

The
Free Presbyterian Magazine
and Monthly Record

Vol. 77

June 1972

No. 6

Sermon

by Rev. Donald MacLean, Glasgow.

(This Sermon was preached before the administration of the Sacrament of Baptism on Sabbath, 22nd September, 1968, and was taken down by a hearer.)

"And they brought young children to Him, that He should touch them: and His disciples rebuked those that brought them.

But when Jesus saw it, He was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.

Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.

And He took them up in His arms, put His hands upon them, and blessed them."
(Mark; ch. 10, vv.13-16).

We have this incident recorded in the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and it is clear from these other gospels that the children referred to here had numbered among them, if they were not all, children who were infants. These were children, who, in other words, were small, and young in years. They were brought to the Saviour so that He would bless them. As we see here "His disciples rebuked those that brought them," being under the impression that those infants had neither part or lot at the present time in the mind of Jesus of Nazareth, that His teaching and doctrine was for those who were of more mature years, and that the kingdom He was setting up in the world was a kingdom in which those children did not play much part.

Now, as we see, the Saviour "was much displeased" at His disciples on this occasion. "When Jesus saw it, He was much displeased." This was something that incurred His Divine displeasure as the King of "the kingdom of God," to which He referred on this occasion. He said, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me,

and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God." He also taught, as He had done on another occasion, that those who receive this kingdom must have, in a spiritual sense, the spirit of a little child. They had to be meek and willing to receive the Word of God. He had already taught this when He had put a little child in their midst, and indicated that one must become like this child, believing and trusting the word of his parents; one must come spiritually to believe and trust the Word of God if one is to receive the kingdom of God which consisteth not in "meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Now, it is not that second teaching that we desire to remark on this morning, as enabled, but the first one: that "for of such," that is for children as such, "is the kingdom of God."

The Saviour teaches here plainly and without any dubiety, that children have their own place in the kingdom of God, and that it is the duty of parents to bring their children to Christ in order that He might bless them. "He took them up in His arms, put His hands upon them, and blessed them." Now, first of all, we shall make a few remarks on "the kingdom of God," which is referred to by the Saviour here. This kingdom undoubtedly involves many teachings, and among them the one we desire to deal with at the present time. It refers to the visible church of God in the world. "My kingdom" said Christ, "is not of this world," but although it was "not of this world," it was in the world, and known as the church of God. That is what is brought prominently before us here by the Divine Saviour. "Of such is the kingdom of God." The particular point we wish to deal with is "the kingdom of God" in the visible church in the world.

In the second place, we shall notice the conduct of the parents on this occasion. They brought these infants and children to the Saviour, and when they did so, it was their desire that He would bless them. That was their desire, clearly taught in the other accounts given, and in this account here. "They brought young children to Him, that He should touch them" and bless them.

In the third place, we shall notice the mind of the Saviour with regard to the disciples' zeal in rebuking those who brought their children. Then the Saviour rebuked them, and "He was much displeased." The words "much displeased" stress the displeasure He felt, and the displeasure that was to be seen on His

countenance, and the displeasure that was contained in the words, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God." "And He took them up in His arms, put His hands upon them, and blessed them."

First of all, with regard to "the kingdom of God" which the Saviour refers to here, we notice that the King of this kingdom is, of course, the Person Who was speaking here. The One Who was the anointed, appointed King of this kingdom is the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. He is the One to Whom all authority and power is given in this kingdom as the Mediatorial King of Zion, and as the Divine Head of the church of God. The second thing with regard to the kingdom we mentioned already. The Saviour, the King of this kingdom, declared, "My kingdom is not of this world: if My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight." The kingdom which is set up in this world, under the kingship of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, is "not of the world." The principles that are in it are the principles revealed and made known by the King of this kingdom in His most holy Word. This kingdom is thus a spiritual kingdom. It "is not of this world" in the sense that it deals with spiritual realities. Those who are in this kingdom may enjoy much of this world's goods and much worldly prosperity, "with persecutions," as the Saviour said to Peter: "Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for My sake, and the gospel's but he shall receive an hundredfold now, in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life." The King of this kingdom does provide for the temporal welfare of those who are in this kingdom. He Who is the "Lord of Heaven and earth" easily secures in His providence that His people should have sufficient to carry them through this world. But principally this "kingdom is not of this world" because it deals with spiritual realities. It has to deal with the fact that man has a soul and is journeying to eternity. It has to deal with the fact that man is a sinner in the presence of a Holy God. It has to deal with the great question propounded by Job. "How should man be just with God?" It has to deal not with men preparing for time, but men preparing for death, eternity, and for the judgment which is to come. These great, solemn, tremendous, spiritual realities that "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man," "God hath prepared" in this kingdom

"for them that love Him." They are spiritual realities, they are realities bound up principally with the needs of the soul, and they are realities which can be met only in this kingdom, and met in the King of this kingdom, in Whom the fulness of the kingdom dwells. This brings before us principally this great question, How can a "man be just with God?" How can a man who is a sinner, who is under the sentence of eternal death, who is included in the description given by the Word of God "the soul that sinneth, it shall die," come to have this promise that in "the world to come" he would have life eternal, as Christ spoke to Peter on that occasion? This kingdom reveals the only Way, and the only Way is in the King of this kingdom. "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me." The Scriptures bring before us that this King Who is the King of Zion, Who is "the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God" in the Person of the Son, became man. He became man so that as the King of this kingdom He might put away the sins of all those Whom He loved with an everlasting love, that He might die the death that their sins required, and that He might empty the curse of God that lay upon them of the death which that curse involved. Therefore, you find later on in the history of this King that when a superscription was put over the cross of Calvary, He was called "The King of the Jews." When He was on the cross of Calvary, although He was the King of Zion and although He was then "the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God" in the Person of the Son, was His portion a "crown of thorns." This was the crown that belonged to this King as He engaged to make an end of sin, as He engaged to bring in an everlasting righteousness, as He engaged to open up the way for the mercy of God to flow to the chief of sinners. The crown He wore was a "crown of thorns". The very presence of thorns in the ground is a testimony to man's sin. It is a testimony to what the Scripture says, "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." The bearing of those thorns by the earth indicates that the whole creation is groaning and travailing because of the load of man's sin, and because of the load of guilty sinners on their way to a lost eternity who tread the earth of God. How little men think of that! How seldom, if ever, do they think of it when they go about their worldly business, when they are "dead in trespasses and sins," and when they are bearing the weight of their sins on their way to

death and to eternity. The very creation is groaning and travailing as it bears the load that they are bearing on their way to death and to eternity. Let me ask you. Did you ever feel that weight yourself? Have you ever felt the weight of your own sins? Have you ever felt the weight of your own sins crushing your spirit right down to the earth? The reason why you have never felt it, those of you who do not know what this means, is because you are "dead in trespasses and sins." It is because sin has never been made a solemn reality to you by the power of the Spirit of God. But the creation groans and travails in pain on account of the sins of man, and it brings forth thorns and briers as a testimony to that.

Now when you come to this Person, the King of Zion, on the cross of Calvary, as He drank the cup the Father gave Him to drink in order to make an end of the sins of His people, and in order to obtain for them the "life that shall never end," you find the Saviour groaning and in travail. This was in order that these words would be fulfilled, "He shall see of the travail of His soul." He shall see the fruit of the death that He died on the cross of Calvary in the eternal salvation of a number that no man can number of the human family.

