

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. LXXIV.*

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**Free Presbyterian Magazine**  
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**There is a Blessing in it.**

**T**HE Holy Spirit, through the prophet Isaiah, in speaking of the rejection of the Jews for their unbelief, idolatry and hypocrisy, reveals that though as a nation they were to suffer, yet they were not to be cast off altogether. "Thus saith the Lord, As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it: so will I do for my servants' sakes, that I may not destroy them all" (Isaiah lxx. 8). As a nation, once highly favoured, we have gone away from God, and, sad to say, the Church has led in this general apostacy, by taking into its creed and constitution Arminianism, the evolution theory and German rationalism, together with a host of other heresies contrary to the Word of God. However, as in the days of Elijah there were left seven thousand who had not bowed their knees to the image of Baal, so in our land God has a Scripturally constituted Church where Modernism has no place, and whatever may be thought or said of us, we ought to count it an honour to be members of such a Church.

This scripturally constituted Church lays no claim to perfection, but accepts the statement in the Confession of Faith, Chapter xxv. sect. 5 that "the purest churches under heaven are subject both to mixture and error." It has been the painful experience of its members that the wheat and tares were growing together, and however vigilant its office-bearers were, roots of bitterness have appeared polluting many. As these appear, however, there is in the Church what can effectively deal with them, thus proving that its constitution is according to the Word of God.

Our enemies have looked upon us as a company of obscure creatures who have little or no influence in the land, and therefore not worthy of being taken into consideration. True it is that we have little or no influence among those whom the world delights to honour and look upon as great. Our history as a Church reveals no traces of lofty aspirations as far as the things of the world are concerned. Rather has it been with us a following of the advice of Jeremiah to Baruch, the son of Neriah, "Seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not" (Jeremiah xlv. 5). Thus have we by the good hand of the Most High avoided a snare into which many have fallen and made themselves useless as far as rebuking sin in high places is concerned. John the Baptist might never have been beheaded if he had aspired to please Herod and connive

at his sin, but he would have been unfaithful to his trust and wronged his own soul.

Our refusal to court worldly favour has caused us to avoid following the world. The great cry of ecclesiastical leaders is, that "we must move with the times," and in suiting the action to the word they become regardless of where the "times" are leading them. This has led many churches to become so degenerate "as to become no churches of Christ, but synagogues of Satan." The aim, however, of the true Church of Christ in all ages has been to follow Christ, and to "go forth therefore to Him without the camp bearing His reproach" (Heb. xiii. 13). This has earned for them the hatred of the world, of which Christ Himself forewarns them. "Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake" (Matt. xxiv. 9).

This hatred which the world shows has been a fertile ground for a great many of the trials of the Church of God in general, and of our own Church in particular. Much as the world, religious and non-religious, affects to take no notice of us yet our adherence to the Word of God and to a Scriptural practice calls down upon us the wrath of men. We are too strict or not strict enough as the whim of the individual may be, who takes upon himself to act as judge. We are hypocrites if we adhere to the Bible, and hypocrites if our judges imagine that they have detected anything in us which savours of a departure from it. Well shall it always be with the Free Presbyterian Church if it refuses to be moved by any of these things, but follows Christ, for Christ has acknowledged it throughout its history and said of it "Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it." What that blessing is, it is now our purpose to notice.

In the Free Presbyterian Church there is an entire Bible. This cannot be said of the great majority in our beloved land. Doctors Drumond, Bruce and Rainy with the rest of the infidel Higher Critics robbed the people of Scotland of the Bible, by maintaining that there were errors in it, and have taught them to treat it with contempt. They have also robbed them of the Confession of Faith by passing a Declaratory Act in which the language of the Confession was to be understood in another way than was customary, and in another way than those who framed it intended. It is an inestimable blessing to have a whole Bible and a Confession of Faith based on it, and that blessing is in the Free Presbyterian Church for it took up its separate position in order to hand these intact to coming generations—a distinction reserved for that Church alone.

It has the blessing of a full-orbed gospel preached from its pulpits. Ruin by the Fall, Redemption by the Blood of Christ, and Regeneration by the work of the Holy Spirit, are declared with no uncertain sound. Law and Gospel each has its own place in gospel preaching, and while man's inability is emphasised, his responsibility is by no means lost sight of when Christ is freely offered as God's only remedy to meet with the lost and ruined condition of man. This gospel is looked upon as old-fashioned, and one would think, by the way some speak and write, that an apology ought to be made for proclaiming it. Long may this great

blessing be found in the Free Presbyterian Church, that its ministers take up the attitude of the Apostle when he said, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Romans i. 16).

Not the smallest of our blessings as a Church is that there are witnesses who never wavered in following Christ. It has been acknowledged by many, who were not distinguished by their love for us, that the cream of the godly in Scotland followed the Free Presbyterian Church in 1893. This noble band of men and women valued Christ and His Word, and refused to be led by men who revealed that they were enemies to the cross of Christ. In doing so they had to endure hardship, and by faith "endured, as seeing him who is invisible." The most of these have by now gone to Mount Zion above, though a few are still with us, and they have left us a glorious example, in order that we would follow their faith, "considering the end of their conversation: Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day and forever." The ranks of these unwavering witnesses are sadly depleted in our day, yet the few who are taking the place of those taken home cause the incense of prayer to rise day by day, and while there are faithful witnesses wrestling at a Throne of Grace, God will reveal Himself as a prayer-hearing God.

The raising up of the Free Presbyterian Church was a testimony against error, and a witness on the side of Christ in Scotland, and Christ has owned that witness in the conversion of sinners. Many heard the gospel for the first time as the gospel of their salvation in the Free Presbyterian Church, and there are some who will throughout eternity be praising Christ for this witness. He has also owned this witness in edifying the Lord's people and building them up in their most holy faith. Another remarkable way in which He has acknowledged the witness raised is by the spread of the gospel in connection with it. It has often been pointed out that at the beginning of our Church as a separate body we had neither property nor funds, while the movement was considered by our enemies as "a storm in a tea-cup" which would soon come to an end for lack of money. To-day we are spread over the whole world, and the Lord has clearly proved to us that the silver and the gold are His. Sometimes those who professed to be our friends withheld that financial support which they were well able to give, and others may be threatening to do the same to-day. This is on a level with all the other folly that is in the heart of man, for it is a vain imagination that the resources of Christ can be bottled up, and kept from such as He has designed to bless. All is well if He says, "Destroy it not."

