

THE
Free Presbyterian Magazine
 AND
 MONTHLY RECORD

(Issued by a Committee of the Free Presbyterian Synod.)

"Thou hast given a banner to them that fear Thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth."—Ps. lx. 4.

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Free Presbyterian Magazine
and MONTHLY RECORD.

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Sin.

II.

(Continued from page 404.)

IN the preceding issue we called attention to the wide gulf between the Bible view of sin and the view of it entertained by multitudes who, though recognising that there is such a thing as sin, do not look at it in the light of Scripture. It was pointed out that to have a right view of sin we must be convinced by the Holy Spirit. It is only then we have a correct view of the guilt and corruption of sin. In God's gracious act of justification the believer is not only pardoned all his sins but is accepted as righteous only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to him and received by faith alone. There is no increase or diminution of this righteousness for it is the imputation of Christ's righteousness which is eternally perfect. In regard to the corruption of the believer's nature God has not seen meet that it should be removed in a day. If He had so purposed it for His people He could have removed it as easily and as quickly as He did the dying thief's. But this is a prolonged work which happily for the believer is carried on not by angels in heaven or saints on earth but by the Holy Ghost Himself and where this good work is begun it is to be carried on to perfection. The Divine Worker will drive out all enemies however strongly entrenched they may be and however powerful until the whole of the heart be given to Christ forever. The Scriptures speak of this work as a crucifixion—

a slow, painful but certain process working towards death. This mortification is something far beyond the power of man and when it is going on the believer is not finding his spiritual condition improving day by day but like Christian in the Pilgrim's Progress he is getting worse and worse, *i.e.*, at least as far as his feelings are concerned. In reality he is making progress but the shining in of the heavenly light is showing him more and more how desperately wicked his heart is. No light but the true light from heaven can show him the loathsome nature of sin. Bright though the electric light is it cannot show us the minute particles of dust in a room but when a beam of light of the sun shines in then thousands of tiny specks of dust are seen dancing in the air. So is it with sin, no light of reason, education or training can reveal it to us until the true light shines from heaven. It is a humbling experience to feel after long years of profession that things are as they are with us—a ceaseless pouring forth from our corrupt hearts of streams of evil imaginations, wicked thoughts, unholy desires, rebellious plans and Satanic schemings. But let the believer rest assured that disconcerting and humbling though the experience be he is to be delivered from all these yet. It was not a cry with a note of despair that went up from the troubled heart of the Apostle when he said: "O wretched man that I am who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" For following up as quickly as it was uttered there was the expression of the triumphant confidence: "I thank God through Christ Jesus our Lord" (Roms. vii. 24, 25). It is a pleasant theme on which to exercise the believer's thoughts that notwithstanding all the corruption of sin which is within that through the mercy of our God and His infinite wisdom they shall one day be presented before the Father without spot or wrinkle or any such thing and that they shall be before Him holy and without blemish. How this can be they do not know but faithful is He who has promised. They have a long distance yet to travel but the work to be done is entrusted to no human hands and the purposes that are working for this end and which

are the plans of that God whose counsels stand fast forever will be accomplished in His own good time. Towards that day God's people may with hope turn their waiting eyes and with confidence say: "It doth not *yet* appear what we shall be: but we know that when He shall appear we shall be *like Him*." That great hope is not resting on a baseless foundation but has behind it the eternal purpose of Jehovah in the predestination of His people when He decreed that they should be conformed to the image of His Son (Rom. viii. 29).

We must turn now to another aspect of our subject. In the foregoing remarks it has been pointed out that it is only by the work of the Holy Spirit that men can be convinced of sin. Now, while this holds true it does not keep men from classifying some of their fellows as sinners. Most men will readily consign to this category—murderers, idolaters, adulterers, fornicators, thieves, etc., but the man who lives uprightly and morally, is not a trouble to his neighbours, pays his way and does not take liberty with his neighbour's belongings, is reckoned a righteous man. We find this classification in vogue in the days of our Saviour. The Pharisees were righteous in their own eyes but others, such as the publicans or tax-gatherers, were reckoned by them as sinners. This mode of classification is still resorted to and when one asks himself on what grounds is the classification made and why it differs from God's classification the answer is at hand. Man has set up a standard by which he is measuring himself and in accordance with this standard he classifies his fellows. With some it is higher than with others, but it has one *fatal* defect, it is not God's standard. Saul of Tarsus measured himself by it until God's high standard was presented to him and from that day all hope of getting to heaven by the works of the Law was gone forever. God's standard is exceeding high and exceeding broad—"to love the Lord with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength and with all our mind and our neighbour as ourselves." In the presence of that standard who can tell what high hopes and vain imaginings have come tumbling down.

This is God's standard and well it is for multitudes of our race that there was One who met it to the fullest or the sinner when confronted with it might say there and then: "There is no hope for ever." But the infinite wisdom and mercy of God opened a door wide enough through which a countless number who were given to Christ have already entered and shall enter into life everlasting—"After that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared. Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Tit. iii. 4, 5).

Now, it is because of man's totally inadequate standard that his views differ so materially from what Scripture says about sin. Of course, there is also the darkness of his mind and the moral twist that the fall has given so that he often calls good evil and evil good, light darkness and darkness light. Then this condition explains further why some sins great and heinous in God's eyes are not regarded by the world as sins at all. For instance (1) it is a great sin that we as creatures of God should not glorify Him or feel within us an overwhelming desire to seek His glory. How many regard this as a sin? yet God is a jealous God and He is jealous for the glory of His name. Hence Scripture regards it as a monstrous sin that His glory should be given to graven images or that His name should be blasphemed. (2) It is a great sin that we believe not in Jesus Christ. God gave abundant testimony that His Son was coming into the world, by promises, types and prophecies, yet men will not receive this message. When He appeared among them God testified on more than one occasion that this was His beloved Son. His presence was confirmed by mighty signs and many infallible proofs yet men reject all this as if they were not committing an exceeding great sin. Charge a man with being a thief or a liar and however true the charge is he is up in arms in self defence. But charge him with being an unbeliever and the charge is treated with unconcern and indifference. Yet, who can measure the enormity

of the sin that calls in question the testimony of the God who cannot lie and rejects Him who is the eternal truth? (3) The rejection of God's righteousness as set forth in the gospel is not considered a sin, yet it has shut the door of heaven in the face of thousands upon thousands of the human race. This was the rock on which the Jews were wrecked—they went about to establish their own righteousness and did not submit themselves to the righteousness of God. This is the rock on which millions in the Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches are suffering shipwreck and yet how lightly this sin is regarded. (4) How many again treat secret sins as not worthy of notice. If sinners are not exposed and found out that is all they seek and their resorting to many devices to cover up their sin and the pleasure they have if successful all go to show that fear of man is more in their eyes than the fear of God against whom the sin is committed. (5) Heart sins, in a sense, are secret sins also but they do not trouble the sinner as they ought to do. Man is not our judge and in some ways this is a mercy for the blunders that even good men make ought to make us thankful they are not our judges but we have a Judge who judges not according to outward appearance but according to the thoughts of the heart and that will make His judgment unspeakably solemn to some one day. As a man thinks in his heart so is he. In the day when He will lay judgment to the line and righteousness to the plummet how many refuges of lies will be exposed and swept away (Is. xxviii. 17). When God will begin to enquire how we ordered our thoughts before Him most of us will feel ill at ease—all of us should. In leaving this subject we would desire to remind our readers that terrible and subtle though sin be yet "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I. John i. 7).

Assurance saith, I believe my sins are pardoned through Christ; faith's language is, I believe on Christ for the pardon of them.—*William Gurnall*.

Synod Sermon.

Preached by the Rev. WILLIAM GRANT, Halkirk,
at Glasgow, 17th May, 1932.

When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, "Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" And they said, "Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets." He saith unto them, "But whom say ye that I am?" And Simon Peter answered and said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered and said unto him, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. xvi. 13-17).

IN the opening verses of this chapter we read of the Lord Jesus Christ being assailed by the enmity of the Pharisees and Sadducees. In general, these sects were at enmity between themselves, but in despising Christ they made common cause. "There is no new thing under the sun." Such unholy alliances are still common among men. The disciples were then warned by Christ to "take heed and beware" of Pharisee and Sadducee doctrines. These two great destructive evils endangered the life of the Church. The exhortation is still "take heed and beware."

Following that discourse a private discussion took place between Christ and His disciples as they went along the coasts of Caesarea Philippi. The Saviour referred to Himself as "the Son of Man." His humanity was a reality. He possessed a true body and a reasonable soul. He was made of the seed of David according to the flesh. He was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary—"Bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh." It is written of Him that "being in the form of God, He thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men, and, being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. ii. 6-8).

