last study, is not repeated here, but it may safely be assumed, both in this and similar accounts, that the Apostles preached in the same strain, from place to place, as that recorded in such detail in *Chapter 13 of Acts*. The historian is concerned hereafter, more with the details of the after-effects of the preaching than the preaching itself, for the purposes of recording to posterity the wondrous deeds done in the name of

the Lord Jesus. We too, on this occasion, are called upon to devote some thought to this aspect of the Apostolic witness in Iconium. Let us think then of these two points:

- a) *The opposition.*
- b) The reaction of the Apostles.

a). *The opposition.*

As was to be expected, the blessing which followed the preached word was not unmixed. The second verse of the chapter introduces us to what is to become the standard procedure, in every place, and yet there are always differences to be observed: the standard procedure may be uniform, broadly speaking—the opposition of the carnal mind to the things of God; the opposition, specifically, of the Jews to the Cross of Christ; and behind it all, the inveterate hatred of the Prince of darkness to the glorious Gospel of God's full and sovereign grace. The specific forms which this procedure actually takes, may differ from time to time and place to place. In Iconium, as in other cities along the great trade routes, and throughout the Empire as a whole, we came across Jews and Greeks (religious proselytes, in the main) and also Gentiles, or native peoples of various districts and regions, with whom the Apostles came into contact. It is necessary to distinguish these three sections of the population in our given centre of civilisation. *Verse 2* speaks of '*unbelieving Jews*' and '*Gentiles*'—while some Jews believed (*verse 1*) there were, as always, others who did not. The word translated '*unbelieving*' is a strong one, used in the sense of vigorous rejection of the doctrine declared, a definite refusal to obey the voice of Jehovah; a **deliberate** turning away from the glorious offer of salvation through the Cross. Unbelief today may take more than one form also; let us search our own hearts and let us try and observe, in others under the preaching of the everlasting Gospel, whether their unbelief is of a negative or positive nature, if we might put it thus. Are there not some, who believe not still, whose attitude of mind is that of the man who cares not whether he believes or not, while others seem to go out of their way to make known their positive rejection of the truth? Both are soul destroying—O to realise it. The Gentiles, upon whom these unbelieving Jews were to use their evil influence, were the native inhabitants of Iconium. They were to become

the tools of the Jews, in **their** evil opposition to the Gospel. The unbelief of the latter was to show itself openly and actively: *'they stirred up the Gentiles and made their minds evil affected against the brethren'*. As at Antioch, so at Iconium, the main target of opposition for the unbelieving Jews, was the human agency, through whom had come to their midst the sweet sound of the 'good news from the far country'—in this case again, Paul and Barnabus. The use of the word '*brethren*'—in verse 2, however, shows us that they wished to attack also the newly converted disciples, both Jews and Greeks. Both the preacher and those to whom his message has been blessed, become the objects of Satan's hatred—is it not so still?

The method of showing that opposition differs, however. At Antioch, as we saw, the Jews had recourse to underhand tactics, whereby to prevail upon the civic authorities to expel the missionaries from the city. At Iconium, however, there was no need to resort to such tactics—if they could prevail upon the mob to take the law into their own hands, then they would have gained their objective. *And so it happened—verse 5*. The events of verse 5 however, are the natural outcome of the tactics of *verse 2; subversive in another way—working immediately upon the minds of the multitude. The terms used are suggestive of evil motives—they 'stirred up' the Gentiles or rather, as in the original order, where the mind is the natural object of both verbs, 'they stirred up and caused the minds of the Gentiles to be evil affected against the brethren'*. When once they had succeeded in prejudicing the minds of the people against the brethren, then all was set for the next stage in their opposition to the Gospel—to leave the people in an assault against the Apostles and their followers. *Verse 5* tells us of this—the word translated '*assault*' means literally '*a rush*' or '*onset*', as of a mob in a riot, about to rush upon their adversary. It is, perhaps, used here rather in the sense of an intended assault, news of which reached the Apostles in time, so that they deemed it wise to flee from the city, and so escape the wrath of the mob. The stoning of which we read here, in intent, was only postponed till a later date and in the next stage of the journey, but the enmity at Iconium is evidence enough of the