This kingdom is a spiritual one also, because the blessings of this kingdom are conveyed by the unction and power of God the Holy Ghost. As the Saviour said on another occasion, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing." All the blessings of the kingdom, the blessing of pardon, the blessing of peace with God, the blessing of being adopted into the family of God, the blessing of being sanctified in one's soul, the blessing at death of being glorified as to one's soul, the blessing on the morning of the resurrection of being glorified in the body, all this is done by the power and the unction and the grace of the third Person in the Godhead Who has been given to the King of Zion without measure, in order that the purposes of Jehovah might be carried out.

"O but the counsel of the Lord
doth stand for ever sure;
And of His heart he purposes
from age to age endure."

They are sure "from age to age" in that God the Holy Spirit brings the blessings that Christ obtained by His redemptive work to the souls of sinners in this world, and applies them by Divine power, so that they are called effectually "out of darkness into His marvellous

light." They are united to Christ by faith and they are on their "way to Zion with their faces thitherward."

This kingdom is spiritual, and yet it has a visible aspect. The visible aspect, is of course, the visible church of God in the world, where the ordinances set up by the King of Zion are observed, and these are wells in "the valley of Baca." You remember in Psalm 84 we read of those who were journeying to Zion? They were going "through the valley of Baca," and they were digging wells, and waiting for the rain to come down from heaven to fill those wells, so that they could drink water with joy out of those wells, which were to them "the wells of salvation." Now that indicates and teaches this fact, that while "the kingdom of God" is spiritual, it has its visible aspect. Its visible aspect is to be seen in connection with the ordinances of God's house, in connection with the preaching of God's Word, in connection with the singing of God's praises, in connection with praying to God, in connection with the commemoration of the death of Christ, and in the administration of the other sacrament, the Sacrament of Baptism. These are all visible aspects of this spiritual kingdom. They are all visible aspects of the way in which the Holy Spirit works spiritually in the souls of sinners in this world. The preaching of God's Word, the worship of God in public where the preaching of His Word is observed, where calling upon His name is observed, where singing His praises is engaged in all this is the visible aspect of the church of God in the world. The reign and rule according to Christ's Kingship by office-bearers in the church who are raised up by God for this particular purpose, so that the Word of God is preached by those who are called to do so, and the rule in the congregation and in the church administered in regard to spiritual things by ministers and elders, and in regard to temporal things by deacons, are visible aspects of the church of God, and what we call the visible church of God.

This brings me to a particular point. It is evident from what the Saviour said here, "of such is the kingdom of God," that He is referring to these children. He is teaching this doctrine here with regard to the visible church of God, that children are members of the church of God. If you look at the teaching about divorce in this chapter, you find that Moses gave them permission to give a bill of divorcement in certain circumstances. The Saviour deals with this feature, and points out that it was because of the hard-

ness of their hearts that the bill of divorcement was given according to Moses, "but from the beginning it was not so." The Christian church was to move back to this position in its administration of marriage. Marriage is for life, apart from the sins of adultery or such desertion as cannot be healed by the individual, the state, or the church, which give the innocent party grounds for divorce. But when He is teaching that children belong to the visible church, He is teaching something which was known to the very people, the very disciples, who rebuked the parents on this occasion. I think this is very important. I know, of course, that anabaptists deny baptism to children. They also try to get away from this verse here as though it had nothing to do with baptism, but they cannot get away from it. It is all very well to close one's eyes to the full revelation of the Word of God, and take up a position, and imagine that as long as one is taking up that position, it is sound. But the Saviour says here with regard to children that they were members of "the kingdom of God." "Of such," He says, "is the kingdom of God." This was not a teaching that was unknown. This was a teaching that these Jews under the Old Testament dispensation knew all about. It was common knowledge to them, that children were members of the visible church. They were circumcised on the eighth day, and circumcision was that which brought them into the visible church. In virtue of their being born into their parents' houses, who were themselves practising the religion of the God of Israel, they were circumcised. Now, this is very important, far more important than people are ready to believe or to understand — this particular point about children being members of the visible church. The Divine Saviour Himself says here, "of such is the kingdom of God." It is the King of Zion Who is speaking now. He is the One to Whom all power has been given in heaven and in earth, and He is saying with regard to infants and children, "of such is the kingdom of God." They have their place as members of the visible church. He says, "Forbid them not." Now, you see anabaptists, those who deny baptism to children, are very bold. It is a pity that they should be so convinced that they are absolutely right when their view is in conflict with the Word of God, and in conflict with the whole history of the Church of God from the days of Abraham downwards, and in conflict with the principles of the Reformation. You feel when this is discussed with them that they really do not understand what paedobaptism, the baptism of children, is about. You can see here, with regard to the visible kingdom, that children

are members of it. Those who brought these children to Christ here, who were inside the visible church themselves, did this as something that they did not need, as it were, to be specially taught to do. They had learned it from their fathers. It had been in the history of the church from the days of Abraham when he circumcised Isaac on the eighth day. They were embraced in the visible church of God in the world, and the Saviour says now to the disciples who rebuked those parents, as though the Saviour had no mind or heart for children, "Forbid them not." Christ said, "Forbid them not," and it is the King of Zion Who is speaking here. "He was much displeased."

That brings me in the second place to notice this. These parents did this particular thing. Others brought the sick, others brought the diseased, others brought the blind, others brought messages of various descriptions and kinds, and the One Who said, "They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick," manifested His love and compassion in healing the sick, and raising the dead, etc.

"The Lord doth give the blind their sight,
the bowed down doth raise."

But these parents brought their children. They brought their children to the Saviour, and they brought them to the Saviour for one purpose, and one purpose only — that He would bless them, that He would lay His hands upon them, and that they would receive a blessing from the King of Zion. That was the reason why they brought these children to Jesus.

We do not know how much they knew. We do not know how much they understood, but the one thing we do know is that these children needed Jesus. It may well be, and indeed one would think as one reads the narrative that it seems very likely that these parents, or some of them at least, understood this — that their children needed more than food or drink, they needed more than the home, they needed more than the love of their fathers and of their mothers, and they needed more than the care that their parents bestowed upon them. They needed more than to be prepared for this world and its needs. They needed Jesus, and they needed Jesus because He is the One of Whom we read.

"Men shall be blessed in Him, and blessed
all nations shall Him call."

They needed Jesus because they were guilty, because they were sinners, because they were lost and undone in themselves, as well as others. They needed Jesus because He was the One Who alone could teach them the Way of Life as surely as He could teach their parents. You see when you consider it — children need to be taught by Christ as much as adults, and adults need to be taught by Christ as much as children. The man who has reached twenty, thirty, forty years, and who is “dead in trespasses and sins” is as ignorant of spiritual realities as the child of ten or twelve or eight or nine years or younger, who is also “dead in trespasses and sins.” They need the same King Who has “the tongue of the learned,” and Who is able “to speak a word in season to him that is weary.”

They brought their children to Jesus, and they brought their children to Jesus for this end — that Jesus would bless them. The same principle operates here. Circumcision is gone. Circumcision is something which pertained to the administration of the visible church in Old Testament times, and in the place of circumcision has come baptism, as we read in Colossians, chapter 2, verses 11 and 12, where baptism is called the “circumcision of Christ.” So that the children of those who are inside the visible church are to be baptised. Parents who bring their children forward to be baptized should have this in view. You must remember, and you must continually remember this point, that bringing a child for baptism is not a mere matter of form. It is not something done to be respectable, not something you do just because your father and mother did it. You ought to do this to the Lord, and you ought to do it from this point of view — that you are bringing your child to become a member of the visible church of God in the world by baptism. You are bringing your child to Jesus, not to a minister, not to a kirk-session, not to a congregation. You are to bring your child to Jesus, to the King of Zion Who has instituted this ordinance in the world, and when you bring your child to Jesus this is to be the desire of your heart, that Jesus would bless the child — the child that God gave you.