He had done many mighty works among them. Some were asking, "Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty

works?" Others had to say: "Never man spake like this man." Now He asks whom do they regard me, the Son of Man, to be? The Saviour already knew what the people in general thought of Him, but He was now to try the faith of His disciples. Thus, having asked the question: "Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man am," He distinguishes between the disciples and others, saying, but "Whom say *ye* that I am,"—*ye*, my disciples—preachers of the gospel? This is a question of vital importance. All the glory of Christ as Mediator hangs upon the glory of His Person.

I desire to direct your attention as the Lord may enable me to: I. The variety of opinions which prevailed regarding the *Lord Jesus Christ*. II. the beautiful confession of the true Church of God as expressed by Peter saying: "Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God. III. The divine origin of this confession—"Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father, which is in Heaven."

I. *The variety of opinions*. Some said that He was John the Baptist; others said, Elias; and some, that one of the old prophets was risen again. All were agreed that, He was a good man and that His doctrine was not like that of the Scribes and Pharisees. But they came far short of the truth. As yet they knew Him not. "No man can say that Jesus is Lord but by the Holy Ghost." Many and varied were the opinions, ranging from His being "a good man" to His being "a malefactor." Yet, this was He, concerning whom a voice was heard from heaven, saying: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him."

We may see the same thing in our land at the present day. Christ and His Gospel are just as little understood in reality and that is an evidence of the work of the Holy Spirit being largely withheld. What is the answer of Modernism to this question—Modernism which denies the infallibility of the Old and New Testament Scriptures which are the only rule given to guide man? Modernism, which is Scotland's blight, says concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, that He was "a perfect man"

but denies that He is very God—the one Mediator—the one High Priest—the only source of life and peace. Vague ideas about Christ are common but experimental acquaintance with Christ is rare. Happy are they who can say of Him: “My beloved is mine and I am His” (Song ii. 16).

Evolutionists say: “He is the great master product of Evolution,” “the flower of humanity,” but the flower of which they speak is artificial—lifeless. It has no fragrance. It is not “the Rose of Sharon;” it is not the “Lily of the Valleys.” It is not the Christ of divine revelation but of men’s imagination. Let us beware of a religion that consists, in men’s opinions, speculations and theories. “If any man will do God’s will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God” (John vii. 17).

II. *The beautiful confession*:—“Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” The disciples’ faith shone brighter because of the fact that they dwelt among hardened and unbelieving Jews. Few were for Christ while many were against Him. The heads of the Jewish nation, the Scribes, Priests, and Pharisees, refused to receive Jesus as the Messiah. Further, the Lord was at this time in the “form of a servant,” without any visible marks of a King. Yet even then Simon Peter says: “Thou art the Christ”—the promised Saviour, the true Prophet greater than Moses, the long predicted Messiah. This confession was an evidence of living faith. To-day the question is addressed to us in particular who profess to be His sent messengers: “Whom say ye that I am?” Do we in doctrine and in practice, subscribe to this confession that Jesus is the Christ—the glorious Emmanuel, God and man in two distinct natures and one person for ever?

Patriarchs, Prophets and Apostles testified to His being co-equal, con-substantial, co-eternal, with the Father. John, the fore-runner, declared: “I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.” Andrew went to his brother, Simon, saying: “We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ.” The poor outcast of Samaria exclaimed: “Come see

a man who told me all things that ever I did. Is not this the Christ?" Peter's confession became that of the Church of God in all ages. Why was the Reformation necessary? It was because the Son of the living God was no longer the theme and object of worship. Prelacy and Papacy had robbed Him of His Kingly glory in doctrine and practice. The noble Martyrs, Covenanters, and others, followed by generation after generation of witnesses maintained an unwavering testimony to Christ, as being the sole Head of His body, the Church. In keeping with that testimony, the Free Presbyterian Church, about forty years ago, came into existence as a distinctive body and continued the Church of the Reformation in Scotland. The older witnesses, who took an active part in upholding the banner at that time, are fast disappearing from among us. To-night, we mourn the removal of one of them, in the person of the late Rev. Neil Cameron. He was wont to take a prominent part in our Synod meetings, and for six and thirty years he preached within the walls of this church, "Christ and Him crucified." He earnestly contended for "the faith once delivered to the saints." He enjoined others to do likewise as he closed his eyes in death saying with the Psalmist: "All my hope and confidence is placed in Thee alone." "It is not of him that willet, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." It is all of free and sovereign grace, it is by faith that any man is saved from sin, "the wages of which is death." O to have saving knowledge, and a zeal according to knowledge. Those who get this embrace with their whole heart, Peter's confession: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

II. *The divine origin of this Confession*:—"Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in Heaven." This light arose neither from nature, nor from education. The Christian religion is a divine revelation. The truth concerning Jesus being the Christ, the anointed of the Father, the Mediator, the Messiah could never be known but by the revelation of the Holy Spirit. It is the Spirit that

convinces of sin, works repentance, faith, love, and new obedience in the soul. The absence of the work of the Holy Spirit accounts for the flood of freak religions, such as Spiritualism, Russellism, etc., which overflow the land. We agree with the writer who said that the characteristic of the present day is "to make truth subservient to a spurious charity, and everything to popularity." Thus there is an obliterating of the distinction between truth and error in doctrine. In practice we see the House of God largely turned into a synagogue of Satan under the plea of reaching the young. It is not by a flesh-pleasing religion, with its dancing, whist-drive, card-playing accompaniments, that souls are to be set free from sin and its miseries. Nothing short of the irresistible power of the Holy Spirit will draw sinners to Christ, who said: "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." It is here alone that there is hope and encouragement for those who go forth to preach the gospel. A sound creed and orthodoxy of itself, will not suffice. It is through divine revelation that Ethiopia will stretch out her hands to God and His ancient people, the Jews, will look upon Him whom they have pierced. That day is coming and world wide events seem to indicate its approach.

A wonderful benediction was pronounced by Christ upon Peter, saying: "*Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona.*" He was blessed in the knowledge he possessed:—"This is life eternal to know thee and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." In this knowledge is the sum of happiness. We need the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. We cannot have too much of "the unity of the Spirit," but we are in danger of "Church Unions" or "religious combines," at the sacrifice of truth. Union is not strength unless it is *union in the truth* and consequently *for the truth in doctrine and in practice*. Peter's confession of faith must be held.

Let us ponder seriously our generation's answer to the Saviour's question: "Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" Our disregard of the fourth commandment involves

an answer. Our legislators, in legislating against the laws of God (Sabbath Cinemas, Betting, etc.), say in effect: "We will not have this man to rule over us." The inordinate love of pleasure, among all classes, also involves an answer. Our spiritual slothfulness and formality reveal much of the spirit of Gadara, and the hand of God is out against us, industrially and otherwise. He says: "If ye walk contrary to me I will walk contrary to you."

Is there no encouragement? Yes, every needed encouragement is in Him, who is "the Christ, the Son of the living God." "*My Word* shall not return unto me void. It shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." Out of confusion He will bring order. He will build the temple and He shall bear the glory. Therefore, let us give heed to the message of the sweet Psalmist of Israel:

"Be of good courage and He strength
Unto your heart shall send,
All ye whose hope and confidence
Doth on the Lord depend."

Gems from the Rev. John Willison, Dundee.

1. **O** WHAT need you will have of Christ then as an advocate with God, when the question is to be determined, where your mansion is to be assigned through all eternity, whether in heaven or hell! O then be looking always to Christ with the eye of faith. Live in the constant thoughts of this blessed Mediator. Let Him be first in your thoughts in the morning, and last in your thoughts at night.

2. It might be much to the glory of God and good of souls, that a great part of our testaments and latter wills should consist of solemn charges, exhortations and blessings to our children, or those to whom we may bequeath any legacy; so as they can never open our testaments, or look into them, but they might hear something that may make impressions on their souls for their spiritual edification, and for quickening them to the diligent practice of both family and personal godliness.

3. O Christless sinner, what will you do in the day of visitation? to whom will you flee for help? Your houses, your lands, your money, your honours, your companions, your relations, will all be miserable comforters to you. Everything will look black and dismal round about you. If you look without you for help, you may see your friends weeping and lamenting your case, but this will do nothing but increase your vexation and misery. If you look within you for relief, conscience, that before you would not suffer to speak, will meet you with bitter stings and upbraidings. It will bring to your view the sins you had forgotten, the time you have mis-spent, the health you have mis-improved, the offers of grace you have refused, the great salvation you have neglected. What folly was it for thee to provoke God and slight Christ, for a little worldly profit, or a little brutish pleasure? Can these relieve thee when the arrows of the Almighty stick within thee, and the terrors of God do set themselves in array against thy soul? In the meantime, the devil that tempted you to your soul-ruining course, will step in, and represent your sins in the blackest colours and aggravations, to render you altogether hopeless and desperate. O sinner, thou that refusedst rest from Christ in the day of health and grace, shalt find no ease from the creature in the day of sickness and death.