wrath of man against the Lord and his Anointed. The term used of the multitude in their intentions against the servants of the Lord—'*to use them despitefully*'— is a standard term in *Greek philosophical* ideas for '*insult*' to those superior in status and especially to the gods. It was regarded among the ancient Greeks as a great sin, punishable by death; if they, without a Divine Revelation, had formed such an estimate of human conduct, in certain relationships between man and his fellow-creature, and man and the superior powers, how much more are we able to see the heinousness of such conduct, in terms of Divine Revelation, and in this context, to evaluate it in relation to Paul and Barrabus, as servants of the Lord Jesus Christ. To this were they called— to bear such insult; such reviling, such assault, for the sake and for the precious name of the Saviour of sinners. How many are the lessons which we may learn, on both sides, from such observations as are recorded here of the activities of the enemies of the Lord, against his faithful servants! Let us realise the sinfulness of prejudicing or embittering, without cause, the minds of any against the servants and people of God; the damage done may be irreparable; the loss to some may be incalculable—how much these poor sinners of the mob of Iconium lost by listening to the unbelieving Jews. Both they who prejudice others and those who are prejudiced by them may suffer. May we also consider seriously the case of those who go beyond this and actually insult or seek to insult the gracious servants of the Lord; their feet are set upon a slippery path indeed. So much for lessons from the attitudes of the enemies of the Apostles— lessons from the reaction of the Apostles to this behaviour will be drawn at the close of the section dealing with that aspect of our subject.

One final point before we turn to this matter itself. We mentioned above that the tactics used in Iconium differed from those employed in Antioch, and the reason lies in this, that Antioch was a Roman colony, but Iconium was a Greek democratic city. The enemies of Paul and Barrabus could not incite a mob in a Roman colony; they could not bring proper charges against the Apostles either, such as could be heard in court. They had to rely on subversive influence among the ruling class in the city, by making use of the honourable and

devout women who worshipped at the synagogue as proselytes. They, in turn, would speak to the rulers, as husbands or fathers and so it came about that latterly they took the initiative in driving the Apostles from their city precincts. In Iconium, however, the matter was entirely different—this was a city ruled in accordance with the original democratic institutions of Athens and other Greek city states of the 5th century B.C. The people held power in assembly; all that was required of the Jews here was to turn them against the Apostles as unwelcome intruders and let the multitude take matters into their own hands. There is, in this account of different tactics, a witness to the accuracy of the inspired historian and a testimony to the authenticity of the book of Acts, as part of the infallible Word of God. At the root of both movements, however, we must never forget, lay this inveterate hatred of the Jews to the Cross of Christ (in general terms, the enmity of the carnal mind to the law of God) and therefore we have one element common to both movements—they stirred up or prejudiced the minds of men against the Apostles in both places: (*ch. 13 v.50 at Antioch—ch.14 v2 at Iconium*): from this point the movements diverge. May we thus see the importance of being rightly affected towards the things of God—*to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace* (Rom. ch. 8 v. 6).

(To be continued)

Concert for Prayer

The Year 1744

Readers are, no doubt, aware that the 1749's brought some of the most remarkable revivals the church has known since Pentecost. In our own homeland there was the famous out-pouring of the Spirit at Cambuslang.* Across the Atlantic, too, the Spirit of God was working so powerfully that Jonathan Edwards was able to publish in 1742 "Some Thoughts Concerning the Present Revival . . ." This book Edwards ended on a challenging note. He proposed that ministers should draw up a covenant on behalf of their congregations, confessing the particular sins to which their

* For a full and interesting account of this revival, readers are recommended to procure for themselves "The Cambuslang Revival", recently published by the Banner of Truth Trust. The last chapter of this book gives edifying details about concerts for prayer, and outlines some of the fruits that they bore.

congregations had been most prone. Congregations should be asked to subscribe to this covenant, and to meet together on days of fasting and prayer in open avowal of its terms. We can be sure that, as Edwards' many friends in Scotland turned over the pages of his latest book, they would have given serious consideration to the proposals he had made.

We are not sure that Edwards' suggestions bore any direct fruit in Scotland, but we do know that a group of Scottish ministers met in 1744 because they were burdened with the belief that "the state of the church and the world called loudly for united extraordinary prayer to God, that He would deliver the nations from their miseries and fill the earth with His glory."