Here we have His command to spare. The history of His providential dealings with His own in all ages may be summed up in the words, "Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm" (Psalm cv. 15); and thus they are given a holy boldness to plead with the Psalmist, "Be thou my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort: thou hast given commandment to save me; for thou art my rock and my fortress" (Psalm lxxi. 3). Together with His commandment to "destroy not" He has given His promise that He would never leave them nor forsake them. When those who formed the Free Presbyterian Church went out from the Declaratory Act Church they had nothing



but the promise of God but that was sufficient, yea, it may be said that there they had all things. That Church is to-day a standing witness to the value of having a covenant-keeping God, and with respect to many a trial, within and without, can join with David in singing, "If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, when men rose up against us: then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us" (Psalm cxxiv. 2, 3). He is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever, and at the end of fifty years and more we cannot do more or less than put up our Ebenezer, as an appropriate memorial of human weakness and Divine help, and say, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us."

This raises the question, What about the future? In this we must take a lesson from those who went before us. Our past had been their future and they faced it wholly depending on the promises of God. These promises are as full for our future as they were for theirs but let us remember that we must walk as they walked for it was said to others, "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it (Isaiah i. 19, 20). While any branch of the visible church walks according to the Word of God His power will be exerted to protect it, and no enemy within or without will be permitted to do it any harm, yea, it shall be proved again, as it was often proved in the past, that the Church of God is an anvil upon which many a hammer will be broken, and any such branch of the Church which will continue faithful, Christ will continue to say, concerning it "Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it," and, in the face of all efforts to destroy it, it will survive till the Millennium.

J. C.

### **Justifying God in Afflictions.**

By Rev. JOHN WILLISON, Dundee.

**T**HOUGH God should condemn you, see that you acquit Him, and say, He is righteous in all His dealings. When the Church was under the heaviest distress, she found cause to justify God. "The Lord is righteous, for I have rebelled against His commandment" (Lam. I. 18). So doth godly Nehemiah: "Howbeit thou art just in all that is brought upon us; for thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly" (Neh. ix. 33). The same doth holy David acknowledge: "I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that in faithfulness thou hast afflicted me" (Ps. cxix. 75). Now, in order to bring you to this agreeable frame, and to convince you of the equity and justice of God in His dispensations, however heavy and long your distress may be, I shall lay before you the following considerations:—

(1) Consider the infinitely holy and righteous nature of that God who smiteth thee: "Righteous art thou, O Lord, and upright are thy judgments" (Ps. cxix. 137). We presume it of a righteous man that he will do righteous things: and shall we not much more believe so of a holy and righteous God? We cannot be infallibly certain that a righteous man will always do so; for a righteous man may leave his righteousness,

because the creature is mutable: but God is immutably righteous; so that we may be confident of this, that the Judge of all the earth will do right, for it is impossible He can do otherwise: "The just Lord is in the midst thereof, he will not do iniquity" (Zeph. iii. 5). He will not, He cannot; for it is contrary to His nature.

(2) Consider that God never brings on any affliction without a cause: "For this cause many are sick" (I Cor. xi. 30). He hath still just ground for the heaviest affliction from thy sins and provocations; and may always say to thee, as to Israel: "Hast thou not procured this unto thyself, in that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, when he led thee by the way? Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backsliding shall reprove thee: know therefore, and see, that it is an evil thing and bitter that thou hast forsaken the Lord" (Jer. ii. 17, 19). There is still ground enough for affliction to be found in the best of God's people and therefore it is said: "For he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men" (Lam. iii. 33). No, it is our sins that oblige Him to it. As Christ whipped the sellers of oxen and sheep out of the temple with a whip (as is generally thought) made of their own cords; so God never scourgeth us but with a whip made of our own sins: "His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins" (Prov. v. 22). If we consider the mighty God as a Lord dispensing grace, then we find that He acts sovereignly, and according to His will and pleasure: "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight" (Matt. xi. 26). But, if we consider Him as a Judge dispensing judgments, He never doeth it without a foregoing cause on the creature's part. God's treasure of mercy is always full and ready to be let out to them that seek it; but His treasure of wrath is empty, till men fill it by their sins: "Thou treasur'ed up to thyself wrath against the day of wrath" (Rom. ii. 5). We do always provide fuel for God's wrath, before it kindles and breaks forth upon us.

(3) Consider further this instance of God's equity, that when there is a cause given, God doth not presently take it, but continues to threaten often, and to warn long, before He executes the sentence of His Word. He sends lesser strokes as warnings of greater, if we repent not; and He repeats His warnings many times, both by His words and providence, before He smites. Yea, even when repeated warnings are slighted, He delays a long time, and waits to be gracious. And when men's obstinacy and incorrigibleness arrive to such a height that He can spare no longer, yet how loath is He to give them up to severe judgment! "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel? How shall I make thee as Admah? How shall I set thee as Zeboim? Mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together" (Hos. xi. 8). When the Lord hath sinners in His arms, ready to give them up to severe judgments, yet He makes a stand, and would fain be prevented, before He proceeds to His "strange work": for so He calls His acts of judgment (Isa. xxviii. 21). Acts of mercy are con-natural, most agreeable, and pleasant to God. "He delighteth in mercy," but judgment is His strange act, and His strange work (Mic. vii. 18).