4. Consider how little reason a believer hath to be much in love with the present life. 1st—"Tis a sinful life; sin dwells in your nature, breaks out in your life, and pollutes all your duties. How oft have you groaned under this burden; and should you not be glad to be eternally delivered from it? 2nd—It is a life of diseases and infirmities; and should you not be willing to be cured of them all at once? 3rd—It is a life of temptations: Satan is still harassing thee; and should you not be desirous to be out of his reach? 4th—It is a life of persecutions from the wicked; they hate, reproach, and injure you many ways. And is it not desirable to be where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary be at rest? 5th—It is a life of clouds and darkness; your sun is

often veiled, and your evidences obscured, which occasions many bitter complaints. And should you not desire that time when the day shall break and all shadows flee away? 6th—It is a life of calamities and fears; it is like a stormy sea, where one wave rolls on the back of another.

5. Mr. John Holland, a godly minister, continued his usual practice of expounding the Scripture in his family to the last; and, the day before his death, he called for the Bible, and causing another to read the eighth chapter of the Romans, he discoursed upon it verse by verse; but on a sudden he said, "O stay your reading! what brightness is this I see? Have you lighted any candles?" A stander by said, "No, it is the sunshine" (for it was about five o'clock in a clear summer's evening). "Sunshine," saith he, "nay, it is my Saviour's shine. Now farewell world, welcome heaven! the day-star from on high hath visited my heart: O speak it when I am gone, and preach it at my funeral. God dealeth familiarly with man: I feel His mercy: I see His majesty. Whether in the body or out of the body, I cannot tell, God knoweth; but I see things that are unutterable." And in this rapture he continued till he died.

6. Surely the day shall break, and the shadows flee away; my King cometh, my well-beloved is on His way; He hath sent His letter before me to warn me of it, saying, "Behold I come quickly." O that, like the cold and wearied night-watch, I may be looking out for the appearing of the morning-star, and the breaking of the eastern sky; and may be still crying, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus; come quickly."

7. I am living on the righteousness of Christ, yea, dying in the Lord. Even so, come. I am detained here, upon the shore, waiting for a fair wind to carry me over this Jordan. I have waited, and will wait for thy salvation, O Lord. The Lord is a rock, and His work is perfect: Lord, perfect what concerneth me.

8. O for more faith! May my faith ripen to a full assurance, that I may go off the stage rejoicing, and that an abundant entrance may be ministered to me into the kingdom

of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. O for more faith, that I may die like Simeon when he had Christ in his arms, saying, "Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy Word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."—*Christian Treasury*.

Notes from Luther.

1. **W**EALTH is the smallest thing on earth, the least gift that God has bestowed on mankind. What is it in comparison with God's Word—what in comparison with corporal gifts, as beauty, health, etc.? nay, what is it to the gift of the mind, as understanding, wisdom, etc.? Yet are men so eager after it, that no labour, pains, or risk is regarded in the acquisition of riches. Wealth has in it neither material, formal, efficient, nor final cause, nor anything else that is good; therefore, our Lord God commonly gives riches to those from whom He withholds spiritual good.

2. Such like fellows does the world produce; grammarians, logicians, rhetoricians, and philosophers, all falsifying the Holy Writ, and sophisticating it with their arts, whereas, it ought to remain, every point in its own place, whereto God ordered and appointed it. Divinity should be empress, and philosophy and other arts merely her servants, not to govern and master her, as Servetus, Campanus, and other seducers would do. God preserve His Church, which by Him is carried as a child in the mother's womb, and defend her from such philosophical divinity.

3. Christ preached without wages, yet the godly women, whom He had cleansed and made whole and delivered from wicked spirits and diseases, ministered unto Him of that which they had (Luke viii.). They gave Him supply, and He also took and received that which others freely and willingly gave Him (John xix.).

4. Faithful Christians should heed only the embassy of our blessed Saviour Christ, and what He says. All they who alter and construe the Gospel through human authority, power, and repute, act very unchristianlike, and against God. No temporal potentate allows his ambassador to exceed his instructions, not in one word; yet we, in this celestial and divine embassy and legation will be so presumptuous as to add and diminish to and from our heavenly instruction, according to our vain conceit and self-will.

5. I am persuaded that if at this time Peter, in person, should preach all the articles of Holy Scripture, and only deny the Pope's authority, power, and primacy, and say, that the Pope is not the head of all Christendom, they would cause him to be hanged. Yea, if Christ Himself were again on earth, and should preach, without all doubt, the Pope would crucify Him again. Therefore, let us expect the same treatment; but better it is to build upon Christ, than upon the Pope. If, from my heart, I did not believe that after this life there were another (that is eternal life), then I would sing another song, and lay my burthen on another's neck.

6. We cannot pray without faith in Christ the Mediator. Turks, Jews, and Papists may repeat the words of prayer, but they cannot pray. And although the Apostles were taught this Lord's Prayer by Christ, and prayed often, yet, they prayed not as they should have prayed; for Christ says: Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name, whereas, doubtless, they had prayed much, speaking the words. But when the Holy Ghost came then they prayed aright in the name of Christ.

7. Such fellows as Tetzels, Cochlaeus, and Lemnius I nothing regard. We should have no dealing with such backbiters and slanderers, they are most detestable; they appear not openly in the field, nor come right in our sight, but, in their poisoned hatred, scorn everything we do. They boast highly of the Fathers; let them; we have one Father, which is in heaven, who is above all fathers; their piece and patch-work is of no weight.

Supposing Him to be the Gardener.*

By C. H. SPURGEON.

“Supposing Him to be the gardener.”—John xx. 15.

I WAS sitting about a fortnight ago in a very lovely garden, in the midst of all kinds of flowers blooming in delightful abundance all around. Screening myself from the heat of the sun under the overhanging boughs of an olive, I cast my eyes upon palms and bananas, roses and camellias, oranges and aloes, lavender and heliotrope. The garden was full of colour and beauty, perfume and fruitfulness. Surely the gardener, who had fashioned and who kept in order that lovely spot, deserved great commendation. So I thought, and then it came to me to meditate upon the church of God as a garden, and to suppose the Lord Jesus to be the gardener, and then to think of what would most assuredly happen if it were so. “Supposing Him to be the gardener,” my mind conceived of a paradise where all sweet things flourish and all evil things are rooted up. If an ordinary worker had produced such beauty as I then saw and enjoyed on earth, what beauty and glory must surely be brought forth “supposing *Him* to be the gardener”! You know the “Him” to whom we refer, the ever-blessed Son of God, whom Mary Magdalene mistook for the gardener. She was mistaken; but if we are under His Spirit’s teaching we shall not make a mistake if now we indulge in a quiet meditation upon our ever-blessed Lord, “supposing Him to be the gardener.”

It is not an unnatural supposition, surely; for if we may truly sing—

“We are a garden walled around,
Chosen and made peculiar ground.”

that enclosure needs a gardener. Are we not all the plants of His right hand planting? Do we not all need watering and tending by His constant and gracious care? He Himself

*This sermon is published by permission of the publishers, Marshall, Morgan & Scott, Paternoster Buildings, London, E.C., from whom Mr. Spurgeon’s sermons may still be had.—Editor.

says, "I am the true vine: my Father is the husbandman," and that is one view of it; but we may also sing, with Isaiah, "My well-beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: and He fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine"—that is to say, He acted as gardener to it. The image is pregnant with suggestions and useful teaching.

In one of His own parables our Lord makes Himself to be the dresser of the vineyard. When the "certain man" came and saw the fig tree that brought forth no fruit, he said unto the dresser of his vineyard, "Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?" Who was it that intervened between that profitless tree and the axe, but our great Intercessor and Interposer? He it is who continually comes forward with, "Let it alone this year also till I shall dig about it, and dung it." In this case He Himself takes the character of the vine-dresser, and we are not wrong in "supposing Him to be the gardener."

If we would be supported by a type, our Lord takes the name of "the Second Adam," and the First Adam was a gardener. Behold, the Church is Christ's Eden, watered by the river of life, and so fertilized that all manner of fruits are brought forth unto God; and He, our second Adam, walks in this spiritual Eden to dress it and to keep it; and so by a type we see that we are right in "supposing Him to be the gardener." And so I sat me still, and indulged the suggested line of thought, which I hope may open many roads of meditation for your hearts also.

I. "Supposing Him to be the gardener," we have here the key to many wonders in the garden of His church.

The first wonder is *that there should be a church at all in the world*; that there should be a garden blooming in the midst of this sterile waste. Upon a hard and flinty rock the Lord has made the Eden of His church to grow. How came it to be here—an oasis of life in a desert of death? How

came there to be a people for God, separated, and sanctified, and consecrated, and ordained to bring forth fruit unto His name? Assuredly it could not have been so at all if the doing of it had been left to man. We understand its existence, "supposing Him to be the gardener," but nothing else can account for it. The garden in which I sat was made on the bare face of the rock, and almost all the earth of which its terraces were composed had been brought up there, from the shore below, by hard labour. It was not by its own nature that the garden was found in such a place; but by skill and labour it had been formed: even so the church of God has had to be constructed by the Lord Jesus, who is the author as well as the perfecter of His garden. Painfully, with wounded hands, has He built each terrace, and fashioned each bed, and planted each plant. All the flowers have had to be watered with His bloody sweat, and watched by His tearful eyes: the nail-prints in His hands, and the wound in His side are the tokens of what it cost Him to make a new Paradise. He has given His life for the life of every plant that is in the garden, and not one of them had been there on any other theory than "supposing Him to be the gardener."