This meeting was not without fruit; the following specific proposals were agreed on:

1. That some time each Saturday evening and Sabbath morning be devoted to prayer for revival.
2. That persons spend the first Tuesday of each quarter year in prayer, whether in whole or in part, in public or in private.
3. That those who joined this "Concert for Prayer" be considered bound to keep its terms for the two years following.

The Year 1746

I suppose that some who entered the agreement in 1744 were troubled by fears that formality might empty the exercise of meaning. This is why 1746 is so important.

In August, 1746, Scottish ministers again met together. (This was two months before the two-year agreement ran out.) Their meeting had two aims:

1. To extend the original concert for prayer into a new agreement which would last for seven years.
2. To encourage more Christians to enter this new concert for prayer.

The lesson from this 1746 agreement is very simple. Whatever fears had been entertained in 1744 had been disappointed by 1746. These ministers had heard the Lord's challenge, "Prove me now" in 1744. They had proved Him, and they had not missed the blessing. Now they wished to prove Him still, that they might have His blessing more and more.

The year 1972

Of course, we are concerned with 1972. It is heart-warming to read of Jesus of Nazareth passing by the Braes of **Cambuslang** in 1741, and to read the testimonies of many who then touched the hem of His garment. But 1741 is no longer "now", and the Lord says, "Prove Me NOW". Again, we may like to push our heads up into the clouds, contemplating the future prospects of Christ's church, turning grieved eyes from her present desolation. But the future will never come as the future; it will come as the present. Neither will it be those who are wrapped up in the future who will receive the blessing; it will be those who hear the still, small voice, "Prove Me NOW".

That is why 1972 is so important for us; it is our NOW. We do not know exactly what the Lord might do in answer to the earnest, united, unceasing prayers of His people. All we know is that it is our duty to engage in such earnest, united, unceasing prayer.

1744, 1746, 1972. Is this the year for another Concert for Extraordinary Prayer?

J.T.

Grace cannot be magnified, unless nature be humbled. Jesus Christ cannot become more precious, unless self becomes more vile. As the believer sinks in his own eyes, Christ rises in his esteem. And this, in my opinion, is growing in grace. Romaine.

Obituary

The Late Mr James Davidson, Helmsdale

On the 3rd September, 1971 James Davidson finished his earthly journey and passed, we believed, to his everlasting rest at the age of 90 years. His memory deserves to be held in the highest esteem.

He was born in Portgower and had the privilege of being brought up in a god-fearing home. The subject of this notice was known as an upright and highly respectable man among

his neighbours before he made a religious profession. Removing to Canada to follow his trade, he would readily admit that during these years he walked "according to the course of this world according to the prince of the power of the air" and was by nature a child of wrath even as others.

Despite attempts on my part, I was not able to gather much of his spiritual experiences. It is true to say that the lives and conversation of the godly he knew in his home and neighbourhood made an abiding impression upon his mind. He could recall many precious anecdotes. His whole life was an evidence that rich mercy and great grace were given in goodly measure so that none who knew him could doubt that it was a work of God. Brotherly love, being a grace wrought by the Holy Spirit in the souls of His people is a clear sign of regeneration. "We knew that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren". This grace was very evident in James Davidson. In fellowship in the Truth and spiritual experience he was sympathetic towards others and always showed an interest in bearing the burdens of others.

During a period of many years this worthy man was an elder in the Halkirk-Helmsdale congregation. He was conscious of his responsibilities as an office-bearer of the Church of Christ and deeply concerned and devoted to the Service of the Lord Jesus Christ. As all who knew him well know he was a beautiful singer of God's praises. In giving an opinion we look upon James Davidson as an experienced believer—one of the faithful of the land who knew the value of vital godliness and although his words were few he was not disposed to accept that which bore the name but lacked the reality. On Fellowship meetings he was most acceptable, always brief but to the point. Also in public prayers the children of God were encouraged when their own soul longings were expressed in his edifying petitions. His public devotions showed that he was a man who spent time in secret prayer and meditation. The Word of God was his delight. As he was not ignorant of Satan's devices nor of the plague and deceitfulness of his own heart there was always a sense of need of mercy and grace to help in the spiritual warfare. He often quoted from Psalm 27 and we take it that he derived much encouragement from that precious field.

"The Lord's My light and saving health
who shall make me dismay'd?