(4) Consider, that when at last He sends strokes on us, they are always short of the cause; He exacts not the whole debt that sinners

owe to His justice, as Ezra doth acknowledge: "Thou hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve" (Ezra ix. 13). The stroke He is there speaking of, was a most heavy judgment; fearful ruin and desolation had come upon Jerusalem, and the whole land of Judah; the city and temple had been burnt to ashes, the people had been carried captive to a strange land, and treated as bond-slaves among the heathen. Yet, saith the holy man, "Thou hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve": example, "It is true we have been carried to Babylon, but in justice we might have been sent to hell; our houses were burnt, but our bodies might have been burnt too. We have been drinking water, but we might have been drinking blood; we have had grievous burdens on earth, but we might have been groaning in hell; we were banished from the temple, but we might have been eternally banished from God's presence." We think it a great favour among men, when any punishment is mitigated, when the sentence of death is changed into banishment, or when banishment is turned into a fine, or a great fine is made smaller; and will you think that God deals severely or rigorously with you, if He lay you on a sick-bed, when He might justly have laid you in hell, and poured out all His wrath upon you there! You but taste of the brim of the cup, when God might cause you drink of its bottom and dregs.

Have you not cause, then, to acknowledge God's justice, nay, even His mercy too, in His dealings with you, however rough they may seem to be? May you not with good reason, say, anything less than hell is a mercy to such an ill-deserving creature as I am? If even a hard-hearted Pharaoh, under distress, came the length of owning the justice of God: "I have sinned, the Lord is righteous" (Exodus ix. 27) shall any progressed Christian fall short of that obstinate Egyptian?

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### **Bright Ornaments of the Church of Christ.**

By WILLIAM TWISSE, D.D.

**T**HE year 1943 marked the tercentenary of the first sitting of the Westminster Assembly of Divines, Robert Baillie of Glasgow says of it; "The like of that Assembly I did never see; and as we hear say, the like was never in England, nor anywhere is shortly like to be." A glance at the list of divines who took part in its deliberations reveals the names of many who truly were bright ornaments of the Church of Christ. Among them none could claim a higher place than William Twisse who acted for a period as Prolocutor of the Assembly.

Twisse was born near Newbury in Berkshire about the year 1576 and was of German extraction. He was educated at Winchester school and New College, Oxford, of which he became a fellow, and where he spent sixteen years. He became Master of Arts in 1604 and Doctor of Divinity ten years later. There is no record available, as far as we know, as to the time in which he became a new creature in Christ Jesus, or the means used, but during his college life he had a reputation for true and vital godliness which was manifested in his walk and conversation.

Although reputed for his great gifts and abilities which were all used in the service of his Master there was one incident which brought him into prominence as a preacher at the time he became Doctor of Divinity. A Jew, who taught Hebrew in Oxford, for very worldly reasons professed to have been converted to Christianity, and a day was set apart on which he was to be baptized. Dr. Twisse was to preach a sermon on the occasion, but the day before the baptism the Jew disappeared with a pretty heavy purse of money which he gathered as a fruit of his supposed conversion. He was, however, brought back and the worthy Doctor had to preach a sermon suitable to the unforeseen circumstances which had now arisen. There was very little time to prepare but he acquitted himself in such a way that he was admired by all who heard him, if we except the poor Jew. Thus, in a strange way, he was brought to the notice of many who otherwise would not have heard of him, so that soon the fame of his sermons and lectures reached the court of King James I. The result was that he was appointed chaplain to Princess Elizabeth and was chosen to accompany her to Germany on the occasion of her marriage to the Elector Palatine.

In about two months he was recalled to England where he laboured for a considerable period in a small country village and applied himself diligent to study. After a while he became Vicar of Newbury in his native district where he spent the most of his life, and though it was a poor living he declined to leave it when chosen Warden of Winchester College, which was equal to the greatest ecclesiastical preferment in England from a financial point of view. Other ecclesiastical preferments were offered him, but "filthy lucre" could never draw him away from attending the flock of God at Newbury. When old age was creeping upon him the Earl of Warwick offered him a Rectory which he was disposed to accept because it was a smaller parish than Newbury, but only on condition that the Earl would be careful to send a faithful preacher to Newbury. In an interview with the Archbishop of Canterbury in connection with this matter he detected that this condition would not be observed, and so he returned to Newbury, resolving to labour there as long as his Lord would enable him.

Such a man would call no man "Master" but Christ, and he proved this when King James issued his Book of Sports. Dr. Twisse refused to read the king's proclamation in connection with it, and faithfully warned his people against the profanation of the Sabbath, by sports, May-games, dancings, and following carnal worldly pleasures. He had to continue this fight for the Sabbath for the most of his life, for King Charles I. renewed his father's proclamation in favour of the Book of Sports. These renewed attacks on the Sabbath brought Dr. Twisse to the front again and again as the champion of the sanctity of the Lord's Day. He spared neither king nor parliament, and discomfited them with their own weapons, for he made free use of an existing Act of Parliament in favour of the Sabbath. It was in connection with these efforts in defence of the Lord's Day that he issued his book, *The Morality of the Fourth Commandment*. That he escaped the wrath of royalty in this connection is strange when many godly ministers who did not take such a prominent part in these matters were severely punished. It is thought by some that his fame throughout the Protestant Churches of Europe

saved him, for to punish him would redound to the disgrace of those who did it. That his labours were not in vain in defence of the Sabbath is clear from the fact that in 1643, Parliament, among other reforming measures, ordered the Book of Sports to be burned by the common hangman.

This was the man who was appointed by both Houses of Parliament as Prolocutor, or Moderator, of the Assembly of Divines which was called together at Westminster in 1643, which position he occupied until his death. At the first meeting of the Assembly Dr. Twisse preached to a vast congregation in the Abbey Church, Westminster, from the words, "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come unto you" (John xiv. 18). As Prolocutor, he spoke very little at the Assembly, and that was made an occasion of reflecting very unfavourably on him. Robert Baillie, one of the Scottish Commissioners to the Assembly, says of him, "The man, as all the world knows, is very learned in all the questions he has studied, and very good, beloved of all, and highly esteemed; but merely bookish, not much, as it seems, acquainted with conceived prayer, and among the unfittest of all the company for any action; so after the prayer he sits mute." It is well-known that Dr. Twisse had a natural aversion to verbal debate, and this along with the fact that, as Prolocutor of the Assembly, it was not his place to give speeches, may be reasons for Baillie's hardly just criticism of him. It is as a writer that his abilities and true character are to be seen.