Besides, there is another wonder. *How comes the church of God to flourish in such a clime?* This present evil world is very uncongenial to the growth of grace, and the church is not able by herself alone to resist the evil influences which surround her. The church contains within herself elements which tend to her own destruction, if left alone; even as the garden has present in its soil all the germs of a tangled thicket of weeds. How is it, then, that the church is a fair garden unto God, and there are sweet spices grown in its beds, and lovely flowers are gathered by the divine hand from its borders? Hear ye the word of the Lord, and learn the reason for the growth of His church below. "I, the Lord, do keep it: I will water it every moment; lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day." The reason for the existence of a spiritual people still in the midst of a godless and perverse

generation can only be accounted for by "supposing Him to be the gardener."

Another mystery is also cleared up by this supposition. The wonder is *that ever you and I should have been placed among the plants of the Lord.* Why are we allowed to grow in the garden of His grace? How is it that we have been kept there, and borne with in our barrenness, when He might long ago have said, "Cut it down: why cumbereth it the ground?" That we have not long ago been cut off as fruitless branches of the vine; that we are left still upon the stem, in the hope that we may ultimately bring forth fruit, is a great marvel. I know not how it is that we have been spared, except upon this ground—"supposing Him to be the gardener." Surely the hoe has spared many of us simply and only because He who is meek and lowly in heart is the gardener."

Dear friends, there is one mercy with regard to this church which I have often had to thank God for, namely, *that evils should have been shut out for so long a time.* During the period in which we have been together as pastor and people, we have enjoyed uninterrupted prosperity, going from strength to strength in the work of the Lord. I do not know how it is that we have been kept together in love, helped to abound in labour, and enabled to be firm in the faith, unless it be that special grace has watched over us. We are full of faults; we have nothing to boast of; and yet no church has been more divinely favoured. I cannot make it out except when I fall into "supposing *Him* to be the gardener." I cannot trace our prosperity to the pastor, certainly; nor even to my beloved friends the elders and deacons, nor even to the best of you with your fervent love and holy zeal. I think it must be that Jesus has been the gardener. Yes, *He* has been with us, blessed be His name! Hence all this peace, and unity, and enthusiasm. May we never grieve Him so that He shall turn away from us; but rather let us entreat Him, saying, "Abide with us. Thou that dwellest in the gardens, let this

be one of the gardens in which thou dost deign to dwell until the day break and the shadows flee away."

II. Let your imaginations run along with mine while I say that "supposing Him to be the gardener" should be a spur to many duties.

One of the duties of a Christian is *joy*. That is a blessed religion which among its precepts commands men to be happy. When joy becomes a duty, who would wish to neglect it? Surely it must help every little plant to drink in the sunlight when it is whispered among the flowers that Jesus is the gardener. "Oh," you say, "I am such a little plant; I do not grow well; I do not put forth so much leafage, nor are there so many flowers on me as on many round about me!" It is quite right that you should think little of yourself: perhaps to droop your head is a part of your beauty. In the Mentone garden right before me grew the orange and the aloe, and other fine and noticeable plants, but on a wall to my left grew common wallflowers and saxifrages, and tiny herbs such as we find on our own rocky places. Now, the gardener had cared for all of these, little as well as great. The smallest saxifrage could say, "He is my gardener just as surely as he is the gardener of the Gloire de Dijon or Maréchal Niel." Oh, feeble child of God, the Lord taketh care of you! Oh, little plant, perhaps it is not yours to grow very fast; you may be a slow-growing shrub by nature, and you would not be healthy if you were to run to wood. Anyhow, be this your joy, you are in the garden of the Lord, and, "supposing Him to be the gardener," He will make the best of you. You cannot be in better hands.

Another mystery is also cleared up by this supposition. *praying for it*. We ought whenever the Sabbath morning dawns to pray our Well-beloved to come into His garden and eat His pleasant fruits. All day long our cry should go up to Him, "O Lord, behold, and visit this vine, and the vineyard which Thy right hand hath planted." We ought to agonize with Him that He would come and manifest Himself to us as

He does not unto the world. For what is a garden if the gardener never comes near it? What is the difference between it and the wilderness, if he to whom it belongs never lifts up spade or pruning-hook upon it? So that it is our necessity that we have Christ with us, "supposing Him to be the gardener;" and it is our bliss that we have Christ walking between our beds and borders, watching every plant, training, tending, maturing all. "Supposing Him to be the gardener," it is well; for from Him is our fruit found.

"Supposing Him to be the gardener," there is another duty, and that is, let each one of us *yield himself up entirely to Him*. A plant does not know how it ought to be treated; it knows not when it should be watered or when it should be kept dry: a fruit-tree is no judge of when it needs to be pruned, or digged, or dunged. The wit and wisdom of the garden lieth not in the flowers and shrubs, but in the gardener. Now, then, if you and I are here to-day with any self-will and carnal judgment about us, let us seek to lay it all aside that we may be absolutely at our Lord's disposal. "Supposing Him to be the gardener," thou mayest well say, "Here, kind gardener, thy poor plant bows itself to thy hand; train me as thou wilt. I would neither have will, nor wish, nor wit, nor way; but I would be as nothing in thy hands: be to me my wisdom and my all." Depend upon it, happiness lives next door to the spirit of complete acquiescence in the will of God, and it will be easy to exercise that perfect acquiescence when we suppose the Lord Jesus to be the gardener.

One more duty I would mention. "Supposing Him to be the gardener," then *let us bring forth fruit to Him*. I believe that most of you do desire to glorify God; you feel a holy ambition to show forth His praises who has called you out of darkness into His marvellous light. You wish to bring others to Christ, because you yourselves have been brought to life and liberty in Him. Now, let this be a stimulus to your fruit-bearing, that Jesus is the gardener. Where you have brought forth a single cluster, bring forth a hundred. If

Jesus is the gardener, and is to bear the blame or the honour of what we produce, then let us use up every drop of sap and strain every fibre, that, to the utmost of which our manhood is capable, we may produce a fair reward for our Lord's travail. Surely we ought to do something worthy of such a Lord. Each little flower in the garden of the Lord should wear its brightest hues, and pour forth its rarest perfume, because Jesus cares for it. The best of all possible good should be yielded by every plant in our Father's garden, supposing Jesus to be the gardener.

III. Thirdly, I have found in this supposition a relief from crushing responsibility. One has a work given him of God to do, and if he does it rightly he cannot do it carelessly. The first thing when he wakes he asks, "How is the work prospering?" and the last thought at night is, "What can I do to fulfil my calling?" Sometimes the anxiety even troubles his dreams, and he sighs, "O Lord, send now prosperity!" How is the garden prospering which we are set to tend? Are we broken-hearted because nothing appears to flourish? It is a very blessed relief to an excess of care if we can fall into the habit of "supposing Him to be the gardener." If Jesus be the Master and Lord in all things, it is not mine to keep all the church in order. I am not responsible for the growth of every Christian, nor for every backslider's errors, nor for every professor's faults of life. This burden must not lie on me so that I shall be crushed thereby. "Supposing Him to be the gardener," then, the church enjoys a better oversight than mine, and all must go well in the long run. I beg you earnest workers, who are becoming depressed, to think this out a little. I pray you, bound your anxiety by the facts of the case. So you have a number of young people around you, and you are watching for their souls as they that must give account. This is well; but do not be worried and wearied; for, after all, the saving and the keeping of those souls is not in your hands, but it rests with One far more able than yourself. Just think that

the Lord is the gardener. I know it is so in matters of providence. A certain man of God in troublous times became quite unable to do his duty because he laid to heart so much the ills of the age; he became depressed and disturbed, and he went on board a vessel, intending to leave the country, which was getting into such a state that he could no longer endure it. Then one said to him, "Mr. Whitelock, are you the manager of the world?" No, he was not quite that. "Did not God get on pretty well with it before you were born, and don't you think He will do very well with it when you are dead?" That reflection helped to relieve the good man's mind, and he went back to do his duty. I want you thus to perceive the limit of your responsibility: you are not the gardener himself; you are only one of his boys, set to run on errands, or to do a bit of digging. The garden is well enough managed even though you are not head manager in it.

While this relieves us of anxiety it makes labour for Christ very sweet, because if the garden does not seem to repay us for our trouble we say to ourselves, "It is not my garden after all. 'Supposing Him to be the gardener,' I am quite willing to work on a barren piece of rock, or tie up an old withered bough, or dig a worthless sod; for, if it only pleases Jesus, the work is for that one sole reason profitable to the last degree."