"One thing I of the Lord desir'd,
and will seek to obtain

That all days of my life I may
within God's house remain".

In most of our congregations and Mission Stations in the North James Davidson was well known. He frequently acted as representative elder in Presbytery and Synod for his own congregation and also in a similar capacity on behalf of the Wick congregation, as an assessor elder. He had a conscientious and intelligent attachment to the position of the Free Presbyterian Church. By grace he remained faithful and he endured to the end as a witness who was not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.

During the **closing** illness this loving and friendly Christian was well cared for in his brother's home. His end was peaceful. A few days before he passed away he told me quietly but convincingly, "Christ is all and in all to me". I believe he continued in this frame of mind till the Lord took him to the sanctuary above. It was a pleasure to visit him on his death bed. Two **nursing** sisters belonging to the congregation admired his Christian witness on his death **bed** and considered it a privilege to **attend** to him.

James Davidson lived to a good old age and his strength continued favourable until his last illness. Also his faculties were unimpaired to the last. In his case, we believe, the Scripture was fulfilled.

"Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like a shock of corn cometh in in his season".

The demise of our elder has caused a big blank in our congregation where death has made so many breaches in recent years.

I express my sincere sympathy to the only surviving brother—Mr. A.J. Davidson an elder in our congregation.

"Woe's me that I in Mesech am
a sojourner so long".

D.A. Maclean

*Because I am His own (God be thanked)
He may use me as He pleaseth. Rutherford.*

Letter from Canada

Winnipeg,
6th March 1972.

Dear Friends,

We are now into another month of the year. The end of the year seemed far away when we set out at its beginning, but, moment by moment, it draws nearer. Life passes that way. When we were young we longed for a certain time to come — perhaps for the day for leaving school or the day when we would be twenty-one years of age. Now as we look back these “longed-for” days have faded into the past. Probably we are all now longing for some day in the future, because to us it is to mark something special in our lives. In this sense most of us live in the future — hoping for something — but we dare not forget the past. “God requireth that which is past” (Ecclesiastes Ch.3, v.15). For the future we need grace to live to God; for the past we need grace to praise Him for the way He has led us, and mercy to cover our sins. It is good for us to consider what we have done, or failed to do, in what is now past of life. Too often our lives are spent floating about, away from realities — the reality of God, of man’s soul, of sin, and of Christ the Saviour. In examining our lives we will either by grace be encouraged, as our spirits will witness with the Spirit in the Truth, that we are God’s children, or we will find ourselves condemned because of our waywardness. Here in Winnipeg we have continued to meet around the Word of God on the Lord’s Days and at the weekly prayer meeting. The Lord has graciously attached a promise to the “assembly to worship Him”. But we must all, here and elsewhere, look to see what fruit is there following God’s Word. We may very often hear the Word of God, read or preached, and yet either not come to have the root of the matter in us or not to have the increase. Our duty is to hear the Word — but our duty goes further. It extends to receiving the Truth in love, and by grace to practice it in our daily living. The weather here resembles the spiritual condition of sinners throughout the world. It has continued very cold, and indeed the temperature is considerably lower than the normal for this time of year. In this vast continent, where the ice of winter takes a firm hold,

there have been, over the years, **many** deaths due to the grip of the frost and the cold blast of penetrating winds. Such incidents are sad to recall, but how solemn for anyone to be in the "death-grip" of sin, and to have only coldness of heart toward Jesus. In my heart and in yours, unless the Lord has made it otherwise by His grace, there is a coldness toward God's Word. Although there are so many activities by way of entertainment and sport, connected with the winter season, there appears to be a longing for the "new life" of Spring and the warmth of summer. Alas, it is with very few that this appears to be so in the matters of their soul's salvation. The Bible shows us a "new life" and the way to it; it shows us the **warmth** of covenant love in Jesus: but who thirsts after a 'new life' in Jesus and after fresh experiences of divine love? See how sin has captivated and destroyed us. The Lord says — 'In me is thy help'.

I hope, the Lord willing, to go West to Vancouver in a few days time, I look forward to being with Dr. and Mrs. MacDonald, and to meeting new friends. I hope likewise, later in the month, to return by way of Calgary where I am to hold services, and where I hope to avail myself of the kind invitation given me by the Misses Beaton who live there.