In theology he was a supralapsarian, which is contrary to the common view held by the Reformed Churches, and known as infralapsarianism. This latter view also is that which the Westminster Confession of Faith holds forth. According to Dr. A. A. Hodge, in the infralapsarian view the order of the decree is as follows:—"(1) The decree to create man. (2) To permit him to fall. (3) The decree to elect certain men, out of the mass of the fallen and justly condemned race, to eternal life, and to pass others by, leaving them to the just consequences of their sins. (4) The decree to provide salvation for the elect." The order of the decrees in the supralapsarian view is as follows:—"(1) Of all possible men, God first decreed the salvation of some and the damnation of others, for the end of His own glory. (2) He decreed, as a means to that end, to create those already elected or reprobated. (3) He decreed to permit them to fall. (4) He decreed to provide salvation for the elect" *Outlines of Theology*, pages 231-232. Dr. Twisse also held the view that God by His absolute power could forgive sin without an atonement. Dr. Owen, in his able work, *A Dissertation on Divine Justice* refutes the arguments of Dr. Twisse and Mr. Samuel Rutherford on this matter. Owen's *Works* Vol. x.

In 1645, Dr. Twisse began to show very visible signs that the earthly house of this tabernacle was being dissolved. His mind was not clouded and his zeal was unabated, but the body was not equal to the task which it used to accomplish. During public worship in his own church he fell in the pulpit and had to be carried home, where he lingered for about a year in a weak state which he bore with Christian patience and resignation, till his death on 20th July, 1646. During his last illness a deputation of the Assembly of Divines visited him, and found him poor as regards this world's goods, but rich in faith. He who could have the

richest ecclesiastical preferment in England, if he had cared for it at the expense of his conscience, died in poverty, but rich in having an eternal inheritance. Almost his last words were, "Now, at length, I shall have leisure to follow my studies to all eternity." He was buried in St. Peter's Church, Westminster, but at the Restoration of King Charles II. his bones were dug up along with the bones of several others and thrown into a hole in the Margaret's Churchyard.

His opposition to Arminians and Jesuits was very marked, and he used his abilities to counteract their craft. Dr. Owen, in spite of the fact that he differed from him in certain matters, as we have already noticed, says of him, "It is well known what sphere this learned author moved in; how far elevated above any possibility of my reaching the least esteem of him or his labours. . . . I doubt not but that it will appear to the reader that he hath dealt with the adversaries of the truth, in their chiefest holds, advantages, and strengths, putting them to shame in the calumnies and lies which they make their refuge." He was a voluminous writer and some of his largest works were written in Latin, but it is very seldom one comes across his writings to-day except in the larger public libraries.

J. C.

## **The Discipline of the Church.**

JOHN CALVIN.

*(Continued from page 122.)*

8. It ought not, however, to be omitted, that the Church, in exercising severity, ought to accompany it with the spirit of meekness. For as Paul enjoins, we must always take care that he on whom discipline is exercised be not "swallowed up with over much sorrow" (2 Cor. ii. 7) for in this way, instead of curse there would be destruction. The rule of moderation will be best obtained from the end contemplated. For the object of excommunication being to bring the sinner to repentance, and to remove bad examples, in order that the name of Christ may not be evil spoken of, nor others tempted to the same evil course: if we consider this, we shall easily understand how far severity should be carried, and at what point it ought to cease. Therefore, when the sinner gives the Church evidence of his repentance, and by this evidence does in what in him lies to obliterate the offence, he ought not on any account to be urged farther. If he is urged, the rigour now exceeds due measure. In this respect it is impossible to excuse the excessive austerity of the ancients, which was altogether at variance with the injunction of our Lord, and strongly perilous. For when they enjoined a formal repentance, and excluded from communion for three, or four, or seven years, or for life, what could the result be, but either great hypocrisy or very great despair?

In like manner, when any one who had again lapsed was not admitted to a second repentance, but ejected from the Church, to the end of his life (August. Ep. 54) this was neither useful nor agreeable to reason. Whosoever, therefore, looks at the matter with sound judgment, will here regret a want of prudence. Here, however, I rather disapprove of the public custom than blame those who complied with it. Some of them



certainly disapproved of it, but submitted to what they were unable to correct. Cyprian, indeed, declares that it was not with his own will he was thus rigorous. "Our patience, facility, and humanity (he says, Lib. i. Ep. 3) are ready to all who come. I wish all to be brought back into the Church: I wish all our fellow-soldiers to be contained within the camp of Christ and the mansions of God the Father. I forgive all; I disguise much; from an earnest desire of collecting the brotherhood, I do not minutely scrutinise all the faults which have been committed against God. I myself often err, by forgiving offences more than I ought. Those returning in repentance, and those confessing their sins with simple, and humble satisfaction, I embrace with prompt and full delight." Chrysostom, who is somewhat more severe, still speaks thus, "If God is so kind, why should His priest (pastor) wish to appear austere?" We know, moreover, how indulgently Augustine treated the Donatists; not hesitating to admit any who returned from seclusion to their bishopric (charges) as soon as they declared their repentance. But, as a contrary method had prevailed, they were compelled to follow it, and give up their own judgment.

9. But as the whole body of the Church are required to act thus mildly, and not to carry their rigour against those who have lapsed to an extreme, but rather to act charitably towards them, according to the precept of Paul, so every private individual ought proportionately to accommodate himself to this clemency and humanity. Such as have, therefore, been expelled from the Church, and so aliens from Christ, but only during the time of their excommunication. If then, also, they give greater evidence of petulance than of humility, still let us commit them to the judgment of the Lord, hoping better of them in future than we see at present, and not ceasing to pray to God for them. And (to sum up in one word) let us not consign to destruction their person, which is in the Hand, and subject to the decision, of the Lord alone; but let us merely estimate the character of each man's acts according to the Law of the Lord. In following this rule, we abide by the divine judgment rather than give any judgment of our own. Let us not arrogate to ourselves greater liberty in judging, if we would not limit the power of God, and give the law to His mercy. Whenever it seems good to Him, the worst are changed into the best; aliens are ingrafted, and strangers are adopted into the Church. This the Lord does, that He may disappoint the thoughts of men, and confound their rashness; a rashness which if not curbed, would usurp a power of judging to which it has no title.