We read in connection with Hannah, you remember, when she was granted a son she called his name Samuel which means “asked of God.” The child she got was the child that she asked of God, and the child she received from God. What did she do? She returned the child to God. This is the view that parents should take of this particular act of theirs of bringing their children forward to the

ordinance of baptism in this world. They are bringing their children to Jesus. They are bringing the child they got from God back to God through Jesus Christ, and they are to bring their child to God in this way, seeking that Jesus would bless the child. This is the view that these parents had here. They brought their children to Jesus, desiring that He would bless them.

That brings me to notice the mind of Christ with regard to this. No doubt the disciples thought that Jesus was too much engaged in preaching the Word of the gospel, in healing the sick, in raising the dead, in these mighty and wonderful works which He alone could do and He alone could accomplish: that He was declaring these wonderful doctrines that caused men to say, "Never man spake like this Man," and that consequently Jesus had no time for little children. That is what they thought. They rebuked these parents. They told them to go away. And Jesus "was much displeased." The King of Zion, my dear friend, "was much displeased," disciples though they were, and though they had in view as it were, to protect the Saviour from what they thought was the undue attention of these parents and children. Jesus "was much displeased." Did they not know that it was "out of the mouth of babes and sucklings" that God had ordained praise? Was His eye set forward to the time when as the King of Zion He entered Jerusalem on "the foal of an ass," and the children began to sing as well as others. "Hosanna to the Son of David?" Jesus "was much displeased" at this act on the part of His disciples and He rebuked them. He said unto them, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such" He said, "is the kingdom of God."

Not only was He "much displeased" at what they did, but He showed His willingness, His compassion, His love, His mercy and His delight in the act of those parents and their children. He did not merely speak to them, as it were, at a great distance. He did not merely, as it were, lay His hands upon them. He did not acknowledge them, as it were, with a nod of the head, but "He took them up in His arms, put His hands upon them, and blessed them." He took them up in His arms." He is the "great Shepherd of the sheep" Who is to take the lambs in His bosom and Who is to "gently lead those that are with young." He delighted in these children being brought by their parents, inside the visible church, to Himself, in order that they might be blessed by the King of

Zion. You see how completely He did this, how completely He signified His pleasure in this particular work, for He took the children in His arms, and He "put His hands upon them, and blessed them."

Now there is one last point I would like to make. The parents of these children were inside the visible church, and Baptism is administered to those who are inside the visible church. In other words, it is administered to those who have been themselves baptized, and who in their walk and life and conversation in the world conform to the practice and beliefs of the visible church of God, who profess that there is no "other name under heaven given among men" whereby they or their children can be saved. Those who are seriously engaged in this ordinance of Baptism, in bringing their children in this way to be brought into the visible church by the sacrament of Baptism, are to have this before their minds: they are bringing their children, my dear friends, to Jesus. It is to Jesus they are bringing their children, to the King of Zion, to the King of the church of God. If they are bringing their children in sincerity, then they themselves in their walk, life, conversation, and knowledge, must be consistent members of the visible church. They must walk according to the Word of God, and they must seek to make manifest that in truth and in reality they wish Jesus to bless their children. They should desire to be delivered from everything and every way of conduct that would cause that the blessing of Jesus would not come upon themselves or upon their children.

Jesus said, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God," and what I would like to stress with regard to this verse is that while this verse itself does not directly deal with Baptism, yet in the analogy of the faith, and consistent with the doctrines of God's Word, we have brought before us here that children were brought to Jesus. This is one of the ways in which they are to be brought, in their being brought for baptism.

Jesus said, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God." The grace held forth in baptism is particularly that of regeneration, and justification, and when in the purpose of God this is applied in due time by the Holy Spirit, the sinner is baptized with the Spirit of God. This, of course, is what we ought to be seeking for, and what we must be seeking for in connection with Jesus blessing the children who are

received into the visible church: that He would bless the ordinance, and that He would follow the Baptism of water with the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, which, of course, is the only Baptism which does effectively, savingly, bring the soul "out of darkness" into God's "marvellous light."

The Diary of Dugald Buchanan

Period VI — From August 1745 to December 1750

(continued from page 146)

22nd July — I got intimation that the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was to be dispensed at Muthil*, where I had several sweet communions with God, and I think that was the place in which my soul was first made to lay hold upon Jesus Christ and was often instructed and comforted by the ministry of the word. And having many Christian acquaintances there, I resolved to go and see what judgment they would make of my case and to lay myself open to the preaching of the word, but had no thoughts of going to the Lord's table. However, as the day was very rainy and my body very weak, I frequently repented that I had set out, but at last I came to the place, and upon Saturday evening heard a sermon preached by the Rev. William Gillespie, minister of Cumnock, and whom, to the praise of God's grace, I never heard in vain. The subject, of his discourse was 2 Cor. 4:8, "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed," etc. The very reading of this text was a sermon to me. I wondered that I had never seen that Scripture before when searching the Bible. He shewed a great many of these grievous distresses and perplexities of the Lord's people arising from remaining corruption and the subtlety of Satan. And he likewise showed the reasons why they were not in despair by all that the devil, the world, or the flesh could do, etc.

I was melted down where I sat under this sermon, and thought all my bands were loosing and the clouds dispelling. But immediately Satan raised an objection that such a person as the minister was describing could not be a child of God.

Satan, perhaps knowing that his time was but short, endeavoured by all possible means to give me a deeper plunge into the ditch than ever, thinking thereby to cause me to abhor all the ordinances of God. And it is my opinion that a few days more of this exercise would have driven me to a desperate end. One link added

*See footnote on page 180

to Satan's chain would have devoured me. Indeed, my strength was gone, the water being spent in the bottle and no well appearing made me to cast away my hope for lost.

I had furthered the design of hell by my own compliance and foolishness, but God who is all eye to see as well as all ear to hear and who knows my frame then remembered that I was dust. O! sweet Scripture, if He should be always wroth or contend for ever, the grace which He had given would not only fail but the soul that He had made, etc.

On my way home I sat down to rest and in a minute's time all my doubts were dispersed, the gates of brass and iron bars of unbelief were broken in a thousand pieces and my captive soul set at liberty. The Shepherd of Israel took my soul half-consumed out of the mouth of the lion. He took the spoil from between the teeth of the terrible and plucked me as a fire-brand out of the burning and before I arose my tongue was loosed to sing the high praises of my God. At the same time Jesus Christ the Son of Righteousness arose upon me with healing under His wings.

I might now say with King Nebuchadnezzar when he returned from the society of beasts, as I was from the society of lusts and devils, "I lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation" (Daniel 1 v. 34).

But, oh! when I lifted up the eyes of my faith and saw the lovely Redeemer leaping upon the mountains and skipping over the hills of crimson guilt and scarlet sins, I was even like one in a dream. And oh! His kindness was great, He did not so much as upbraid me for evils in His absence, but said, "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee."

The whole gates of my soul lifted up their heads, and the everlasting doors were set open and the King of glory came in. O stupendous miracle of grace! O astonishing and unexpected visit! But O! when He came near me in the glory of His pardoning grace and mercy, proclaiming Himself the Lord, the Lord God merciful and gracious, long suffering, etc., how was my soul overwhelmed with His grace! My soul failed when He spoke. But was it any wonder that I was glad? It was rather a wonder that I did not give up the ghost with joy. Though all the mountains around me were gold

and silver and all my own, I would esteem them as dung and dross in comparison of the excellency of Christ Jesus my Lord. Was it any wonder though I was glad to see Him whom I had not seen these few years but seldom, or as a wayfaring man that turneth aside to tarry for a night, and for the last two years not at all: But when my Redeemer was absent, O how was His love despised, His name reproached, His spirit vexed by my ungodly deeds! But now He is come! O He is come! Blessed be His name who hath taken away the difference. And what shall I say? Yea, what could David say more? "But is this the manner of men, O Lord?" I'll say with Hezekiah, "He hath both spoken unto me and himself hath done it: I shall, by his grace, go softly all my days in the bitterness of my soul."

