

SPECIAL
ARTICLES

Our Contributors

BOOK
REVIEWSSABBATH SERVICES IN CAPE
BRETON.

A summer visitor to the beautiful scenery of the Bras D'or lakes contributes to the United Presbyterian, of Pittsburg, Pa., the following account of Sabbath services among Gaelic-speaking people in that romantic district:

The place is the Little Narrows of Bras D'or, Cape Breton, N. S., and the time, August 19, 1906. The edifice of the Presbyterian church is on a point of land extending into the Bras D'or waters. The day is exceedingly calm and bright. The little coves and inlets beyond the church, fringed with thickets of spruce and pine, lie peaceful in the sunshine. There is a solemn stillness of the day and an enchanting quiet about the church, the manse and the churchyard.

On the opposite side of the water, at an early hour, the rumble of bugles is heard. The people begin to come in numbers to fill the scow which carries them across 570 feet of water, one hundred at a time, to the white church standing so gracefully on the point partially covered with evergreens. More than one crossing takes place, for two-thirds of a large congregation live on that side of the Bras D'or. Some come hastening in private boats, and some come from the green mountain on the other side, five miles away. By the time the service is to begin a large congregation has poured in and filled the spacious church, except the broad gallery on its three sides. We enter with the throng and are seated.

We survey the congregation and find an earnest, intelligent looking people quietly waiting for the service to begin. Almost to a man, they are the sturdy descendants of Scotch Highlanders, from the islands west of Scotland, Uist, Skye and Lewis, as well as from the mainland. They retain, to a large extent, their old church customs and habits. Almost all can read and speak the Gaelic language, and the older members, as largely throughout Cape Breton, prefer a Gaelic service, and secure, if possible, a man who can speak it.

The officiating minister of the day is Rev. C. C. Mackintosh, of Reserve, C.B., a man of about forty years of age, and of ready tongue in both languages. He ascends the high pulpit at the side of the church between the galleries, and, at the appointed time, announces the psalm from Rouse's version, even unversed. Three preceptors who have an elevated seat in front of the pulpit, and look down on the box of pews containing the elders, rise and start some old tune like Balerma, in which the whole congregation, young and old, join with a will, and sing without lining out. Then a portion of Scripture is well and reverently read, two-thirds, at least, of the congregation, with open Bibles, following carefully the reading. Then, the congregation remaining seated, but with heads reverently bowed, the minister leads in a beautiful and fervent prayer. Another psalm is sung, the text announced, and a most excellent practical sermon preached from Matt. 15:41, "Whoever shall compel thee to go a mile go with him twain." The law of love was illustrated and enforced from the second mile. The whole service lasted no longer than half an hour. The benediction was pronounced and an opportunity given for any to retire who did not wish to remain. A very small portion of the congregation went out, and even they could understand the Gaelic service.

A psalm in Gaelic was then announced and the three preceptors rose and started a tune in the minor key, which seemed

to make the music plaintive and mournful. One of the three chanted or intoned one line at a time, always coming to the first note, on which the fathers would fall in with a peculiar force and unctio which was very striking to a stranger. After prayer another psalm and the reading of the Scripture, all in Gaelic, the text was announced, Heb. 13:8. As it was not intelligible to the writer he borrowed an English Bible and found it to be "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today and forever." I shall be excused from telling what the excellent preacher presented on that occasion. The sermon was most earnestly delivered and sometimes toned to the liking of the fathers. All listened intently and no sleepers or sleepy-heads were seen. The service over and the benediction pronounced the people thronged out of the two doors in the ends of the building, some hastening to their private boats but the majority to fill the scow in which one hundred people, on foot, conversing with one another were ferried by a cable to their buggies. The writer waited for the second instalment to go over and soon the scene became as peaceful as in the morning.

The two services, which some has called "double-barreled," were little longer than an ordinary English service. They were solemn and impressive and led the writer to think of the olden time in the psalm-singing churches of Pennsylvania, Guinston and Lower Chancetford, where the Scotch-Irish, so much akin to these Gaelic Highlanders, had habits and customs somewhat similar. Here at some seasons of the year several congregations gather from far and near to one place and in the open air celebrate the Lord's Supper, the members being admitted by token or card.