Then there is that succession in the garden which we cannot keep up. Plants will die down, and others must be put into their places or the garden will grow bare; but we know not where to find these fresh flowers. We say, "When yonder good man dies who will succeed him?" That is a question I have heard many a time, till I am rather weary of it. "Who is to follow such a man?" Let us wait till he is gone and needs following. Why sell the man's coat when he can wear it himself? We are apt to think when this race of good brethren shall die out, that none will arise worthy to unloose the latchets of their shoes. Well, friend, I could suppose a great many things, but this morning my text is,

"Supposing Him to be the gardener," and on that supposition I expect that the Lord has other plants in reserve which you have not yet seen, and these will exactly fit into our places when they become empty, and the Lord will keep up the true apostolical succession till the day of His second advent.

IV. Fourthly, I want you to notice that this supposition will give you a deliverance from many gloomy fears. I walked down the garden, and I saw a place where all the path was strewn with leaves and broken branches, and stones, and I saw the earth upon the flower-beds tossed about, and roots lying quite out of the ground: all was in disorder. Had a dog been amusing himself? or had a mischievous child been at work? No: in a minute or two I saw the gardener come back, and I perceived that *he* had been making all this disarrangement. He had been digging, and hacking, and mess-making; and all for the good of the garden. It may be it has happened to some of you that you have been a good deal clipped lately, and in your domestic affairs things have not been in so fair a state as you could have wished: it may be in the church we have seen ill weeds plucked up, and barren branches lopped, so that everything is *en déshabille*. Well, if the Lord has done it, our gloomy fears are idle. "Supposing Him to be the gardener," all is well.

As I was talking this over with my friend, I said to him—"Supposing Him to be the gardener," then *the serpent* will have a bad time of it. Supposing Adam to be the gardener, then the serpent gets in and has a chat with his wife, and mischief comes of it; but supposing Jesus to be the gardener, woe to thee, serpent: there is a blow for thy head within half a minute if thou dost but show thyself within the boundary. So, if we are afraid that the devil should get in among us, let us always in prayer entreat that there may be no space for the devil, because the Lord Jesus Christ fills all, and keeps out the adversary. I am sometimes troubled by the question—What if roots of bitterness should spring up among us to trouble us? Who is to prevent this? Only the Lord Jesus

by His Spirit. He can keep out this evil, "supposing Him to be the gardener." The root which beareth wormwood will grow but little where Jesus is. Dwell with us, Lord, as a church and people: by Thy Holy Spirit reside with us and in us, and never depart from us, and then no root of bitterness shall spring up to trouble us.

Then comes another fear. Suppose the living waters of God's Spirit should not come to water the garden, what then? We cannot make them flow, for the Spirit is a sovereign, and He flows where He pleases. Ah, but the Spirit of God will be in our garden, "supposing our Lord to be the gardener." He will "pour water on him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground." But what if the sunlight of His love should not shine on the garden? if the fruits should never ripen, if there should be no peace, no joy in the Lord? That cannot happen "supposing Him to be the gardener;" for His face is the sun and His countenance scatters those health-giving beams, and nurturing warmth, and perfecting influences which are needful for maturing the saints in all the sweetness of grace to the glory of God. So, "supposing Him to be the gardener" I fling away my doubts and fears, and invite you who bear the church upon your heart to do the same.

V. Fifthly, here is a warning for the careless, "supposing Him to be the gardener." Many are to the church what weeds are to a garden. They are not planted by God; they are bringing forth no fruit to His glory. My dear friend, I have tried often to get at you, to impress you, but I cannot. Take heed; for one of these days, "supposing Him to be the gardener," He will reach you, and you shall know what that word meaneth, "Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up." Take heed to yourselves, I pray.

Others among us are like the branches of the vine which bear no fruit. We have often spoken very sharply to these, and yet we have not touched their consciences. Ah, but "supposing Him to be the gardener," He will fulfil that

sentence: "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit He taketh away." *He* will get at you, if *we* cannot. Would God you would turn unto the Lord with full purpose of heart; so that instead of being a weed you might become a choice flower; that instead of a dry stick, you might be a fruit-bearing branch of the vine.

VI. Another set of thoughts may well arise as a quietus to those who complain, "supposing Him to be the gardener." Certain of us have been made to suffer much physical pain, which often bites into the spirits, and makes the heart to stoop: others have suffered heavy temporal losses, having had to endure privation, perhaps even to penury. Are you ready to complain against the Lord for all this? I pray you, do not so. Take the supposition of the text into your mind this morning. The Lord has been pruning you sharply, cutting off your best boughs, and you seem to be constantly tormented with the knife. Yes, but "supposing Him to be the gardener," suppose that your loving Lord has wrought it all, that from His own hand all your grief has come, every cut, and gash, and slip: does not this alter the case? Hath not the Lord done it? Well, then, if it be so, put your finger to your lip and be quiet, until you are able from your heart to say, "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, and blessed be the name of the Lord."

Especially I speak to those who have suffered bereavement. I can hardly express to you how strange I feel at this moment when my sermon revives a memory so sweet dashed with such exceeding bitterness. I sat with my friend and secretary in that garden, and we were in perfect health, rejoicing in the goodness of the Lord. We returned home, and within five days I was smitten with disabling pain; and worse, far worse than that, he was called upon to lose his wife. We said to one another as we sat there reading the Word of God and meditating, "How happy we are! Dare we think of being so happy? Must it not speedily end?" I little thought I should have to say for him, "Alas, my

brother, thou art brought very low, for the delight of thine eyes is taken from thee." But here is our comfort: the Lord hath done it. The best rose in the garden is gone. Who has taken it? The gardener. He planted it and watched over it, and now He has taken it. Does anybody weep because of that? No; everybody knows that it is right that He should come and gather the best in the garden. If you are sore troubled by the loss of your beloved, yet dry your grief by "supposing Him to be the gardener." Beloved, remember the next time the Lord comes to your part of the garden, He will only gather His own flowers, and would you prevent His doing so even if you could?

VII. "Supposing Him to be the gardener," then there is an outlook for the hopeful. "Supposing Him to be the gardener," then I expect to see in the garden the best possible prosperity: I expect to see the richest, rarest fruit, daily presented to the great Owner of the garden. Let us expect that in this church, and pray for it. Oh, if we have but faith we shall see great things from the work of Christ by His Spirit in the midst of His people's hearts, and we shall not be disappointed.

"Supposing Him to be the gardener," we may expect divine intercourse of unspeakable preciousness. Go back to Eden for a minute. When Adam was the gardener, what happened? The Lord God walked in the garden in the cool of the day. But "supposing Him to be the gardener," then we shall have the Lord God dwelling among us, and revealing Himself in all the glory of His power, and the plenitude of His Fatherly heart; making us to know Him, that we may be filled with all the fulness of God. What joy is this!

One other thought. "Supposing Him to be the gardener," then I expect He will remove the whole of the garden upward with Himself to fairer skies; for He rose, and His people must rise with Him. Oh, the glory we shall then enjoy up yonder, on the hill of spices in the garden of God; and how shall you and I grow therein. developing beyond imagination.

“It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.” Since He is the author and finisher of our faith, to what perfection will He conduct us, and to what glory will He bring us! Oh, to be found in Him! God grant we may be! To be plants in His garden, “supposing Him to be the gardener,” is all the heaven we can desire.

Searmon.*

le C. H. SPURGEON.

[*R OIMH-RADH*.—Bha an searmon a leanas air a sgrìobhadh leis an Urramach C. H. Spurgeon. Tha ainm agus oibrichean an Urr. C. H. Spurgeon ainmeil air feadh an domhainn uile far am bheil Crìosduidhean ag gabhail còmhnuidh. Ged nach 'eil sinne ag gabhail ris na beachdan a bh'aig Maighstir Spurgeon a thaobh baistidh, agus mar an ceudna a thaobh riaghladh na h-eaglais fhaicsinnich, agus mar an ceudna ri cuid de na cleachdaidhean a bh' aige anns an aoradh fhollaiseach, 'se sin ri ràdh, ged nach robh e gnàthachadh inneal-ciùl anns an aoradh, agus tha e soilleir gu robh e fada an aghaidh gu'm biodh iad air an gnàthachadh, aig àm 'sam bith no an àite 'sam bith ann an aoradh an Tiomnaidh Nuaidh; gidheadh bha e gnàthachadh *hymns* (laoidhean), chan e gu'n d' fhiach e riamh ri fhireanachadh gu robh e ceart a bhi ag gnàthachadh *hymns* (laoidhean), 'se aon leithsgeul a breithnich sinn riamh a b'urtainn e 'ghabhail airson *hymns* a bhi aige 'san aoradh, gur ann ris an nì a bha an sin a bha iadsan air an togail bho laithean an leanabanachd, ach mar a bha e fhéin ag ràdh, anns an t-searmon a leanas, a bhi toirt a' mhol bhò'n a' chruithneachd, faodaidh sinne a' ràdh ann a bhi a' leigeil a' chuid a chaidh ainmeachadh de 'n a' mhol leis a' ghaoith gu robh an cruithneachd aig Maighstir Spurgeon cho glan anq an