If any should ask, What is they Beloved more than another beloved? I'll tell in a word what I think of my Beloved. He is altogether lovely: He is a lovely king upon His throne as well as a lovely priest upon His altar, His law and precept are lovely as well as His promise and grace: He is altogether lovely. And I love Him to that degree that I can as well tell what are the outgoings of paradise as tell the various outgoings of my soul towards Him in all His offices and relations as Mediator, nor yet how my soul feeds by faith upon Him. He is a sun and shield unto me, He is my hiding-place and my shield.

My soul discovers many avenues where Satan can throw his fiery darts, and yet in less than a minute my faith can turn Christ, my shield, into a safe bulwark of defence at the head of every avenue, and then I see safety in Christ against all enemies and a complete fulness for all wants. He is dearer to me than my bosom friend, than my only son etc. He is the very life of my soul and soul of my life. Yea, I had such a discovery of Christ in His mediatory offices as made me put my whole trust and confidence in Him. I am sure there was never a man born blind who trusted his father or any friend to lead him safely in the way, more than I trusted God to lead and guide me by His Spirit unto all truth.

There is no devil nor damned reprobate in hell who can have more frightful views of their sins than I have of mine in all their most aggravating circumstances, and yet, when I view Christ as a Priest, and the efficacy of His blood, the merits of it in the sight of God and the sanctifying virtue of it in the soul when applied by the Holy Ghost, I am as much confirmed of the love and everlast-

ing favour of God as the elect angels are who were confirmed in their first state and never sinned. And when I view Christ as King of kings and Head over all things to His Church, I undervalue the power of Satan, and wicked men, etc. as I do the dust under my feet. I rejoice, I triumph, I conquer in Christ, and have no confidence in the flesh while I earnestly covet His example. And now that I am a believer in Christ Jesus, the peace of God that passeth all understanding fills my whole soul.

I came home the rest of my journey as one who had been raised from the dead. Yea, I could scarcely forbear to tell my joy to those whom I met by the way.

13th December. As there has not been one day since the 26th of July in which I have not experienced something of the love and power of God, and for the most part of that time there has not been five minutes at one time except when I was asleep in which the Lord has not been either instructing or quickening and comforting me. And at this day the high tide of God's consolation has almost overwhelmed my spirit. How long I shall enjoy the manifestation of God's love in Christ is not for me to determine, but I expect to enjoy it through all the ages of eternity. Therefore I shall record the fruits and effects of this grace of God produced in my soul, and what a glorious change grace has made upon my principles and practice; and, as it is with a design to glorify God, and partly that I may treasure up these things in these days of plenty — not knowing what is between me and the grave, but that I may have need to remember God from the land of Jordan, etc. — so I shall, as a person who hath obtained mercy of the Lord, declare the truth as near as I can, and nothing but the truth, in these works of righteousness which evidenceth the truth of faith to my conscience, according to the written record of God. For, as the Apostle saith, "though I have whereof I may glory, through Jesus Christ, in those things which pertain to God; yet I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me," or in me by his spirit (Romans xv. 17,18). "Neither will I," as the same Apostle saith, "boast of things without my measure" beyond my real experience; for in this I am not afraid to exceed my warrant at all, because I know, that while in the body I'll never declare the hundredth part of that which God hath manifested to me of His love; nor yet shew forth, either by my words or practise, these draughts of Christ's image which are engraven

in my heart, not by pen and ink, but by the Spirit of the living God. I am sure if a person of more learning were to write these matters of fact he would do it to much better purpose.

[FOOTNOTE:

The work of conversion to which we have in the preceding notes alluded in reference to the parishes of Cambuslang and Kilsyth extended itself to other parishes also, and among these to the parish of Muthil in Perthshire. Mr. Halley, the minister of this parish, to whose ministrations Mr. Buchanan bears an honourable testimony, speaks of it in a letter addressed to the Rev. Mr. Robe in the following manner:—

“The work of God is going forward in this parish. Many seem truly awakened to a sense of their condition as connected with eternity. All those with whom I have conversed appeared to be touched to the very quick, the arrows of the Almighty shot to their very hearts, trembling like the Jailer crying out against sin and breathing and thirsting after a Saviour. My bowels were moved for them, and I hope the bowels of a compassionate Redeemer were yearning over them when they were with Ephraim bemoaning themselves. As a token for future good, a praying disposition among the people not only continues, but is upon the increase. Thirteen Societies for prayer have been recently instituted and a new one is about to be established. I cannot express how much I am charmed with the young people. They have now three Prayer Societies. The members of one of these made me a most agreeable visit upon the first Monday of the year, a day which young people especially usually spend in mirth and folly. Upwards of forty attended and continued in prayer and other exercises till about ten at night. And oh! to hear the young lambs crying after the great Shepherd, to hear them pouring out their souls with such fervour, with such beautiful expressions, with such copiousness and fulness, did not only strike me with admiration but melted me into tears. I wished in my heart that all contradictors, gainsayers, and blasphemers of this work of God had been where I was that night.” In a subsequent letter Mr. Halley thus writes:— “The concern in hearing the Word still continues, though not with such a noise and outcrying as formerly. And though the public awakenings are not so discernible as they were sometime since, yet few Sabbaths pass but there are some pricked in their hearts, and with great anguish of spirit, crying, What shall we do? A law work is still severe and

of long continuance with many, but the Lord is supporting, helping to wait, and keeping them thirsting after relief in Christ.”]

Studies in the Life of the Apostle Paul

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

(Continued from page 151)

XII

Iconium, Lystra and Derbe.

b. *The reaction of the Apostles.*

In face of such a situation as we have outlined above, we might well pose the question, How are the Apostles to react to this? Shall they endeavour to defend themselves against the prejudices of the Jews, their instigation of the mob and their evident intention to defeat the Apostles objectives in coming to Iconium? Shall they immediately depart to another city? or what shall they do? This was all part of the discipline necessary to the making up of a true disciple — to be faced with such situations and to know how best to meet them. In the days of his flesh, the Lord Jesus had warned his disciples of the dangers of discipleship — that the world would hate them, even as it hated Him; that they could expect persecution for his name's sake: but in the midst of it all, had He not given them the greatest encouragement in promising to be with them and to keep them. This is best summed up in His precious closing words in *John 16 v.33*. “*In the world he shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer: I have overcome the world.*”

Paul and Barrabas were now having fresh tribulation at Iconium. The answer to our questions above is supplied in the portion under review in *Acts ch.14 verses 1—7*, but as we study it in the light of the latter part of the Scripture quoted from John ‘*I have overcome the world*,’ we cannot but adore the wondrous grace bestowed upon them, to realise that Jesus indeed was with them at Iconium and that the final victory lay with Him. In his strength they would go on, until he should make it clear to them that their duty lay elsewhere. Thus we read of them, in *verse 3*. “*Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of His grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands.*”

O the wonder of all this! In spite of a threatening situation — '*long time abode they*' in Iconium; in Iconium they 'spake boldly in the Lord', no matter what threatenings hang over their heads. They stood firm; and the Lord rewarded them for their steadfastness — He was with them and *gave testimony to the word of His grace . . .* What a precious way to meet the situation facing them! What a lesson for all true servants of the same Lord and Master! Let us consider a little more fully the riches of this precious verse.

a) "*Long time therefore abode they*".