10. For when our Saviour promises that what His servants bound on earth should be bound in heaven (Matt. viii. 18) He confines the power of binding to the censure of the Church, which does not consign those who are excommunicated to perpetual ruin and damnation, but assures them, when they hear their life and manners condemned, that perpetual damnation will follow if they do not repent. Excommunication differs from anathema in this, that the latter completely excluding pardon, dooms and devotes the individual to eternal destruction, whereas the former rather rebukes and animadverts upon his manners; and although it also punishes, it is to bring him to salvation, by forewarning him of his future doom. If it succeeds, reconciliation and restoration to communion are ready to be given. Moreover, anathema is rarely if ever

to be used. Hence, though ecclesiastical discipline does not allow us to be on familiar and intimate terms with excommunicated persons, still we ought to strive by all possible means to bring them to a better mind, and recover them to the fellowship and unity of the Church: as the apostle also says, "Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother" (2 Thess. iii. 15). If this humanity be not observed in private as well as public, the danger is, that our discipline shall degenerate into destruction.

11. Another special requisite to moderation of discipline is, as Augustine discourses against the Donatists, that private individuals must not, when they see vices less carefully corrected by the Council of Elders (Kirk-Sessions) immediately separate themselves from the Church; nor must Pastors themselves, when unable to reform all things which need correction to the extent which they could wish, cast up their ministry, or by unwonted severity throw the whole Church into confusion. What Augustine says is perfectly true: "Whoever corrects what he can, by rebuking it, or without violating the bonds of peace, excludes what he cannot correct, or justly condemns while he patiently tolerates what he is unable to exclude without violating the bonds of peace, is free and exempt from the curse" (August. Contra. Parmen. Lib. ii. c. 4).

He elsewhere gives the reason. "Every pious season and mood of ecclesiastical discipline ought always to have regard to the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. This the apostle commands us to keep by bearing mutually with each other. If it is not kept, the medicine of therefore ceases to be medicine." He who diligently considers these things, neither in the preservation of unity neglects strictness of discipline, nor by intemperate correction bursts the bonds of society."

He confesses, indeed, that Pastors ought not only to exert themselves in removing every defect from the Church, but that every individual ought to his utmost to do so; nor does he disguise the fact, that he who neglects to admonish, accuse, and correct the bad, although he neither favour them, nor sins with them, is guilty before the Lord; and if he conducts himself so that though he can exclude them from partaking of the Supper, he does it not, then the sin is no longer that of other men, but his own. Only he would have that prudence used which our Lord also requires, "lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them" (Matt. xiii. 29). Hence he infers from Cyprian, "Let a man then mercifully correct what he can; what he cannot correct, let him bear patiently, and in love bewail and lament."

12. This he says on account of the moroseness of the Donatists, who, when they saw faults in the Church which the bishops indeed rebuked verbally, but did not punish with excommunication (because they did not think that anything would be gained in this way) bitterly inveighed against the bishops (Pastors) as traitors to discipline, and by an impious schism separated themselves from the flock of Christ. Similar, in the present day, is the conduct of the Anabaptists, who, acknowledging no assembly of Christ unless conspicuous in all respects for angelic perfection, under pretense of zeal overthrow everything which tends to edification. "Such (says Augustine) not from hatred of other men's iniquity, but

zeal for their own disputes, ensnaring the weak by the credit of their name, attempt to draw them entirely away, or at least to separate them; swollen with pride, raving with petulance, insidious in calumny, turbulent in sedition. That it may not be seen how void they are of the light of the truth, they cover themselves with the shadow of a stern severity: the correction of a brother's fault, which in Scripture is enjoined to be done with moderation, without impairing the sincerity of love, or breaking the bond of peace, they pervert to sacrilegious schism and purposes of excision. Thus Satan transforms into an angel of light (2 Cor. xi 14) when under pretext of a just severity, he persuades to savage cruelty, desiring nothing more than to violate and burst the bond of unity and peace; because, when it is maintained, all his power of mischief is feeble, his wily traps are broken, and his schemes of subversion vanish."

13. One thing Augustine specially commends, viz., that if the contagion of sin has seized the multitude, mercy must accompany living discipline. "For counsels of separation are vain, sacrilegious, and pernicious, because impious and proud, and do more to disturb the weak good than to correct the wicked proud." This which he enjoins on others he himself faithfully practiced.

For, writing to Aurelius, bishop of Cartage, he complains that drunkenness, which is so severely condemned in Scripture, prevails in Africa with impunity, and advises a council of bishops (Pastors) to be called for the purpose of providing a remedy. He immediately adds, "In my opinion, such things are not removed by rough, harsh, and imperious measures, but more by teaching than commanding, more by admonishing than threatening. For thus ought we to act with a multitude of offenders. Severity is to be exercised against the sins of a few" (August. Ep. 64). He does not mean, however, that the bishops (Pastors) were to wink or be silent because they were enabled to punish public offences severely, as he himself afterwards explains. But he wishes to temper the mode of correction, so as to give soundness to the body, rather than cause destruction, and, accordingly, he thus concludes "Wherefore, we must on no account neglect the injunction of the apostle, to separate from the wicked, when it can be done without the risk of violating peace, because he did not wish it to be done otherwise (1 Cor. v. 13). We must also endeavour, by bearing with each other, to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. iv. 2).