IN EVERYTHING GIVE THANKS.

By William Norton.

In everything give thanks!
When bread in fulness is thy daily store,
When near thy dwelling comes no plague nor blight,
When boding ills forecast no coming night,
When to thy riches each day addeth more,
Say not, "My hand hath gotten me this wealth."
Remember who it is that gives thee power.
The cunning hand and brain, the glow of health,—
Receive them humbly as God's freewill dower.
To boast give no place!
Thine own is all of grace.
In everything give thanks!
In everything give thanks!
When fail the flocks and herds, and fields are bare,
When lips needs press the bitter cup of pain,
When each day's close marks loss where once was gain,
O troubled soul! remember, in thy care,
The Master took the symbols of his death,—
With thanks he broke the bread and poured the wine,
Scourged Paul and Silas praised with every breath;
Habakkuk's field more barren was then thine.
Despair not! Trust and pray!
Commit to God thy way!
In everything give thanks!

If God were not just we could not trust him; if he were not merciful he could not trust us.

GRATITUDE OF HEART.

The whole Christian life centres in love. It has its spring in the infinite love of God, it seeks its outlet in praise, thanksgiving and service. "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear." Love draws us close together and binds us in one. As we love God we take Him into the heart and He enters into the life, and to praise and serve Him becomes the great object in our thoughts, plans, and aspirations. The joy of the Lord bursts forth in song. He is the author of all blessings, all that is good is the expression of His love, and grateful outpourings of the heart are our return. Herein the Christian religion stands alone, for it alone reveals God in His true relation to us and in the knowledge of Him we attain that element of His own nature in which gratitude rules every emotion and directs the whole course of life. Thus "He hath put a new song in my mouth." He himself is its theme: "The Lord is my strength and song, and He is become my salvation."

Thanksgiving is the necessary outflow of the experience of God's grace. One saved without thankfulness in his heart is unthinkable. To be conscious of God's love and daffly goodness without gratitude of heart and thanksgiving is not possible. In our selfishness we may undervalue His grace, we may fail to recognize His goodness, and so stifle the sweetest outgoings of the heart, but this cannot always be. The heart cannot always remain frozen and hard under the breath of God, and as it softens the springs of joy and praise begins to flow. "I will magnify the Lord with thanksgiving" becomes the joyful thought and resolution. And this speaks out to others in an invitation to join in the songs of praise: "O come, let us sing unto the Lord, . . . let us come before his presence with thanksgiving."

The Churchman says that on an ocean liner during a recent trip "a Jew sun-moned Christians to prayer, read to them, with a few changes, a Christian ritual, and spoke, what seemed to them, words of Christian truth." On the first Sabbath out there was no service. When the second came, Dr. Sigismund, a physician of New York, unwilling to spend another Sabbath thus, asked and obtained of the captain permission to conduct a service from the Prayer Book, substituting the words "through the Merciful Father of the Universe," for "through our Lord Jesus Christ." Christian hymn-books were used. The address was on the words of Paul, "Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one for another." Brotherly love, he said, was fundamental to both Jewish and Christian teaching. Very tenderly he asked the audience if opportunity offered, to kneel with his persecuted people fleeing from Russia, and pray for them. The service was very impressive.

"We should remember past mercies and blessings. If we do, our past will shine down upon us like a clear sky full of stars. Such remembering will keep the gratitude ever fresh in our hearts and the incense ever burning on the altar. Such a house of memory becomes a refuge to which we may flee in trouble. When sorrows rather thickly, when trials come, when the sun goes down and every star is quenched and there seems nothing left to our hearts in all the present, then the memory of a past full of goodness becomes a holy refuge for our souls."

Pride wants to do something to win salvation. Salvation wants to do something to win pride. Doing good to win salvation is putting the cart before the horse. Doing good after salvation is putting the horse where it belongs.