This is their answer in effect. The '*therefore*' does not refer immediately, as one might think, to the previous verse, where the opposition movement is already on foot, although no doubt the very fact of this opposition, on Satan's part, spurred them on. What really gave them encouragement to stay on and to work for the Lord there, was the obvious blessing which had already followed the preaching of the word as revealed in *verse 1*. The opposition merely sharpened their resolve. The phrase, '*long time*' is one which originally means '*sufficient time*' — just enough time and no more; by extension, it came to be used of a long, but definite period of time, according to the context in which the phrase is used. Now moving to reflect here on the Apostles, (even led aright by Divine guidance from on high) remaining in Iconium long enough to accomplish the task committed to them, despite the opposition, and no more! The word translated '*abode*' is not its usual and normal *Greek verb* '*to abide*', but another and rather unusual one, meaning literally '*to rub hard*', or to '*rub away*', and hence to '*consume*', '*wear away*' or '*spend*' time, as here. We have a similar expression of time passing quickly or wearing away. Behind the idea of rubbing away lies the picture of a garment worn out with constant wear. It was thus that the Apostles passed their time in Iconium — wearing away the hours in the continual service of the Master. Would that we were made like them! How many wear away their hours and days, weeks and years, in a less honourable service — indeed, in the vilest service of all, the service of sin and Satan.

b) "*Speaking boldly in the Lord*"

It was in such activity that they passed this time — declaring the whole counsel of God. There was no fear of man before

their eyes, as they stood forth as heralds of the Cross. To speak boldly or freely—nothing wavering, without fear or favour; this spirit was given, a spirit of boldness for the Lord. The fear of man so often brings a snare; Paul and Barrabas are here graciously delivered from it. Reflect again upon their boldness, in face of mounting opposition, the secret power behind lies, not in themselves, but, as we see *'in the Lord'*—that is, in dependence upon the Lord—upon His help, His grace, His comforting presence. It was only as they stood in Him that they could thus face the storm. Just so will it be for all those who will follow in their steps, for Paul to the last displayed this spirit, as the last verse of this book of Acts clearly indicates, when describing him, in his own hired house, as one who was still *"preaching the Kingdom of God . . . with all confidence (or boldness)"*. Jesus Himself had reminded the disciples before He departed to the Father—*"without me, ye can do nothing"* (John 15 v.3). Paul had found this out and here, at Iconium, he proved the contrary truth to which he later gave expression in his letter to the Philippians *"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheth me"* (Philippians 4. v13).

c). *Which gave testimony . . . by their hands*".

The remainder of the verse reveals to us the sweet reward which the Apostles received in virtue of their steadfastness—the Lord was with them to bless their labours, to acknowledge the Word of His grace with signs following. Signs and wonders were done, indeed; what these were specifically, we are not told: there may have been miracles, since *'Their Hands'* are mentioned, but we cannot be sure. Of this, however, we may be sure—that there were not wanting signs of a spiritual work of wonder done among the inhabitants of Iconium: sinners were born in Sion and the church was inaugurated in that place. Perhaps we should lay emphasis on the fact that the Lord was pleased to add His own seal to the Word proclaimed—and to remember the expression used here to describe that Word: the Word of His grace. This is a sweet description of the Gospel message. Iconium heard of God's grace to perishing sinners through the Word, in the mouth of Paul and Barrabas. It is good to remember still that the word of the Cross is still the word of

God's grace; how thankful we ought to be for it; how solemn the responsibility of despising it, to the peril of our immortal souls. This, then, was the answer of the Apostles—to remain at their post of duty. As we read the following verse, we cannot but agree that their decision was correct. They had the seal of God's blessing. As always, however, the blessing was not without its counterpart. "*But the multitude of the city was divided: and part held with the Jews, and part with the Apostles*". (verse 4). Thus it was to be, at all times, and in all places—some believed, and some believed not. It is probable that the word 'multitude' here refers to the whole population; it is not to be understood in the sense of 'mob' or 'crowd'. Paul and Barrabas began their work in the synagogues, but clearly their influence was such that soon the whole city became involved—leaders and people alike; rich and poor; master and slave; learned and unlearned. The outcome of their labour of love in the Gospel is a city divided—not merely a congregation worshipping in the synagogue. This in itself testifies to the power of the truth. The divisions existed; its proportions are undeterminable. The inspired Record leaves it thus—some were with (or on the side of; in company with) the Jews, others were with the Apostles—with no indication as to numbers. In view of subsequent events, and in line with the history of the Church in every age, it is likely that there were more on the enemy side, than on the Lord's side. Be that as it may, however, we feel that the great matter for us is to realise that some were brought out of darkness. This is matter for praise to Him, who encouraged His servants then, and still does to this day. Can we not understand the feeling of dear Samuel Rutherford of old

*'If one soul from Anwoth
meet me at God's right hand
My heaven will be two heavens
In Immanuel's land'*

Paul looked upon his converts as his crown and joy—he had them in Iconium, as in other places.

The Gospel divides — as Jesus Himself had foretold. On which side are you, dear reader?

Out of this division comes the final assault of the enemy, to which we have devoted some attention already. How now did

the Apostles react? In a word, they felt the time had come to move; they left Iconium, as they had left Antioch, and fled to Lystra and Derbe (*verse 6*); but the work went on — “*and there they preached the Gospel*” (*verse 7*). Flee they might, from one city to another; to shrink from declaring the glad tidings, never. From place to place they go and the name of Jesus is ever on their life. How noble their example to God’s servants in all ages! How inspiring their labour of love to all true believers! How beneficial their determination to all who may hear the Gospel of God’s grace, to this day!

Before we leave Iconium, it is good to know that Paul and Barnabus had friends among the brethren who believed — friends who let them know of the intentions of their enemies; friends who were not ashamed to be identified with them in the noble cause and who were willing to risk much to save the Apostles from the wrath of the rabble. As the Record tell us (in one word in Greek) — “*They were ware of it*”, i.e. the assault planned. This timely information gave them warning. Will not the Lord remember such deeds? “*Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me*”. May we take heed likewise.

Free Church Principles (1882)

by The Late Dr. Kennedy, of Dingwall.

Dr. Kennedy treated his subject under the following four heads, the first of which is given at large below:—

1. What in relation to Establishment is the proper attitude and bounden duty of the Free Church? 2. That this Disestablishment movement, while inconsistent with our engagements as Free Churchmen, springs from no creditable source, and is accompanied with such symptoms of spiritual decline as make it very unlikely that it can be prompted and sanctioned by the Lord. 3. That our present duty is to hold our disruption ground, aloof as yet from the existing Establishment, but striving to secure for Scotland the blessing of a rightly constituted and healthily-conditioned Established Church. And 4. That this is very specially the duty of all in the Highlands who are connected with the Free Church. The first head he enforces as follows:—

The Proper Attitude and Bounden Duty Of The Free Church

What the peculiar constitution of a Church is may be discovered by ascertaining what makes her position distinctive as compared with that of other ecclesiastical bodies in the same locality. No Church has any right to a separate existence if there be no difference between her testimony and that of the others. Now there are two large Presbyterian Churches in Scotland — the Established Church and the United Presbyterian Church — each of which till very lately, when the latter materially altered the Confession, professed to adhere to the Westminster Standards. The difference between the Free Church and both these lies in her being neither Erastian nor Voluntary. She protests against interference with her spiritual jurisdiction by the civil ruler, and holds the scripturalness, and highly values the benefit, of a connection between Church and State. It is this which makes her constitution peculiar as a Church in Scotland. Any action, therefore, on her part which is inconsistent with this peculiarity, must be unconstitutional. She was constituted on an intermediate site, with the Erastianised Establishment on the one hand, and the Voluntary Dissenters on the other. She abuts beyond her proper site — she goes off her distinctive position — when she inclines either to Erastianism on the one side, or to Voluntaryism on the other.