14. The remaining part of discipline, which is not, strictly speaking, included in the power of the keys, is when pastors, according to the necessity of the times, exhort the people either to fasting and solemn prayer, or to other exercises of humiliation, repentance, and faith, the time, mode, and form of these not being prescribed by the Word of God, but left to the judgment of the Church. As the observance of this part of discipline is useful, so it was always used in the Church, even from the days of the apostles. Indeed the apostles themselves were not its first authors, but borrowed the example from the Law and the Prophets. For we there see (Ezra. viii. 21) that as often as any weighty matter occurred the people were assembled, and supplication and fasting appointed. In this, therefore, the apostles followed a course which was not new to the people of God, and which they foresaw would be useful. A similar account is to be given of the other exercises by which the people may

be aroused to duty, or kept in duty and obedience. We every where meet with examples in Sacred History, and it is unnecessary to collect them. In general, we must hold that whenever any religious controversy arises which either a council or tribunal behoves to decide; whenever a minister is to be chosen; whenever, in short, any matter of difficulty and great importance is under consideration: on the other hand, when manifestation of the divine anger appears, as pestilence, war, or famine, the sacred and salutary custom of all ages has been for the pastors to exhort the people to public fasting and extraordinary prayer. Should any one refuse to admit the passages which are adduced from the Old Testament, as being less applicable to the Christian Church, it is clear that the apostles also acted thus; although in regard to prayer, I scarcely think any will be found to slur the question. Let us then make some observation on fasting, since very many, not understanding what utility there can be in it, judge it not to be very necessary, while others reject it altogether as superfluous. Where its use is not well known, it is easy to fall into superstition.

### **Greatheart's Account of Mr. Fearing.**

*(Continued from page 117.)*

When we were come to the place where the three fellows were hanged, he said that he doubted that that would be his end also. Only he seemed glad when he saw the Cross and the Sepulchre. There I confess he desired to stay a little to look; and he seemed for a while after to be a little cheery. When he came at the Hill Difficulty, he made no stick at that, nor did he fear the lions: for you must know that his trouble was not about such things as those; his fear was about his acceptance at last. I got him in at the house beautiful, I think before he was willing. Also when he was in, I brought acquainted with the damsels of the place; but he was ashamed to make himself much for company. He desired much to be alone; yet he always loved good talk, and often would get behind the screen to hear it. He also loved much to see the ancient things, and to be pondering them in his mind. He told me afterwards that he loved to be in those two houses from which he came last, to wit, at the gate, and that of the Interpreter, but that he durst not be so bold to ask.

When we went also from the house Beautiful, down the hill into the Valley of Humiliation, he went down as well as ever I saw a man in my life; for he cared not how mean he was, so he might be happy at last. Yea, I think there was a kind of sympathy betwixt that valley and him; for I never saw him better in all his pilgrimage than when he was in this valley.

Here he would lie down, embrace the ground, and kiss the very flowers that grew in the valley. He would now be up every morning by break of day, tracing and walking to and fro in this valley.

But when he was come to the entrance of the Valley of the Shadow of Death, I thought I should have lost my man: not for that he had any inclination to go back; that he always abhorred; but he was ready to die for fear. Oh the hobgoblins will have me! the hobgoblins will have

me! cried he; and I could not beat him out on't. He made such a noise, and such an outcry here, that had they but heard him, 'twas enough to encourage them to come and fall upon us. But this I took very great notice of, that this valley was as quiet when he went through it, as ever I knew it before or since. I suppose those enemies here had now a special check from our Lord, and a command not to meddle until Mr. Fearing was passed over it.

It would be tedious to tell you all; we will, therefore, mention only a passage or two more. When he was come at Vanity Fair, I thought he would have fought with all the men in the Fair. I feared we should both have been knocked on the head so hot was he against their fooleries. Upon the Enchanted Ground he was very wakeful. But when he was come to the river where there was no bridge, there he was in a heavy case. Now, now, he said, he would be drowned for ever and so never see that face in comfort that he had come so many miles to behold. And there I took notice of what was very remarkable; the water of the river was lower at this time than ever I saw in all my life, so he went over at last not much above wet shod. When he was going up to the gate Mr. Greatheart began to take leave of him and to wish him a good reception above, so he said I shall! I shall! Then parted we asunder and I saw him no more. *Honest*: Then it seems he was well at last. *Greatheart*: Yes yes! I never had a doubt about him. He was of a choice spirit, only he was always kept very low and that made his life so burdensome to himself and so troublesome to others. He was above many tender of sin; he was so afraid of doing injuries to others that he would often deny himself that which was lawful because he would not offend.

*Honest*: But what should be the reason that such a good man all days should be in the dark?

*Greatheart*: There are two sorts of reasons for it. One is, the wise God will have it so: some must pipe and some must weep. Now Mr. Fearing was one that played on the bass. He and his fellows sound the sackbut whose notes are more doleful than the notes of other music are. Though some say, the bass is the ground of music. I care not at all for that profession that begins not in heaviness of mind. The first string that the musician usually touches is the bass when he intends to put all in tune. God also plays on this string first when He sets the soul in tune for Himself. *Only here was the imperfection of Mr. Fearing he could play upon no other music but this*, till towards his latter end.

I make bold to talk thus metaphorically for the ripening the wits of young readers, and because in the Book of the Revelation the saved are compared to a company of musicians that play upon their trumpets and harps and sing their songs before the throne.

*Honest*: He was a very zealous man as one may see by the relation you have given of him. Difficulties, lions, nor Vanity Fair he feared not all; 'twas only sin, death and hell, that were to him a terror, because he had some doubts about his interest in that celestial country. . . . I dare believe that the proverb is he could have fit a firebrand had it stood in his way but the things with which he was oppressed no man yet could shake off with ease."

### **Sermons Which Have Impressed Me.**

**I**N reading the biographies of religious men one often comes across references to sermons that at some time or other impressed them. The state of mind, or the circumstances of the hearer may to some extent account for the impression. In the case of those hearing the truth by the divine Spirit, that is in those cases where it is received with much assurance and joy of the Holy Ghost an ineffaceable impression is made. There are instances recorded where the seed sown did not take root until many years after and the Saviour has told us of those who received the seed with joy but the joy was short lived. No one, it is true, can analyse the feelings of the heart infallibly. That prerogative belongs to the Searcher of hearts but there are occasions when impressions made in listening to the truth continue for many years and even for a lifetime. Many of the readers of the Magazine must have had such experiences and the writer thought it good to put on paper a few thoughts on this subject.