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tomhas mór ann an searmonachadh an t-soisgeil shiorruidh do dh'araman dhaoine, 's a bha e air a chuir an céill anns an Roinn-Eòrpa bho àm an Ath-leasachaidh. Cha cheisd 'sam bith nach robh e air a theagasg gu soilleir, tuigse ghlan air a thoirt dhà agus breithneachadh fallain leis an Spiorad Naomha ann an Sgriobtuirean an t-Seann Tiomnaidh agus an Tiomnaidh Nuaidh, agus ann an cleachdaidhean gràis ann an anaman sluagh Dhé—gu robh a shaothair air a h-aideachadh, 's air a beannachadh gu soilleir, cha ghabh e, 's cha'n fhaod e, bhi air àicheadh le neach 'sam bith a dh' fhòghlum a' ni a's lugha de obair éifeachdach gràis Dhé 'na anam féin. Bu ghaisgeach treun e air taobh Chrìosda. Bha e dìleas do dh' anaman dhaoine ann a bhi cronachadh 's ag earaileachadh nan aingidh, a' misneachadh, a' treòrachadh 's a' teagasg pobull an Tighearna; bha e deas fo àrmachd, gun eagal, gun fhiamh anns a' chath, ann a bhi 'cur dion ann an teagasg agus an cleachdadh air sgriobtuirean an t-Seann Tiomnaidh agus an Tiomnaidh Nuaidh 'nan iomlanachd naomha. Cha robh puine no earann, caibdeal no leabhar, a bha e smuaineachadh riamh, no thuirt e nach bu chòir iad a bhi anns a' Bhiobull. Cha do thog e teagamhan ann an inntinn a' chomh-pheacaich gu robh earainnean anns a' Bhiobull nach robh còir a bhi ann. Cha b'urrainn e bhi air a ràdh mu dheighinn-san gur e duine eumhang 'na bheachdan, neo-fhòghluimte, agus gun bhreithneachadh, a bha ann. Chuir e cath math a' chreidimh, 's cha cheisd nach d' fhuair e crùn na beatha bho làmh a' Bhreitheimh mhóir, 'nuair a dhealaicheadh an t-anam prìseil ri tigh-talmhaidh a' phalluinn so, aig latha a' bhàis.—Seumas Macleoid, Grianraig.]

“ Mar sin thug Daibhidh buaidh air an Philisteach le crann-tàbhail agus le cloich; agus bhuail e am Philisteach, agus mharbh se e; ach cha robh claidheamh ann an laimh Dhaibhidh ” (I. Sam. xvii. 50).

Paidhidh e do neach sealltuinn seachad air a' chaibdeal so le faicill agus le aire. Thagh mi an earrainn a th'ann so airson feumalachd, ach feumaidh mi an roimh-ràdh uile airson a' chinn teagaisg. Ma tha sibh mion-eòlach anns an eachdraidh,

cha bhi feum 'sam bith againn air roimh-ràdh no tòiseachadh aig an toiseach. Tòisichidh sinn air ball ann a bhi ag gabhail beachd air Daibhidh, agus a' chomhstri a bha eadar e féin agus Goliath agus a bhuaidh thairis air. Anns a' cheud àite—mar shamhladh air an Tighearna Iosa Crìosd, agus, anns an dara h-àite mar eisimpleir dhuinn féin, oir an ni tha 'na shamhladh air a' Cheann tha e do ghnàth an dhì-dhaimh ris na buill, Mar a tha na buill ann an corp diamhair Chrìosda a nis, agus ann an iomlanachd na's motha an déidh so cosmhuil ris féin. Chan'eil ann ach smuain, as déidh na h-uile, a bhios sinn a' leantuinn a mach ann an beachd-smuaineachadh air na nithean a tha fo ar comhair.

1. Tha sinn a' gairm bhuir n' aire a dh' ionnsuidh an t-sar-bheachd gu'n robh Daibhidh anns a' chuis so 'na shamhladh air an Tighearna Iosa Crìosd. Bha na prìomh-aithrichean anns an eaglais an toiseach glé mhór air an toirt thairis ann a bhi coimeasg samhlaidh nàdurra ri nithean spioradail. Bha iad gu dearbh cho làn de'n ni so 'nam minichidhean agus cho mionaideach a' dol gu crìochan chùisean, gur ann mu dheireadh thall a chaidh iad ro fhada agus thuit iad ann am faoineasan mearachdach.

Tha Origen, mar shamhladh a chaidh anabarrach uile gu léir fada, 's nach gabh a bhi air altrum mar ni glie, a' toirt eadar-mhìneachadh spioradail de nithean a bha litireil. Agus muinntir eile a chaidh na b' fhaide na am maighstir mór aca (Origen) am beachdan dorecha, agus ann an ùine glé ghoirid a rinn call mór do eaglais Dhé, ann a bhi toirt fìrinnean luachmhor a dh' ionnsuidh a bhi air an cur ann an teagamh. Ann a bhi a' beachdachadh air samhlaichean an t-Seann Tìomnaidh cha d' fhuair iad an t-àite a bhuineas dhaibh o laithean nan daoine sin le'n eud neo-ghlie ann a bhi a' deanamh mi-fheum de na samhlaichean. Chan 'urrainn dhuinne sinn fhéin a thoirt gu bhi smuaineachadh gu bheil ni math a stad a bhi na ni math airson a bhi air a thionndadh aig àmannan àraidh gu mi-fheum. Tha sinn a' smuaineachadh gu faod e bhi air a ghnàthachadh gu dleasail agus feumail taobh a stigh a chrìochan àraidh,

erìochan, tha sinn ag ràdh, anns nach 'eil eagal gu'm bi sinn a' tuisleachadh anns na h-àmanna anns am bheil na h-uile ni 'dol air aghaidh gu foirmeil agus neo-chéolmhor. Tha samhlaichean, agus a' chainnt shamhlachail a tha air an gnàthachadh anns na Sgrìobtuirean Naomha feumail a chum ar teagasg agus a bhi ghnàth maille ruinn mar theagasg fallain. Le aonta ghnàthaichte nan Crìosduidhean soisgeulach, tha Daibhidh 'na shamhladh soilleir air an Tighearna Iosa Crìosda. Faodaidh sinn a bhi beachdachadh air an ni àraidh so anns an dol a mach ma's do chuir e an cath ri Goliath gu robh Daibhidh air ungadh le Dia. Chaidh Samueil sìos do Bhethleim agus dhoirt e adhare ola air a cheann. Chì sibh gu h-ealamh dé tha sin a' ciallachadh. Bha an Tighearna an so a' faotainn a mach air a shon féin aon a thagh e mach á measg an t-sluaigh agus le ola naomha dh' ung se e. Cha robh air a dhortadh air ceann Shaul ach gloine bheag de dh' ola, ach air ceann Dhaibhidh adhare làn de dh' ola. Faodaidh so a bhi a' comharrachadh a mach an ùine ghoirid neo-chliùteach a rìghich Saul agus an ùine agus an cùmhaich agus an t-urram mór anns an do rioghaich Daibhidh. Ann a bhi toirt mineachadh spioradail dha faodaidh e bhi comharrachadh a mach an lagh air an robh Saul 'na shámhladh—'s e sin eachdraidh nan Iudhach—aig nach robh ach tomhas àraidh de'n bheannachadh, ach tha Daibhidh a' samhlachadh a mach lànachd iomlan an t-soisgeil. Ach tha Iosa air an robh Daibhidh 'na shamhladh air ungadh le ola aoibhneis os cionn a chompanaich. Thàinig gràs agus firinn le Iosa Crìosda. Cha robh an Spiorad air a thoirt dha a réir tomhais. Bha Daibhidh air ungadh caochladh uairean; bha e air ungadh, mar gheibh sibh anns a' chaibdeal air thoiseach air so, “ann am meadhoin a bhràithrean;” —air ungadh, mar a gheibh sibh II. Sam. xi. 4 le bhràithrean, fir Iudah;—bha e air ungadh a ris mar a dh' fhaodas sibh fhaicinn II. Sam. v. 3 le seanairean Israeil. Cha téid sinn a steach anns a' chùis so an dràda, 's leoir leinn beachdachadh air gu robh ar Tighearna air ungadh le Dia, air ungadh leis na naoimhe, agus gu'm bi e air ungadh leis an eaglais gu h-iomlan.

Bha Spiorad an Tighearna airsan agus 's ann an cumhachd an Spioraid sin leis an robh e air ungadh leis an Athair, tre'n deach e mach a chogadh nam blar as leith na h-eaglais. Aig a bhaisteadh, an uair a thàinig e nìos á Jordan bha e air ungadh leis an Spiorad 'nuair a thuirling e air, a' tighinn a nuas bho neamh an riochd calmain, agus chaidh e mach air dha bhi air iomain do'n fhàsach agus a bha e ann an cruaidh-ghleac ris an nàmhaid Uile-Bhéisteich, namhaid mhór anaman. Chuir e na cathan ann an Spiorad agus an neart an Ti a's Airde oir bha cumhachd agus móralachd an Spioraid Shiorruidh 'nan laighe Airsan.