In this large continent, as elsewhere, materialism is a force among men, and the spirit of worldliness in many of the churches cannot combat the enemy of man's soul. The answer is in the Gospel of Jesus Christ—a crucified, risen, and loving Saviour—applied by the Spirit of God to man's sin-smitten soul. I would ask you all to pray for the people of Canada that the Lord would bless them in the things of the Gospel. The Lord can raise a nation in a day.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,

Malcolm MacInnes.

Banner of Truth Trust

At its inception in 1957 the Trust operated from one basement room in St. John's Wood, London, with a small temporary store-room loaned on the premises of Westminster Chapel. Then, in 1958, two floors of the three-storied

Victorian building, 78 Chiltern Street, in the West End of London were leased for the modest sum of £450 per annum. The property, rented to us by St. Paul's Church, Portman Square, had many benefits — not least the location of the Evangelical Library on the top floor — and our only hesitancy arose from a measure of doubt whether there was more floor-space than could be used.

Now, after fifteen years' growth, which includes the sale of more than a million books, the trustees in reviewing the general organization of the work, have decided upon certain changes to aid the future running and expansion of the trust. First, the trans-Atlantic and international aspect of the work is to be strengthened by the incorporation into the Trust of the office and staff of Puritan Publications Inc., Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Since 1967, the board of Puritan Publications has been responsible for the distribution of all Trust books in the U.S.A. and in this work they have rendered invaluable aid. Increasingly the operations of Puritan Publications and the Trust have merged together and the point has been reached at which the efficiency and strength of the whole enterprise would be served by the two centres, on different sides of the Atlantic, coming under one management. The Trust is, therefore, purchasing the assets and taking direct oversight of the Carlisle office. In practice, this means that after April 1, 1972, the Trust will be responsible for its own distribution arrangements in the U.S.A. and our American address will be printed on all publications. With the permission of the former board of Puritan Publications, that name is to be maintained at least for the time being, for the purpose of distributing in the United States some other books and booklets not published by the Trust. At the same time as this change is **being** made in the United States, Walter Chantry, pastor of Grace Baptist Church, Carlisle, and Albert N. Martin, pastor of Trinity Baptist Church, Essex Fells, New Jersey are becoming Associate Editors of the Banner of Truth magazine.

In France there will also be expansion this year as the Trust acquires an office in Marseille for our French literature work, which is directed by the Rev. W. Clark. Distribution of French literature continues to be encouraging and after April Mr. Clark is anticipating help from David Ellis who with his

wife and daughter are moving from Dublin to Marseille in order to serve the cause of the Gospel in France. In Britain, the decision has been reached to move the main base of the Trust work from Chiltern Street, London. Our volume of stock has long exceeded the space available at this office — necessitating storage elsewhere — and the rising costs which have led other firms to move away from the centre of London have also affected us. Instead of paying what is now a much higher rental, funds would be better employed in the purchase of permanent premises elsewhere.

Forseeing this, thought has been given for some years to the siting of the next Trust headquarters. In the outcome it has been decided that next to London there was no more suitable publishing centre in Britain than Edinburgh, and steps are now in hand to find a suitable building in the Northern Capital. The Trust will retain a number of connections with London and, probably, a London address. With communications as fast as they are now between England and Scotland, and between Britain and the U.S.A., there is little significance in the geographical location at which editorial and production work is done and this move will entail no change in Trust policies.

The trustees, who are finally responsible for all Trust decisions, are spread across the world, and so are the many churches, ministers and friends whose fellowship in the past fifteen years has shaped the course of the publishing history in which we have **shares**. Our publications have reflected the international unity of doctrine which existed among the Reformed Churches in the past — authors include 23 American, 31 English and 28 Scots — but it is the renewal of this wider unity and vision in the present which is now contributing so much to the work of the Trust in the realm of literature. . . The presence of a common spiritual hunger and the common prayer of many churches in different lands for a revival of truth and godliness lie behind the present wide circulation of literature belonging to the tradition of historic and biblical Christianity. The Holy Spirit, the author of this blessing, is not concerned for one land or two; rather it is promised that He will testify of Christ to the world: 'His Name shall endure for ever: and men shall be blessed in Him: all nations shall call Him blessed.'

Book Review

PSALMS ONLY Objections Answered, issued recently in Sydney is from the pen of the Rev. M.C. Ramsay, a retired minister of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia.