This was the view of her distinctive position held by the acknowledged leaders of the Free Church in 1843, and by the whole body of the Church as well. "Though we quit the Establishment," Dr. Chalmers, as the moderator of the first Free Church Assembly, said, "We go out on the Establishment principle — we quit a vitiated Establishment, but would rejoice in returning to a pure one. To express it otherwise, we are the advocates for a national recognition and national support of religion and we are not Voluntaries." Dr. Candlish was equally explicit in his disavowal of Voluntaryism. "I trust," he said, "we shall be enabled in our Assemblies, and, if possible, in our outward and tangible acts, to maintain uncompromised our principle of a religious establishment. I trust we shall resist every motion or proposal of an incorporating union with any Church that differs from us on that point."

But it may be said that we are not to be bound by the utterances of any men, however eminent their position and however great their influence may have been. But that cannot be said as to the authoritative declarations of the Church, in those documents

which form the basis of her position, as to those acts of Assembly which indicate what are her constitutional principles, and as to those engagements which require a faithful adherence to those principles.

The Claim of Right is the document in which, in 1842, the position of the party afterwards composing the Free Church, was formally defined. She is no longer the Free Church of Scotland if she ceases to demand what was claimed in 1842, and abandons the idea of occupying the position in which alone she could accept the concession of that claim. That Claim is in these terms – “The General Assembly do, in name and on behalf of this Church, and of the nation and people of Scotland, and under the sanction of the several statutes, and the Treaty of Union hereinbefore recited, Claim as of Right, that she shall freely possess and enjoy her liberties, government, discipline, rights and privileges according to law.” Now, this is a Claim which can be conceded only to a Church in connection with the State, or to a Church willing to enter into such a relation to the State as Establishment constitutes.

The Protest of 1842 declares, “that the Claim, Declaration, and Protest of the General Assembly which convened at Edinburgh in May, 1842, as the Act of a free and lawful Assembly of the said Church, shall be holden as setting forth the true constitution of the said Church;” and that the rejection of the Claim of Right is the only reason why the Disruption took place. The concession of that Claim, at any time, should therefore suffice as a reason for the Free Church’s return to the position of an Establishment.

In Act XII., 1846, “Anent Questions and Formula,” it is declared “That the Church firmly maintains the same scriptural principles as to the duties of nations and their rulers, in reference to true religion and the Church of Christ, for which she has hitherto contended, “both against Erastians and against Voluntaries.

In Act VII., 1853, “Anent the Principles of the Church,” it is declared – “That this Church maintains, unaltered and uncompromised, the principles set forth in the Claim, Declaration, and Protest of 1842, and the Protest of 1843, relative to the lawfulness and obligation of a scriptural alliance between the Church of Christ and the State, and the conditions on which such an alliance ought to be regulated – as well as the position which, in the maintenance of these principles, the Church was called upon to take in 1842 and 1843, as a Church protesting against invasions of her just and

constitutional rights, and demanding redress of the wrongs thus inflicted." The Church is thus fixed down in the position of a claimant in relation to the State, till redress is granted. To depart, in any other circumstances from that position is to cease to be the Free Church of Scotland.

And further, we are required, so long as we do not formally repudiate the Claim of Right, "highly to value the connection" of the Church with the State; and in its closing sentences we are directed to pray for the restoration to Scotland of a rightly constituted Established Church. And the Protest reserves a right "to strive, by all lawful means, as opportunity shall in God's good providence be offered, to secure the performance of this duty" — viz., the maintenance and support of an establishment of religion in accordance with God's word by the civil magistrate.

The Free Church, therefore, in terms of the authoritative declarations of her distinctive testimony, is bound to continue —

1. To assert "the right and duty of the civil magistrate to maintain and support an establishment of religion in accordance with God's word."
2. Highly to value the benefit of such an establishment.
3. To pray for this benefit for Scotland.
- And 4. To "strive by all lawful means to secure" this boon.

Such is the position and such the action to which as Free Churchmen we are solemnly pledged; and any action inconsistent with those engagements must be unfaithful and unconstitutional, and therefore both unwise and sinful.

(F.P. Magazine Vol. 1 p. 62).

Letter from Canada

Calgary,

April 3, 1972.

Dear Friends,

Since I last wrote to you I have travelled West to Vancouver, and am now in Calgary on my return journey to Winnipeg. One, cannot but be impressed with the vastness of this continent, with its different "time-zones" and variety of climate. I left Winnipeg for Vancouver on the evening of Monday, 13th March, after the weekly prayer meeting. Mr. Gillies and Mr. Kitchen saw me away at the Canadian National Railway Station, and I travelled west passing through the miles of prairie to Edmonton, then through the 'Rockies and along the Fraser Valley, to arrive in Vancouver on Wednesday afternoon. There I was met at the station by Dr.

MacDonald, our minister in Vancouver, and a number of the men in his congregation. The Communion season was due to begin, so that evening we had the prayer meeting, and over the following days the usual services. It was a pleasure to be among the people of the Vancouver congregation. Their Christian fellowship was refreshing, and their kindness very great. They appear as one family, interested in and helping one another. I believe this is the fruit of the Spirit. God alone can bring about such a situation, and He alone can maintain it. I pray that it will continue among our people there, and that the Lord will add unto the church daily such as should be saved. Not only did I enjoy the hospitality of Dr. and Mrs. MacDonald, and of many other families, but I also had opportunity of visiting places of interest in and around Vancouver. Very pleasant as my time in Vancouver was, the time eventually came when I must leave. It was an experience to be long-remembered when we assembled at the railway station as the time for departure drew near. As the Canadian Pacific train drew out of the station I could thank God for the work of His grace, and for the evidences of it among those whom I was leaving behind. The train wound its way toward the east, until about mid-day the following day we drew near the more spectacular part of this journey. We can be impressed with the work of creation, but how few seem to be impressed with the work of redemption. Man by the talents given him from God, has achieved many amazing things, but God alone could accomplish the work of redemption. May God give us His grace, that, as we see more of the works of Creation, we may see more of His glory in Jesus Christ. At Calgary I was met by the Misses Beaton, whose hospitality I am enjoying at present. Yesterday I held services in a hall nearby, at which there were good numbers present, and I pray the Lord will confirm His Word with signs following. This is another large city where there is the opportunity to preach the Gospel of Christ. We need more preachers to declare the whole counsel of God. "Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest."

I expect to remain here for another week, after which I return, the Lord willing, to Winnipeg. I would again ask you to make it a regular and fervent matter of prayer that the Lord come in the power of His Spirit to visit us in mercy and grace.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,

Malcolm MacInnes.

Letter

by Rev. William Romaine

My Dear Madam,

I cannot resist the opportunity, though I can write but two or three lines, to thank you for your last letter, and for your kindness to me expressed in it. I thank God for the contents. What you say of yourself is to me very comfortable, because I see how the Spirit of God is leading you. He is taking you up into the highest form in the school of Christ, and is teaching you an experience which is not only next to glory, but is also glory begun. This being the hardest to learn, no wonder you should complain. I take notice of your account of your present state, of your trials, and of the exercises of your faith. A great part of your letter is upon these points, describing your self-abasement and loathing at the sight and sense of what you are in yourself, and wondering that such a one as you should be brought to know, to believe in, and to love our Jesus.