To begin with he may recall a note he heard many years ago from a sermon by the Rev. Neil MacIntyre preached on the Monday of a Communion at Fort William in which he told of a sermon preached many years before at Onich (near Fort William) by that eminent preacher of the Gospel, Rev. John MacQueen, Strontian (afterwards of the Free Church, Daviot) on the text, "We were eyewitnesses of His Majesty." The sermon it would appear made an extraordinary impression on many of the hearers as the following incidents will indicate. On my way home to Oban from Fort William I was in the habit of calling on a worthy man in Glencoe, Mr. George Brown, farm manager to Lord Strathcona. As I was making my way to his house, situated beside the Signal Stone so-called because it was at this spot the signal shot was fired for the commencement of the Glencoe Massacre in 1694.

Mr. Brown was in the fields looking after the sheep but on recognizing his visitors he made for the main road and after the usual salutations, without more ado, he began to speak of the wonderful sermon he heard at Onich over 50 years before on the text, "We were eye witnesses of His Majesty." Mr. Brown had a retentive memory and I was privileged to hear from the lips of a deeply impressed hearer the substance of a sermon which left such an impression on so many of the hearers. Another hearer who used to speak about that sermon was the worthy Mr. Andrew Cameron, Oban. As I listened to these accounts I could not help feeling that there were others than the Disciples who could say on that memorable day at Onich: "We were eyewitnesses of His Majesty."

John Brown, Haddington, mentions that as a shepherd lad he used to cross the hills to hear Ralph Erskine preach and his experience under that preaching as recorded in the words: "And there we met with the God of Israel face to face." That surely was real preaching. There is another anecdote worth recording in this connection. A preacher of the Gospel, whose name is unknown to me was pouring forth the gracious Gospel message with such unction that one of his hearers rising in the congregation, forgetful of where he was addressed the preacher in the words: "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel



peace and bring glad tidings of good things" (Roms. x. 15). The minister without being put out turned to his happy hearer with the appropriate words:

O greatly bless'd the people are  
 The joyful sound that know;  
 In brightness of thy face, O Lord,  
 They ever on shall go.  
 They in thy name shall all the day rejoice exceedingly  
 And in thy righteousness shall they exalted be on high.

The writer remembers after an interval of fifty years not a few sermons he heard from the older ministers of our Church who are now at their everlasting rest. One stands out clearly on the page of memory. It was preached by Rev. D. MacDonald on a Communion occasion in Pulleneytown Academy (Wick). The subject was Joseph making himself known to his brethren. As the preacher in an ecstasy of delight spoke of Joseph of the New Testament. The Lord's people present drank in the sweet message and they too were soon in an ecstasy of delight also as was manifest when they came out of the meeting and held sweet intercourse with one another. Another sermon written on memory's page was one by the Rev. D. MacFarlane on the Friday night of a Communion in St. Jude's. The subject was justification by faith. I scarcely ever listened to such a simple sermon but surely the Holy Spirit was present that night with preacher—the impression made on the audience was so profound that a death-like stillness prevailed. Many a precious sermon I heard from his lips but never one in which simplicity and preciousness were so entwined. Another sermon that has its place on memory's page was one preached by the Rev. John R. MacKay, at Lybster, on the text: "Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old as a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner but my salvation shall be forever and my righteousness shall not be abolished" (Is. lvi. 6). It was a noble sermon. Gifted as he was to deal with the deep things of God's truth there was something very impressive in his presentation of the transitoriness of the heavens and the earth and the lasting nature of God's salvation and His righteousness which was not to be abolished.

It was as we have said a noble sermon and worthy of an honoured place on the page of memory. Another sermon that rises up before the mind was one preached by Mr. MacKay's contemporary, Rev. Neil Cameron, Glasgow. It was preached at Wick on the Monday of a Communion from the text: "His name shall endure forever: His name shall be continued as long as the sun; and men shall be blessed in Him; all nations shall call Him blessed" (Ps. lxxii. 17). It as a beautiful gospel sermon in which the Redeemer was exalted. The effect of the sermon was indicated by the sweet melody that often accompanies the singing of a people whose hearts have been touched under the preaching.

It was so on this occasion as the closing song of praise was sung:

"His name for ever shall endure;  
 Last like the sun, it shall  
 Men shall be bless'd in Him and bless'd all nations shall Him call

And blessed be His glorious name to all eternity.  
The whole earth let His glory fill  
Amen so let it be."

These are a few of the sermons heard over 50 years ago that still linger on the memory and recall happy days in listening to the gospel.  
D. B.

## **The Pilgrims Reach the Bridgeless River and Pass Over.**

### **I.**

**I**N the estimation of not a few one of the finest passages in the *Pilgrim's Progress* is the account of the Pilgrim's gathering at the River the last obstacle between them and the gate of the City. Most of their trials are over, the gate of the City is within sight and there is now but two difficulties to meet. Right before them was the Bridgeless River. Oh! that deep flowing dark River. Was there no bridge across? By a few masterly strokes of his pen the great allegorist sketches the reactions to the new and formidable obstacle that confronts them. They were stunned at the sight of the River. They were told they must go through the River to get to the gate. Then they began to inquire if there was no other way to the gate. They were answered, Yes; but that none but two since the foundation of the world, to wit Enoch and Elijah got by that way until the last trumpet shall sound. At this news Christian began to despond and began to look about, to look this way and that but no way could be found by which they could escape the River. They then asked if the waters were all of a depth and they were told by the men who were with them No; they were also told they would find the waters deeper and shallower as they believed in the King of the Country.