In the Introduction Mr. Ramsay states that the position taken up in his book *Purity of Worship* issued in 1968, that the Psalms only should be the substance of our praise to God, had been attacked in three publications, written by the Rev. D.C. Shelton of Brisbane, Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones of London and the Rev. R.O. Zorn of Sydney respectively.

Mr. Shelton made the serious allegation that all metrical renderings of the Psalms, which, of course, includes the Scottish version, are inaccurate and unreliable and but loose paraphrases of the original Hebrew. In refuting this allegation Mr. Ramsay states that Rous' edition of the Psalter was thoroughly revised by the Westminster Assembly. It was then submitted to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. "The Assembly resolved to subject this Psalter to its own careful scrutiny. Thus Rous' version had the greater part of three years to pass through the mill of revision before it received the sanction of the General Assembly. The famous Robert Baillie who was a member of that Assembly, left on record that the revision of the Psalter "cost the Assembly some considerable pains". The Commission of Assembly, entrusted with Assembly powers, devoted four days to examining the Psalter. It was not until 1649 that the Assembly authorized its publication. . . . Thus this Psalter got its final shape from devoted godly scholars who were fine Hebraists.

. . . The famous Rev. Dr. Henry Cooke, in his work entitled, *The True Psalmody*, stated the Scottish Psalter to be more accurate." The Rev. Murray McCheyne who possessed liable to the charge of inaccuracy than our generally faultless English Bible. Where it differs from the prose, competent judges pronounce most frequently in its favour as really the accurate." The Rev. Murray McCheyne, who possessed poetical gifts of a high order, declared, "It is truly an admirable translation from the Hebrew, and it is frequently more correct than the prose version." (pp 32,22).

Dr. Lloyd-Jones in his printed sermon on Eph.5:19 stated:

"The great St. Augustine gave a definition of what a hymn should be. He put it like this. He said: 'A hymn must be praise, it must be praise of God, and it must be sung'." "It causes wonder" Mr. Ramsay comments, "that one who has a reputation as a fine Biblical commentator should write something so erroneous. Never at any time did Augustine give a definition of what constitutes a hymn. Why then did Dr. Lloyd-Jones declare that he did? We may charitably conclude that he came across the statement, and reproduced it. So here we have the staunch Psalm-singer who passionately loved the Psalms, wrote a commentary on all the Psalms, who every Sabbath Day expounded one or more of the Psalms, represented as giving a definition of what a hymn should be! Apparently Dr. Lloyd-Jones did not trouble to seek to verify what he wrote. Hymn singers reveal their poverty when they turn to Augustine for help." Mr. Ramsay then goes on to give the facts concerning Augustine (p.49). Further on Mr. Ramsay states that Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones' article affords clear evidence of a resolute attempt to build up a historical background favourable to a somewhat novel explanation of the New Testament references to worship. "Had the author" comments Mr. Ramsay "taken the pains to examine his so-called historical evidences, he would have declined to make any references at all to them. There is in his treatise which purports to be an exposition of Ephesians 5:19, evidence of the author's highly imaginative powers, and his readiness to believe that which he imagines can be supported by scripture and history . . . Some of the author's illustrations and theories are very fanciful and extravagant, so that one is tempted to think that hymn-singers lack anything substantial to support their cause." (p.56).

In connection with the desire for hymns instead of the divinely inspired Psalms, the late Rev. Donald McFarlane, Dingwall, whom the Lord honoured in his day and generation to preserve and transmit by his historic Protest in May 1893 the doctrines and principles of the church of the Reformation in Scotland to generations yet unborn, has in his diary: "There is not a condition in which the Lord's people are but there is something in the Book of Psalms to suit them. That book is intended for the use of the Church of God as a book of praise in both dispensations — Old and New. Those who do not find

their experience in that book have reason to doubt that they are the people of God. The teaching of the Spirit in the soul must agree with His teaching in the Word. He is the author of both. But those who are not taught of the Spirit, uninspired hymns will suit them better. A counterfeit religion will take up with counterfeit praise." (Memoir p.117).

The Psalms Only is an excellent book of 56 pages containing 25 chapters beautifully printed and deserves a world-wide circulation. Cost 59c (plus postage). Available from Mr. J. G. Harris, 5 Roper Lane, N.S.Wales, 2077, Australia.