Now, my good friend, I must tell you, if you had written to me, and desired me to give you the character of a true Christian, I should have copied it from your letter. I could not have left one circumstance out. All that you mention of your being tried, afflicted in body and mind, brought low and kept low; sometimes mourning at the strength of corruption, and at the weakness of your graces; at your love to earthly relations, and at your love to our Jesus — one so strong, the other so weak; your trials on these, and many other such like accounts, are such as no true disciple of Christ, in your circumstances, could be without. My answer should have been, 'He is exactly what Mrs. ——— says she is.' For in reading the Scriptures I can find but these two things spoken of the office of the Holy Spirit: He first enables the sinner to receive Christ by faith; and then to live upon Him, so received, for all things. If you examine these two rules carefully, you will see that all the teachings of the Holy Spirit may be reduced to them; and if you examine yourself by the light of the Word, you will have no doubt but that you are among them to whom the promise was made: 'All thy children shall be taught of God.' For have you not renounced your righteousness as well as your sins? Is not the holy nature of our Emmanuel, His infinitely holy life, His everlastingly precious death — is not this complete work of His the only ground of your hope? 'O yes,' say you, 'on this rock I lay my foundation;

I build all on it for time and eternity,' Very well! then certain it is the Holy Spirit had done His first work in you. He has enabled you to receive Christ; now He is carrying on His work, the second part of the same lesson, which is enabling you to live upon Christ received. This is very hard to learn; it is against nature; against our natural love for law and works, our legal lookings at self, our foolish hope, if I live longer I shall be better. O it is hard, I find it to this hour like leaping overboard in a storm, to cast myself simply on Jesus for everything; but it must be done. The Spirit abides with you for this purpose — "that He may take of the things of Christ, and show them to you, and so glorify Him." When He is teaching this heavenly truth, we kick against it, we pervert it. When we go on the best, we think we are at the worst. But He abides, to conquer our opposition, to set right what we pervert, and to convince us all is and shall be well. May He thus bless a word spoken to the Saviour's glory!

My dear friend, you know it pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell in our Jesus: it pleases the Spirit to witness of it, and to glorify it. How? in what way? — why, just as He is teaching you. He is bringing you to live out of yourself upon the fulness of Jesus. Mind how He does it. He shows you, first, that you lack such a thing; then, that you cannot get it anywhere but from Jesus; and then He leads you to think, that trusting to His faithful word, you may experience how ready His heart, how able His hand, is to supply all your need. This is a beggar's life; here is nothing but alms. We do not like it. We want some stock; if we could get it, we should like an independent fortune. But it cannot be. The Spirit of Jesus will witness of nothing, and glorify nothing, but the Saviour's all-sufficient grace; and therefore He sets Himself against all our greatness and goodness — that he who glorieth may glory only in the Lord Jesus. And when He is bringing us to this true glorifying of the Lord, we mistake, we pervert His lessons; I know I do, and I think you do. We both fail in our experience, as your letter clearly proves to me.

If you ask me how you may become a better scholar? as I have been taught I would gladly inform you.

Read and pray for more self-knowledge: God's Word and Spirit will teach you nothing about yourself but what will humble you to the dust, and keep you there. Read and pray for more knowledge of Jesus, of His person God-man — His salvation-work infinitely and

everlastingly perfect: He is yours, now He is received; and all He has, and all He is, as Jesus, yours in title; and, so far as you believe, yours now in possession.

Read and pray for more faith, that what you have a title to, you may take possession of, and so make constant use of it. Your estate is great, immensely great. Use it and live up to it: as you do in temporals so do in spirituals. Your money, your land, your air, your light, your meat and drink, and house and clothing, these you use: but you have not them in you; only being yours they are used by you. So do by Christ. When the Spirit would glorify Jesus, He humbles you; when He would glorify His fulness, He makes you feel emptiness; when He would bring you to rely on His strength, He convinces you of your weakness; when He would magnify the comforts of Jesus, He makes you sensible of your misery; When He would fix your heart on His heaven, He makes you feel you deserved hell; when He would exalt His righteousness, you find you are a poor miserable sinner. Can you, my friend, practise this? let nothing keep you from Jesus. Whatever you need, whatever you feel wrong, may it bring you to the Saviour's fulness! O that all things may help forward your acquaintance with Him! I except nothing, neither sin nor sorrow; I would carry all to Him, as one great lump of sin, and receive all good from Him, as the only storehouse of good for wretched sinners. In this communion I desire to grow; for this I desire to live. O that you and I may learn it more and get every day nearer fellowship with our Sweet Jesus — growing up into Him in all things.

See how my pen runs on as fast as I can write. My very heart and soul are enamoured with Him! I love His name; I adore His person; He is my heaven. O what treasures are there in our Jesus! May His glorious Spirit witness for Him in your heart. Believe me your very friend, a well-wisher in that matchless Lover of sinners and of one of the chief of them,

William Romaine.

Book Reviews

The Cambuslang Revival by Arthur Fawcett. Banner of Truth Trust Price £1.25.

This book on the Scottish Evangelical Revival of the 18th century, by Dr. Arthur Fawcett, Minister of Johnstone High Parish Church, Renfrewshire, was written after much research and con-

sequently contains a very thorough study and assessment of the revivals of that period. It appears to be written in a sympathetic vein. While it is true that the book will be of most value to students of Church history in its detailed study of the factors leading up to, present in, and following upon the revivals at Cambuslang and Kilsyth, yet it should also be of interest to the general reader. The subject of revivals, indeed, is one that is full of encouragement to the people of God, and especially in a dark day such as the Church of God is experiencing at the present time. The effect of a careful perusal of this book on the minds of all truly gracious people will surely be to cause them to breathe the prayer of the Psalmist: "Wilt Thou not revive us again: that Thy people may rejoice in Thee?" Ps. 85: 6. We do hope that this book will have a wide circulation. D.B.M.

Jeanette Li. Translated by Rose Huston. Banner of Truth Trust. Price 60p.

In this paperback of 361 pages we have the autobiography of a Christian Chinese woman which should be of much interest to Christian readers in giving some idea of the difficulties which Christians face under a Communist regime. Mrs. Li was called on to endure much suffering for the sake of the Redeemer, yet continued to witness on the side of Christ. She was born in 1899 in Tak Hing, Southern China where the Reformed Presbyterian Church had a Mission. At this Mission she was introduced to Christianity and after some time professed faith in Jesus Christ. She spent the first part of her life in South China either in Tak Hing or Canton. The next part of her life she spent as a Bible woman first in Northern Manchuria and later back in South China again. Her last days were spent in exile from her native country in Hong Kong and latterly in America as a faithful worker for the Reformation Translation Fellowship. Rev. Samuel E. Boyle of America in a foreword explains that much of Mrs. Li's work was done in primitive, rural churches and homes of Chinese poor people where most of the women and many of the men were illiterate and where Chinese ordained pastors were too few.

Surely the autobiography of this Chinese Christian and the record of her faithful witnessing for Christ in the most trying circumstances and under persecution ought to stir up Christians in our day to value their privileges more highly and to witness more fearlessly on the side of the Lord Jesus Christ. D.B.M.