Ri leantuinn.

Nadur an Duine 'na Staid Cheithir Fillte.

CEANN III.

NEO-CHOMAS AN DUINE GU H-IOMLAN AIR E FEIN A LEIGHEAS.

(Continued from page 395.)

FHUAIR sinn a nis sealladh do thruaillidheachd iomlan naduir an duine, agus de'n chudthrom feirge sin a ta 'na luidhe air, de dhoimhne na truaighe sin gus am bheil e air tuiteam sìos, 'na staid naduir: Ach tha aon earrann d'a thruaighe d' an eor dhuinn aire shonraichte thabhairt, eadhon, a neo-chomas gu h-iomlan air e féin a leigheas; tha eolas air an ni so feumail, air son a' pheacaich gu h-iomchuidh irioslachaidh. Is e na tha rùn orm an so, a mhain beagan de nithe a nochdadh, a thabhairt mothachaidh do'n duine neo-iompaichte air a neo-chomas, a chum gu faic e feum àraidh air Criosd, agus air cumhachd a ghrais.

Mar nach urrainn duine a ta air tuiteam ann an slochd, e féin a chuideachadh a mach as, ach air aon do dhà rathad; an dara cuid, le e féin a dheanamh an iomlan, no a chuid eile, le greim a ghabhail, agus le feum a dheanamh do chomhnadh

a ta air a thairgse dha le muinntir eile: Mar sin, cha'n 'eil sinn gu bhi saòilsinn gur urrainn duine neo-iompaichte e féin a chuideachadh a mach as an staid sin, ach ann an rathad an lagha, no coimheangal nan oibre, le e féin a dheanamh an iomlan, as eugmhais Chrìosd; no ann an rathad an t-soisgeil, no choimheangal nan gras, le feum a dheanamh d'a neart féin gu greim a ghabhail, agus gu feum a dheanamh de'n chomhnadh a ta air a thairgse dha le slanuighear. Ach, mo thruaighe, tha'n duine neo-iompaichte marbh anns an t-slochd, agus cha'n urrainn dha e féin a chuideachadh air aon de na rathadibh sin: Cha'u urrainn dha dheanamh air a' cheud rathad; oir tha'n ceud bhonn-teagaisg ag innseadh dhuinn, 'nuair thainig ar Slanuighear gur comhnadh, *gu'n robh sinn gun neart*, neo-chomasach air sinn féin a leigheas. Bha sinn *neo-dhiadhaidh*; uime sin fuidh uallach de chionta agus de fheirg: *Gidheadh gun neart*; neo-chomasach air seasamh fuidhpe, agus neo-chomasach air a tilgeadh dhinn, no faotainn uaiphe. Air chor as gu 'm biodh an cinne-daoine uile gu cinnteach air an sgrios, mur basaicheadh Crìosd air son nan daoine neo-dhiadhaidh, agus mur d' thugadh e cobhair d' an ionnsuidhsan nach b'urrainn gu brath iad féin a leigheas. Ach 'nuair tha Crìosd a' teachd agus a' tairgse comhnadh do pheacaich, an urrainn iad gabhail ris; an urrainn iad feum a dheanamh do chuideachadh 'nuair tha e teachd g' an laimh? Cha'n urrainn; Tha'n dara bonn-teagaisg ag innseadh dhuinn nach urrainn iad a dheanamh: "Cha'n urrainn neach air bith teachd a m' ionnsuidhse, (sin ri radh) creidsinn annamsa, (Eoin vi. 44.) mur tarruing an t-Athair e." Is tarruing so a neartaicheas iad gu teachd, eadhon iadsan, nach tigeadh gus an àm sin; agus air an aobhar, sin, nach b' urrainn iad féin a chuideachadh, le feum a dheanamh de'n chuideachadh, a bh' air a thairgse dhoibh. Is tarruing i a ta do ghnath eifeachdach; oir cha'n ni a's lugha i na bhi 'g eisdeachd agus a' foghlum o'n Athair: ni ge b'e ta 'na fhear comhpairt dhi, thig e dh'ionnsuidh Chrìosd, rann 25. Air an aobhar sin, cha tarruing i a*ta sruthadh o bhuidh argumeid air inntinn neach a dh'fheudas a bhi; seadh, agus a ta do ghnath, neo-eifeachdach; ach is

tarruing i a ta le treun-neart, Eph. i. 19. ro-fheumail dhoibhsan aig nach 'eil neart annta féin, gu teachd a ghabhail greim de'n chuideachadh a ta air a thairgse.

Eisd air an aobhar sin, O dhuine neo-iompaichte! agus bi lan chinnteach as, mar tha thu ann an staid ro thruagh do thaobh naduir; mar sin gu bheil thu neo-chomasach air thu féin a leigheas air sheol 'sam bith. Tha thu millte; agus ciod an rathad a ghabhas tu gu thu féin a leigheas! - Cò de 'n dà rathad so a roghnaicheas tu? Am feuch thu ris leat féin, no an dean thu feum chomhnadh? Am feuch thu ri rathad nan oibre, no ri rathad an t-soisgeil? Tha fios agam gu ro mhaith, nach feuch thu ri rathad an t-soisgeil, gus aon uair am faic thu gu bheil an leigheas neo-chomasach, ann an rathad an lagha: Air an aobhar sin toisichidh sinn, far am bheil nàdur truailidh a teagasg do dhaoine toiseachadh, eadhon, aig rathad lagh nan oibre.

Ri leantuinn.

Notes and Comments.

Mr. Brider's Mission to Soldiers and Sailors.—Mr. Brider still continues his useful and praiseworthy work of sending good literature to our soldiers and sailors and he is encouraged by the grateful letters he receives often from the recipients. The Mission, like many other good causes, is feeling increasingly the financial depression and last year has been one of the worst ever experienced. It is to be hoped that Mr. Brider will receive encouragement to continue his good work. His address is:—Mr. R. E. Brider, 21 Firfield Street, Bristol.

The Oxford Group Movement or Buchmanism.—In notice of a booklet we made reference recently to this extraordinary movement in the religious world. Since then we have read some of the literature issued by supporters of the Movement. In our estimation it has serious defects. (1) Stress is laid upon sin as selfishness—this is very inadequate. (2) The

Movement as such, whatever may be said of some of its supporters, does not seem to give the place to the atonement which it occupies in Scripture. (3) It does not emphasise the principle of separation from the world as it ought to do. It has made its effect felt in Scotland, England, South Africa, U.S.A., and Canada. It is not to be confused with the Oxford Movement which was launched a century ago and which headed towards Rome. *Christianity To-day* (January) calls attention in an editorial note to a statement made by the Rev. Harold T. Commons, a Baptist pastor of Atlantic City, N.J. Mr. Commons says: "After three years on 'the inside' I finally severed my connection with the Group out of loyalty to my Lord, for I realized that it is actually far removed from real New Testament Christianity." Mr. Commons concludes that Buchmanism (pronounced *Bookmanism*) so called after its founder, Rev. Frank Buchman is "one of the many counterfeits and delusions of the latter days." Dr. Craig says in his editorial note: "Such knowledge as we have of this movement does not lead us to rejoice greatly at the apparent success that is attending its advocates. We cannot agree with them that what they are propagating is in any adequate sense of the word first century Christianity or even that the methods they employ are those that the Apostles employed. The very fact that Modernists and Fundamentalists seem equally at home within its fellowship indicates that there is nothing very distinctively Christian about the Movement"—*Christianity To-day* (Philadelphia, U.S.A.).

Literary Notice.

THE SECEDERS (1829-1869), Vol. II. Edited by J. H. PHILPOT, M.D. London: Farncombe & Sons Ltd., 30 Imperial Buildings, Ludgate Circus, E.C.4. Price, 8s. 6d. Illustrated. Pages, 359.