Notes and Comments

Northern Ireland

During the month of March, the British Government put proposals to the Northern Ireland Government aimed at reducing tension in that land and to pave the way for a settlement. The proposals were so radical that they left the Northern Ireland Government with no alternative but to resign. In these circumstances the British Government suspended the Stormont Parliament for a year and assumed full control of Northern Ireland, appointing a Minister to take charge.

From the very beginning of the troubles in Northern Ireland it was clear that the Protestants in that country could expect little sympathy from the Government at Whitehall. A Government which in composition is singularly lacking in religious sentiment could not be expected to understand a situation which was essentially religious in origin. There is also to be taken into account the fact that the Roman Catholic Church has successfully blinded the minds of political leaders in our day to its evil influence and intrigue in national and world politics.

It is no wonder, then, that the so-called "new initiative" merely conceded some of the demands of the I.R.A while it produced the suspension of the Northern Ireland Government—a major victory for the I.R.A. What the eventual outcome will be remains to be seen but the situation will require vigilance on the part of the Protestants if they are not to be robbed of their liberties. They are deserving of our sympathy and prayers. Let them put no confidence in the fickle political leaders of our day but let them put

their trust in the Lord who is able to help them and deliver them out of the hand of their enemies.

Church Notes

Meeting of Synod

The Synod will meet on Tuesday, 23rd May, 1972, in St. Jude's Church, Glasgow, at 6.30 p.m. (D.V.) when the retiring Moderator, Rev. Alex. Morrison, will preach.

We would ask for the prayers of the people throughout the Church in connection with the forthcoming meeting of Synod, that the ministers and elders may be guided aright in the decisions which they may be called upon to make, and that all may redound to God's glory and to the furtherance of His Cause amongst us at home and abroad.

Publications Treasurer—Change of Address

As from 1st May the address of the Publications Treasurer will be R.W.M. MacKenzie, C.A., Hilton of Cadboll, Fearn, Ross-shire.

Change of Communion Date

It was decided by the Kirk Session of the Portree congregation to change the date of the communion from the 2nd Sabbath of August to the 3rd Sabbath of September (D.V.). This change has been made in the spiritual interests of the congregation.

Acknowledgment of Donations

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

Sustentation Fund: Misses J. & K. MacKinnon, West Tarbert, £3; Anon., In memory of the late Alexander Fraser, Collan, Harris, £19.23; D.F., £20; Mrs Humphrey, Rodney, \$ 48; Anon., £2.

Home Mission Fund: Misses J. & K. MacKinnon, West Tarbert, £1; D.F., £20; Anon., £1.

Jewish and Foreign Mission Fund: R.A. Kidd, Grafton, £21.86; Gisborne Congregation, £100 for Medical Equipment, Mbumba Hospital, per Rev. D. MacL.; Misses J. & K. MacKinnon, West Tarbert, £1; D.F., £20; Mrs Humphrey, Rodney, \$ 48; Anon., 50p.

Dominions/Overseas Fund: Late Mrs MacKenzie, Grosse Ile, £19.53; Miss I. MacDonald, Eston, £9.47.

College and Library Fund: D.F., £20.

Home of Rest Fund: Thurso Congregation, £35; Miss I. MacDonald, Eston, £9.47; D.F., £20; A.F., £5; Friend, £20; (last two per R.W.M.M.); Fort William Congregation, £50; Mrs Graham, Uig, Skye, £2; Kyle Congregation, £56.50; Plockton Congregation, £10.50; Mrs Watt, Inverness, 50p; Anon., Kyle, £2 per Rev. A.F.M.;

Mrs C. MacLeod, Resident, £10; Mr D. Ross, £1; Resident for petrol, £1.
Foreign Mission Fund: R. Ferguson, Leverburgh, £1.50 per R.W.M.M.
On behalf of the Trinitarian Bible Society: Auckland Congregation, £32.

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

Publication Fund: A.F., £5; M.W., Grand Rapids, £2.

Welfare of Youth Fund: A.F., £5; M.W., Grand Rapids, £2; Friend, £10.

Trinitarian Bible Society: A.F., £5.