Notes and Comments

Sabbath Opening of Public Houses

An article in the Daily Express states that the weight of evidence given to the Clayson Committee, which has been looking into the drinking laws in Scotland, has been in favour of a major relaxation of these laws. The article also maintains that the Government will introduce a Bill at the end of the year to relax the liquor laws. An Editorial in the same newspaper welcomes such a move with the significant comment: "This is one concession we in Scotland will gladly make to the Common Market."

The attempt to break down Sabbath legislation has been actively pursued by the enemies of the Sabbath during recent years. In a number of instances they have been frustrated in their attempts. We pray that they will be unsuccessful in this instance also.

New Confession for the Church of Scotland

The Church of Scotland's Panel of Doctrine is of the view that the time is now ripe to produce a new statement of belief. If the General Assembly gives approval it is likely that a new Confession will be prepared and the Westminster Confession of Faith will be relegated to a document of purely historic interest.

There are such varying shades of belief within the Church of Scotland that the new statement of belief will have to be a very nebulous document to satisfy all parties. Indeed it is very doubtful if anyone knows what the Church of Scotland as a body believes. The casting aside of the Westminster Confession is a retrograde step, although in practice it has been discarded long ago. The real fault with the Westminster Confession was its clear statement of the doctrines of God's Word. Consequently it was a standing condemnation of the Church of Scotland in her present practice and belief.

Church Notes

Aberdeen Manse Fund Appeal

The Aberdeen Congregation has been successful in obtaining a Manse in the city. The Deacons' Court are very gratified that the debt on the Church, which was purchased last year, is now paid

off and they wish to thank all who contributed so generously to the Church Building Fund. The Congregation is now faced with the cost of a Manse. It is well known that the congregation at Aberdeen is not large and is a recently established one, and consists in part of students attending University or College there. In these circumstances the Deacons' Court find it necessary to appeal once again to the liberality of the people throughout the Church in the hope that they will come to the help of the Aberdeen Congregation in paying off the Manse. Interest free loans as well as donations will be gratefully received and should be sent to Mr. William MacKenzie, 7 Crown Drive, Inverness, the Treasurer of the Aberdeen Manse Fund, or to the Congregational Treasurer, Mr. William MacKenzie, 3 Pitstruan Place, Aberdeen. "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver." (2 Cor.9:7). This Appeal has been approved by the Northern Presbytery.

D.B. MACLEOD, Moderator of Presbytery.

Induction of Elders at Dingwall

At the forenoon service in the Dingwall Church on Sabbath 16th April an ordination and admission of Elders took place. Mr. Ian M. Macleod, formerly a member of the Dornoch and Rogart Kirk Session, was inducted and Mr. Ian Graham was ordained and admitted to the Eldership in the Joint Congregation of Dingwall and Beaully. We commend these Elders to the prayers of the Lord's people.

Presbytery Meetings (D.V.)

Northern—At Dingwall on Tuesday, 20th June, at 3.30 p.m.

Southern—At Glasgow on Tuesday, 20th June, at 6 p.m.

Western—At Kyle of Lochalsh on Tuesday, 27th June, at 11 a.m.

Outer Isles—At Stornoway on Tuesday, 18th July, at 3.30 p.m.

Rhodesian Mission Staff

We record the safe arrival in Rhodesia of Miss Alison Dunbar, F.R.C.O.G., to relieve Dr James Tallach, M.B., Ch.B., who has come home on furlough. Rev. and Mrs Donald Campbell and family have arrived home safely by sea. In the Lord's kind providence they have been preserved travelling over many thousands of miles. For this we would desire to acknowledge the Lord's goodness.

Acknowledgment of Donations

The following donations were held over from last month's magazine.

Tarbert: Friend, Stockinish, £10 for manse repairs and £5 for minister's car expenses; C.A. McL., Tarbet, £5; J. McL., Tarbert, £5; both for manse repairs; Friend, Tarbert, £3 for manse repairs and £2 for minister's car expenses; all per Rev. A. McK.

Oban: Mrs C. MacLennan, Dalintart Hospital, £5 for Congregational Funds per Rev. M. MacS.

Portree: Mrs N., Braes, £2 for Church bus.

Raasay: Wellwisher, £1; Friend of the cause, £5 per R. MacLeod; P.A.S., Raasay, £3; Friend, late of Raasay, £2; Friend, £1 per J.M. MacLeod; C. Finlayson, Raasay, £2; Friend, Raasay, £1; Friend, Raasay, £5; all for manse extension; Sojourners, £2.50 for manse extension and £2.50 for Sustentation Fund.

Scourie: E. Morrison, £5; Anon., £3; Kinlochbervie Congregation, £29.75 for Church Renovation Fund.

Shieldaig: In memory of the late Lexy MacLennan, £5 for Congregation Funds.

Staffin: Friend, £5 for car park fund per M. MacRaid.

Stirling: B.P., London, £6.

Stornoway: Two Friends, Inverness, £10; Stornoway Friend, £5, both for Congregational purposes.

Aberdeen Building Fund: I. McA., £5; J. Gunn, Inverness, £4.50; A. Forgie, Redding, £25; D. McCuish, Inverness, £2; No name, Inverness, £3; Friend, £20 per R.W.M.M.

Beaulay Church Building Fund: M.C.M., Beaulay, £2; Envelope in plate, £5; J.S.S.G., £15; Friend, £20 per R.W.M.M.; From Estate of late Mr Alex. MacLennan, £300 per R.W.M.M.

Broadford Manse Building Fund: Stornoway Friends, £5 per Rev. F. Tallach; R.M.D., Brae Ord, £5 and £2 for Sustentation Fund.

London Church and Manse Building Fund: Inverness Friend, £5; Friend, £1; Old Time Friend, Psalm 77, v. 5, £1; Interested, Psalm 26, v. 8, £5; all per Miss I. Grant, Inverness.

Tain and Fearn Manse Fund: Anon., £5; Anon., £25; M.G., Glasgow, £2; Anon., £5; A Friend, £10.

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

Sustentation Fund: A. Smith, 7 New Tolsta, £3; A. MacKay, Quidinish, £1.

Jewish and Foreign Mission Fund: Jireh Chapel Sabbath School, £8.50; Daviot friend, £5 per Rev. A. MacPherson.

General Building Fund: Mrs Kirkham, Leeds, £5.

The Publication Treasurer, Mr R.W.M. MacKenzie, C.A., Hilton of Cadboll, Fearn, has held over acknowledgments of donations until next month.

The Treasurers of the following Congregations acknowledge with sincere thanks:—

Aberdeen: A friend, £10 per G.G.; A friend, Raasay, £10; Two Edinburgh friends, £10; M. Tallach, £1; Friend, Dingwall, £5, all for Manse Purchase Fund. Anon, Aberdeen £5; C.M.M., Aberdeen, £12, both for Communion expenses. Anon, £2 per R.W.M.M.; M.H. and A.W., £4, both for Congregational funds.

Applecross: A friend, North Coast, £50 for Congregational purposes.

Glasgow: Mr and Mrs J. Macdonald, £20; Miss M.S., £5, both for Bus fund; Miss M.S., £2 for Communion expenses.

Helmsdale: From the estate of the late James Davidson, Portgower, £600;

Ingwenya: From Holland—Danny Mloyi's college expenses, HFL 100 (R\$20.29);

Rev. P. Mzamo, HFL 100 (R\$20.29); General Mission Funds, HFL 64 800 (R\$13143.01)

—expenses of Dutch gentlemen's visit to Rhodesia to be met out of last item. Timothy Mission Fund, US.\$100 for Mbuma Mission Hospital. (Correction: Donation from Mr Vrieslaar, Chilliwick, was \$1500, not \$500 as published in April Magazine).

Further donations have been held over until till next month.