### **CHRISTIAN PASSES OVER.**

As he entered the waters he began to sink and cried out to his friend, Hopeful, "I sink in deep waters; the billows go over my head, all His waves go over me, Selah." Then said Hopeful "Be of good cheer my brother, I feel the bottom and it is good. Then said Christian: "Ah my friend, the sorrows of death hath compassed me about, I shall not see the land that flows with milk and honey." A great darkness and horror now fell on Christian. He could not remember any of the sweet refreshments that he had met with in his pilgrimage. He was not troubled by the thoughts of his sins before and after he began his pilgrimage. Sometimes he seemed to be quite gone and then for a while he would rise again half dead when Hopeful would comfort him by saying: "Brother, I see the gate, and men standing by it to receive us." But Christian would not be comforted. "'Tis for you they wait," he would reply. "Ah, brother," said he if I was right He would now rise to help me. But for my sins He hath brought me into the snare and hath left me. Hopeful reminded him that he had forgotten the text which says of the wicked, "There is no band in their death but their strength is firm; they are not troubled as other men neither are they plagued like other men." These troubles and distresses that you go through in these

waters are no sign that God hath forsaken you; but are sent to try you whether you will call to mind that which you heretofore have received of His goodness and live upon Him in your distresses.

### Notes and Comments.

*The Duty of Battling for the Truth.*—"We ought to set ourselves against perversions of the truth and to rebuke them sharply. For if we wink at them and let them pass, we give them our support. And then we may boast as we please about being Christians, but there are more devils among us than Christians if we countenance falsehood.

"Therefore, let us look well to the doctrine intrusted to us, and if we see wicked persons trying to infect the Church of God, to darken the doctrine or destroy it, let us endeavour to bring their works to light, that everyone may behold them, and thereby be enabled to shun them. If we attend not to these things, we are traitors to God and have no zeal for His honour, nor for care the salvation of His Church. We must be the out-and-out enemies of wickedness, if we will serve God. It is not enough to refrain ourselves from wrong and sin but we must *condemn these* as much as possible that they may not gain influence or get the upper hand."

—JOHN CALVIN.

#### *Spurgeon's Concern about the Metropolitan Tabernacle:*—

Extract from a Sermon on *Our Last Journey*, preached by Mr. C. H. Spurgeon from Job 16, 22, *Treasury of Old Testament*, Vol. II., page 251:—

"Consider the fact we shall not return. . . . Neither can we come back to rectify any mistakes we have made in our life work, nor even return to look after it, in order to preserve that which was good in it. I sometimes think if I were in heaven, I should almost wish to visit my work at the Tabernacle, to see whether it will abide the test of time and prosper when I am gone. Will you keep the truth? Will you hold to the grand old doctrine of the Gospel? Or will this Church, like so many others, go astray from the simplicity of the faith, and set up gaudy services and false doctrines? Methinks I should turn over in my grave if such a thing should be. God forbid it. But there will be no coming back, and therefore we must build well, rejecting all wood, hay, and stubble, using nothing but gold, silver, and precious stones. We must build quickly to get the work done, but fast as we labour, we must do it surely, and honestly, and thoroughly, for the fire will try it when we are gone. It will be a pity our work should suffer loss, even though we ourselves should be saved. We cannot return to save the burning mass, nor to rebuild the ruin, but we shall doubtless see, and know what comes of it. 'Establish Thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish Thou it.'"—*Gospel Magazine*.

*National Sins.*—A correspondent in the *English Churchman* says: "We know not how far God may have permitted this German scourge as a judgment upon the nations (ourselves among them) for our 'manifold

transgressions and mighty sins.' It is startlingly true that within the last 30 years there has been a national departure from God on an increasing scale, and the downgrade pace is accelerating every year with a terrible momentum. The rejection of the Holy Scriptures as the very Word of God, the promulgation of pure rationalism from Christian pulpits and platforms, the determined secularization and open desecration of the Lord's Day, the flood of impure literature and debasing stage plays, the mad lust for pleasure, the shameless indecencies in dress, and the unblushing immodesties of the rising generation—these are some of the more apparent symptoms which betray the cancer that is eating out the heart of our national life, religiously, socially, and domestically."

*Papal Plotting.*—Signs multiply in several directions, says the *English Churchman*, indicating a very active attempt on the part of the Vatican to pull the strings in connection with post-war settlements in the interests of the Church of Rome. The seductive influence of the Papacy has drawn British and American statesmen and military leaders to the Pope's audience chamber and it is evident that diplomatic negotiations with the Vatican have recently taken definite shape. That this should be so is a cause of grave concern to Protestants who know how far-reaching is the political machinery of Rome and with what subtlety, under the guise of concern for the well-being of mankind, that machinery is directed to the ultimate aim of Papal domination in the nations of the world. A well-informed writer in *The News Chronicle* holds that "the Vatican will try to regain its prestige and its power by developing a Catholic political bloc in Europe which would include the Catholic Centre Party in Germany and would seek to produce 'soft' terms for Germany and create an anti-Russian bias in all the Western countries." He adds that "into this pleasing picture comes the figure of Mr. Robert Murphy, suspect on both sides of the Atlantic, who has been assigned to London with the personal rank of ambassador, in order to take part in due course as the chief American official in the Allied military government of Germany." That Mr. Murphy is "one of Roosevelt's favourites" is a matter for added concern when we remember how repeatedly the President has sought unto the Pope in counsel.

### Church Notes.

*Communion.*—November, first Sabbath, Oban; second, Halkirk and St. Jude's; third, Edinburgh, Dornoch, Uig (Lewis). January, last Sabbath, Inverness. February, first Sabbath, Dingwall.

*South African Mission.*—The following are the dates of the Communion:—Last Sabbath of March, June, September and December. NOTE—Notice of any additions to, or alterations of, the above dates of Communion should be sent to the Editor.

*Ordination.*—The ordination of Mr. Edwin Radasi will take place at Lairg, on Friday, the 1st day of December. Rev. R. R. Sinclair, Wick, will preach at 12.30 p.m. D.V.

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**Sustentation Fund.**—A. MacLeod, Toino, B.C., \$6; "Wellwishers to the Cause" o/a Glendale per Rev. J. Colquhoun, £10; Mrs. Mack, Badralach, o/a Lochbroom, per Rev. D. N. MacLeod, £1; A Friend, o/a Inverness Congregation, £2; A Friend, Bridge of Allan, £2 10/-; Mrs. J. McL., Newcastleton, Roxburgh, £3; Mr. F. Matheson, Mitchell Street, Fairfield, Sydney, N.S.W., o/a of Inverness Congregation, £1; London Congregation, £1; and Oban Congregation, £1.

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