For Scottish readers it may be necessary to say at the outset that the Seceders referred to are not the Erskines but William

Tiptaft and Joseph C. Philpot. In these days it is a rare occurrence that such a book is issued from the press. Its pages breathe the atmosphere of a deep religious experience that was at war to the death with lifeless religion, hypocrisy, formality, self-righteousness, the world, the flesh and the devil. No one who believes in the clear cut work of the Holy Spirit can read these searching letters of J. C. Philpot without being made conscious that here was a man who had his eye fixed on the distant goal and who was pressing to it with all his might. He smote the lifeless religion, orthodox and heterodox, with resounding blows and as a result these formalists turned on him as if he were an agent of Satan. He felt the attack keenly but he did not lay aside his sword. The searching nature of his preaching laid him open to enemies from every side but he candidly admitted that he was to blame at times for drawing their fire. He had an abiding sense of the desperate wickedness of his heart and the all-suitability of Christ's atoning blood to cleanse from all sin. He laid special stress on experimental preaching and he excelled in this department but there are expressions used by him in condemnation of doctrinal preaching with which we cannot agree. We fully understand the type of doctrinal preaching at which he was aiming his well directed blows but to condemn all doctrinal preaching as some of his sentences seem to do without a word of qualification is as wrong as it would be to condemn all experimental preaching because some kinds of it does not reach very much higher than a lifeless emotionalism. We believe Dr. Duncan was right when he warned against purely doctrinal preaching for that would be all *head* and this would be a monster; if all experience this would be all *heart* and this would be a monster; and if all practice this would be all hands and feet and this too would be a monster. The Scriptural way is to combine the three and preach doctrine, experience and practice; for the experience and practice which have not as their solid foundation the doctrine of Scripture is worthless for eternity. Another matter with which we cannot agree is

what Mr. Philpot says about teaching children prayers. Here again we recognise the danger of parents and others thinking that *saying* of prayers is the same thing as praying; nevertheless many a one will have to bless God throughout eternity for the blessed privilege of being taught to pray at their mother's knee. These and a few other points we do not agree with but when it comes to the deep, searching, spiritual experiences we delight in reading these gracious letters. Mr. Philpot was conscious of his own weaknesses and there is a refreshing candour in what he says about those who mistake the fire of their own spirit for fire from heaven. "I have had this spirit myself," he writes, "and know from experience that there is no dew nor unction of the Spirit attending it. This carnal fire dries up all such heavenly dew." The letters will be valued most of all by those who know something of the plague of their own hearts and who long to have a clear distinction made between the clean and unclean. Searching though he is, he does not wield such a piercing and keen blade as Samuel Rutherford, Thomas Shepard and Jonathan Edwards but he belongs to this goodly company. Though a Baptist Mr. Philpot was by no means narrow minded on the important question involved. The letters are written in a polished literary style and indicate a mind acute and well-balanced capable of treating momentous matters with a becoming sanity of judgment. There is no conscious effort to deck out his mental output with meretricious adornment but no one can read the letters without feeling they are worthy of a one time Fellow of one of our ancient and most renowned Universities.

Dr. Philpot, in this act of filial piety, has done his work exceedingly well. The introductory part will be read with pleasure by many who have heard of such men as William and John Gadsby, John Warburton, John Kershaw, John MacKenzie, Thomas Godwin and others less known but whose names we believe were written in the Lamb's book of life. There is a tribute fitly worded to that beautiful Christian gentlewoman, Lady Lucy Smith, of the Scottish house of Leslie-Melville, who

lived a devoted life to her Lord and though of high social station she did not disdain to cast in her lot with the Lord's chosen ones of low degree. We are sure many will thank Dr. Philpot for the brief but interesting sketches he has given of those worthy men who when they had served their generation fell asleep in Jesus. The book contains many illustrations and portraits and does high credit to the publishers in its binding, printing and general get up.

Church Notes.

Communions.—March—First Sabbath, Ullapool; second, Portree and Ness; third, Lochinver; fourth, North Tolsta, Fort William and Kinlochbervie. April—First Sabbath, Achmore; second, Lochgilphead; third, Greenock; fourth, Glasgow; fifth, Wick. May—First Sabbath, Kames and Oban; second, Dumbarton; third, Edinburgh. South African Mission—The following are the dates of the Communions:—Last Sabbath of March, June, September, and December. *Note.*—Notice of any additions to, or alteration of, the above dates of Communion should be sent to the Editor.

Standing Committees of the Church.—As we are often asked about the membership of these Committees, we subjoin a list.

Church Interests Committee.—Moderator (Convener), with Synod Clerk and Clerks of the four Presbyteries.

Religion and Morals Committee.—Revs. D. M. Macdonald (Convener), M. Morrison, D. A. Macfarlane, and William Grant.

Finance Committee.—Revs. Ewen Macqueen (Convener), N. Macintyre, D. N. Macleod and M. Gillies and the representative Elders of Glasgow and Edinburgh Kirk-sessions, with Mr. John Grant, General Treasurer, associated.

Legacy Committee.—Same as foregoing.

Canadian and Colonial Mission Committee.—Ministerial members of the Northern Presbytery, with Rev. E. Macqueen as Convener.

Jewish and Foreign Mission Committee.—Ministers at Glasgow, Edinburgh and Greenock with their representative elders *ex-officio* with Rev. N. Macintyre as Convener.

Training of the Ministry Committee.—Rev. E. Macqueen (Convener), D. M. Macdonald, and D. A. Macfarlane.

Church Magazine Committee.—The Editor of Magazine (Convener), with the Clerks of the four Presbyteries.

Sollas Mission House.—The Sollas portion of the Bayhead Congregation, North Uist, desire to thank all friends, both at home and abroad, for their liberal and generous donations towards the building of their mission house. The mission house has been opened some time ago free of debt and it is our wish that many souls may be born anew in this solitary part of the vineyard. Ps. lxxxv. 5.—J. M.

Acknowledgment of Donations.

Mr. John Grant, 4 Millburn Road, Inverness, acknowledges with sincere thanks the following donations:—

Sustentation Fund.—Friend, Abroad, £3; Mrs H. N., Fort William, Ontario, \$3; M. A. McK., Easter Fearn, Ardgay, 4s; R. McD., Ahmore (o/a Bayhead), 5s; Miss N. C., The Towers, Wilmslow, Cheshire, £1; F. P. (o/a Edinburgh), per Rev. N. McIntyre, 7s.

Colonial Missions Fund.—Friend Abroad, £2.

Jewish and Foreign Missions.—Friend Abroad, £3; N. McL., Cromalt, 10s; Anon, Gairloch, 5s; In loving Memories of a dear Husband, 10s; Mrs C. Russell Hill, Purley, Surrey, £1 1s; M. M., Stanley Cottage, Brora, 10s; J. M., Philadelphia, U.S.A., £1; D. M., Assynt, £1. The following per Rev. N. McIntyre:—Friend, Applecross, £2; J. M., Crianlarich, 10s; Psalm 36-8, 5s; H. A. A., 5s. The following per Mr Hugh Mackay, Missionary, Vancouver:—From Vancouver Congregation, 1st Collection in New Year, £7; from Vancouver Sabbath School, 1st Collection in New Year, £10; from A Friend, £3.

Home Mission Fund.—J. H. McL., per Mr H. Mackay, Vancouver, 10s.

The following lists have been sent in for publication:—

Greenock Manse Purchase Fund.—Rev. Jas. MacLeod acknowledges with grateful thanks the following donations:—Nurse Boyd and Mrs Stewart, North Uist, Bayhead Section per Collecting Cards, £8 2s; McE. Brothers, Laird, Sask., Canada, \$15; Friend, Greenock, £1 5s.

Raasay Manse Building Fund.—Mr William MacSween, Missionary, Raasay, acknowledges with sincere thanks the following donations:—Friend, Raasay, 10s; Wellwisher, Raasay, £1; the following per Miss M. A. Tallach:—Friend, Kames, £1; Friend, Raasay, 10s.

Raasay Congregation.—Mr William MacSween, acknowledges with grateful thanks the sum of £200, being amount of legacy bequeathed to the Congregation of Raasay by the late Mr M. MacLeod, Osaig.

Rogart Church Building Fund.—Rev. F. McLeod acknowledges with grateful thanks the following donations:—U. N. O., 10s; Mrs R. L., £1, per R. M. T.; A Friend, £1, per Mr M. Fraser.

St. Jude's Congregation, Glasgow.—Mr Neil MacLeod, Treasurer, acknowledges with sincere thanks the following donations:—Mrs McL., for Foreign Missions, £2; Anon, o/a Sustentation Fund, per Rev. R. MacKenzie, 10s.

Sollas (North Uist) Church Building Fund.—Mr Donald MacSween, Missionary, Sollas, wishes to state on behalf of the Sollas Congregation that the Church recently built at Sollas is now paid and desires to sincerely thank all friends who have contributed.

Uig (Stornoway) Manse Building Fund.—Rev. R. MacInnes, Uig, acknowledges with sincere thanks the following donations:—Mrs M., Schoolhouse, Kildary, £1 1s; "Pro Causa," £2; the following per Mr N. Mackay, Treasurer:—A. M., 3 Valtos, £2; Mrs D. McL., 10 Valtos, 10s; Anon, Braenish, 10s; D. M., 1 Lundale, 10s; Mr A. McA., Jr., Stornoway, £3 3s.

Wick Manse Purchase Fund.—Rev. R. R. Sinclair acknowledges with sincere thanks the following donations:—B. K. T., £5; Mrs M., Simcoe, Canada, \$3; J. M., Crianlarich, 10s; A Friend, Oban, 10s.

The Magazine.

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Free Distribution.—A Friend Abroad, £1; Anon, Gairloch, 5s; Hugh Mackay, 778 24 Avenue West, Vancouver, 2s; John MacRae, Kelwood, Manitoba, 6s.