Free Distribution Magazine Fund: Mrs H. MacL., Drumbeg, 95p; Mrs M. MacL., Raasay, £4; N. MacK., Port of Ness, £1.80; A.M., Northton, 40p; Mr and Mrs J.S., Vancouver, 40p; Miss A. MacL., Ness, 80p; N. MacD., Fort William, 40p; Mrs A.B., Seattle, £1.40; Miss J.A. MacL., Inverness, 40p; A. MacK., Plockton, 40p; Friend, Scotsclader postmark, £5; A Friend, U.S.A., £2.60; D. MacK., Torridon, 40p; K. MacK., Laide, £2; Mrs M.M., Lochbroom 40p; R.M., Finsbay, 40p; Mrs C.J. MacK., £1; J.V.S., Grand Rapids, £4.40; Miss J. MacK., Wick, £2.40; Mrs A. Tegart, Sask., £1; James W. MacK., Laide, £1.20; Mr C. MacF., Edinbane, 40p; Mrs A. MacK., Uig, Skye, 40p; Mr V.F., Grand Rapids, £1.40; J.W. MacK., Leverburgh, £1.40; Mrs A. MacG., Dunblane, £1.40; M. MacL., Aberfeldy, £1.40; E. MacD., Glasgow, £1.72; G. MacL., Stornoway, 72p; M.W., Grand Rapids, £2.40; K. MacK., Edinburgh, £1; Mr and Mrs W.A.F., Auckland, 40p; Miss C.M. Shaw, Australia, £2.70; A. MacL., Stockinish, 40p; Miss M. MacK., London, 40p; R.J. MacA., Tain, £2; Mr K.M., Birmingham, 40p; A.F., £3.12; Margaret Brown, Hamilton, £1; Mrs M., Tarbert, 80p; R. Ferguson, Leverburgh, 50p; A. MacPhee, Kingston, Ontario, 40p; Mrs C.M.B., Inverness, 80p; Mrs C. MacK., Broadford, £2.80.

The Treasurers of the following Congregations acknowledge with sincere thanks:—
Aberdeen: Friend, Uig, Skye, £5; Anon., £5; both for Aberdeen Manse Purchase Fund per Miss M.M.

Applecross: Mrs Christine Macdonald, Cuaig, £3 for Sustentation Fund per R.W.M.M., Inverness.

Breasclete: Mr and Mrs M.M. Gillies, Winnipeg, £5 for Congregational Purposes per R.W.M.M.

Fort William: Friend, £5 per Rev. J.A. McDonald; Friend, £7.10; Friend, £5, all for Church Funds.

Gairloch: The donations in last month's magazine were for the Car Maintenance Fund.

Glasgow: Mrs McG., £10 per Rev. D. McL.; Mr and Mrs A. McIntosh, £10; Mathesons, Cardonald, £3; Anon, £2; Miss M. Jones, £10; Mrs D.W. MacLeod, £2; Mrs R., £5 per Rev. D. McL.; Anon, £5; Mr and Mrs D. MacPhie, £10; all for Bus Fund.

Mrs Walker, 50p and 50p (Church bus); Anon., £2 per A.G. (Communion expenses); Late Mrs Catherine MacKinnon, 36 Blairgowrie Road, Glasgow, S.W.2, £50 per Rev. D. McL.; all for Congregational Fund. N. Shaw, £5 for Sustentation Fund.

Greenock: Friend, Dunoon, £5 per Rev. L. MacLeod; Robert H. Conway, £5; both for Congregational Purposes. Friend, £5 per Rev. L. MacLeod, for Communion Expenses.

Helmsdale: Estate of late Mr James Davidson, £600 for Congregational Funds.

Kyle: Mrs MacAskill, Stornoway, £5; Mrs MacIver, Railway Terrace, Kyle, £5; both for Communion expenses.

Ness: Friend, Glasgow, £5; Mrs MacKay, New York, £41; Friends, Germany, £124 per Rev. J.N.; Miss MacL. (late of Uig), £2 per Miss J.R.; Envelope in plate, £15; all for congregational funds. Envelope in plate, £20 for manse repairs; Mr M. MacD., (late of Achmore), £20 for Communion expenses. Friend Stornoway, £10 in appreciation; Miss MacKay, Dun, Berisay, £10; Friend, Stornoway, £5; Friends, Stornoway, £10 (last two for new vestry).