

Notes of an Ordination Sermon.

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(Taken from his own manuscript and hitherto unpublished.)

“Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee” – 1 Timothy 4:16.

The subject of this and the subsequent Epistle was born at Lystra, which was a city of Lycaonia. Of his father we are merely informed that he was a Gentile, who had married a Jewish female whose name was Eunice. Timothy was instructed in the oracles of God from his earliest years and brought to a saving acquaintance with the truth by the preaching of Paul on his first visit to Derbe and Lystra, at which time Timothy was only a very young man. When the apostle returned to visit the brethren in these cities at the distance of a very few years, they gave him such a favourable report of the piety of Timothy that Paul determined to take him for his companion in preaching the gospel among the Gentiles, and to cut off all occasion of complaint on the part of the Jews who did not see that the ceremonial law was virtually abolished by the death of Christ, Timothy was circumcised. From this time he accompanied the apostle for several years, assisting him in his apostolic office, until, as is generally understood, he took the pastoral care of the Church at Ephesus. Timothy evidently enjoyed a large share of Paul’s affection, who always speaks of him in language denoting the very high estimation in which he held him, and the tenderest solicitude for his welfare. This Epistle is thought to have been written by Paul in the year 58 A.D. Its original design was to give instructions to Timothy concerning the management of the Church of Ephesus, and it was probably intended that this Epistle should be read publicly to the Ephesians, that they might know upon what authority Timothy acted. The Epistle goes on, fraught with every necessary and salutary admonition, which is applicable to every Christian minister in every period of the Church, and which is calculated to cherish and promote that circumspection, faithfulness, and usefulness, which are implied in the exhortations of the text. “Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt save thyself and them that hear thee.” In enlarging from these words, I shall consider,

I. – The exhortations of the text; and

II. – The promises by which they are enforced.

I. – The exhortations.

1. “Take heed unto thyself.” Notice six particulars: –

(1) Take heed that you be a sound believer, that you have been convinced and converted, and that you are making progress in the divine life.

(2) Take heed that you be a called and sent minister to witness the things you have seen and felt. If the Lord does not send ministers they shall not profit the people. The profitable minister is he who can say, “Lord, thou hast sent me; therefore go with me; bless me and make me successful.”

(3) Take heed you be an exercised minister – not satisfied with systematic and orthodox views merely, but coming forth in the fulness of the blessings of the gospel of Christ, speaking from the heart to the heart, and bringing out of the treasure “things new and old.”

(4) See that there be conscientious diligence in all the means for attaining fitness for this great work. “Till I come give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all.”

(5) See that you will have the glory of God and the salvation of souls in view.

(6) See that you watch in all things; be on your guard against every temptation, every external and internal enemy, that your conversation be such as becometh the gospel, and that you walk with circumspection worthy of the vocation by which you are called.

Being surrounded with more temptations than other men in general, the minister should learn to bear injuries with patience and be ready to do good to every one; to be affable without levity and humble without pusillanimity, conciliating the affections without violating the truth, connecting a suavity of manners with a dignity of character, obliging without flattery, and throwing off all reserve without running into the opposite extreme of volubility and trifling. "The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient."

Be watchful in the improvement of time, losing no time in indolence or unnecessary sleep, formal visits, or perusing useless books. Every day should have its work in Christ's vineyard.

As the Christian religion pre-eminently regards the welfare of our immortal souls, as its object is to promote the honour of God and the salvation of men, how incumbent it is upon the ministers of this holy religion to feel its grandeur and importance, to imbibe its true spirit and genius, to "magnify" their ministerial office, and to display the beauty and glory of it before a dark and fallen world! To them are committed the word of life, the mysteries of godliness, the riches of divine grace, for it is through this consecrated medium that these great and inestimable blessings are chiefly communicated. Hence they are called in the language of inspiration, the light of the world, the salt of the earth. If the light then be eclipsed, darkness covers the land; if the salt lose its savour, the earth becomes putrid and corrupt. Being, therefore, the appointed and instrumental causes of diffusing this knowledge of Christianity, and its character and reception in the world being closely connected with their fidelity and zeal, how ardently they ought to seek a conformity of spirit, a perfect congeniality of soul to this sacred and momentous office with which they are invested! To produce a capacity of enjoyment, there must be a congruity between the mind and the object, so that religion, when rendered congenial to the mind inspires also confidence and delight, and renders the service of God a service of perfect freedom and happiness. The heart, attuned to a just and elevated sense of divine objects, assists the operations of the understanding. Its feelings imperceptibly mingle with the light of the mind, and by their reciprocal influence, the fire kindles within, the thoughts begin to sparkle, and the expressions to flow. This is to become "burning" as well as "shining" lights.

There is also a force and an authority with the truth, when it is delivered with gospel sincerity and simplicity and accompanied with genuine holiness. Such characters are living sermons, read and understood of all men. Discourses about virtue are pictures only. A virtuous example is a virtue embodied, animated, and exhibited to public view. Well may saints be represented with a glory around their heads, seeing the work of sanctification assimilates them more and more to the divine image, and enables them to have a life and conversation becoming the gospel of Christ. This holy fervour of spirit and hallowed flame of devotion, which all the ministers of Christ most anxiously desire to cherish in every duty and trial, arises from a spiritual knowledge of the glory of God shining in the person of Jesus Christ, and is a very different thing from that species of knowledge which defends only the outworks of Christianity, illustrates its nature and importance, and admires it only as a beautiful and perfect system. Knowledge is one thing; grace is another. Hence some men are able advocates for "the faith once delivered to the saints," zealous champions for the truth as it is in Jesus, standing forth in the trenches, repelling by cogent arguments the bold attacks of infidelity, and yet, at the same time, strangers to the interior and vital parts of the Christian religion, to that inward sanctification of mind, to that spirit of genuine piety and devotion

with which the ministerial success of a pastor, and the salvation of his own soul are inseparably connected. Though the intellect of fallen man still retains many vestiges of its primitive grandeur and capacity, though it be still competent to the investigation of the most abstruse sciences, and even to the acquisition of sound and orthodox notions in the great science of theology, yet it has no such perception of divine truths as admits them into the mind under a just view of their spiritual nature, moral beauty, and transcendent importance. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." His conceptions on these subjects are so feeble, so indistinct, and so inadequate that he himself comes not under their influence. To all practical purposes the light he has is little better than darkness, and if the light that is in him be darkness, how great is that darkness! It is, moreover, to be observed, that not only considerable theological learning may be acquired, and much sacred criticism displayed, but also the most splendid gifts may be bestowed for the general edification of the Church, independently of divine grace. But when genuine piety is not the basis of these qualifications and gifts, they swell and inflate the mind, and usually exhibit a light which dazzles more than it illuminates, leading to self-exaltation more than to the glory of God. Whereas it is the character of grace to humble the sinner, to exalt the Saviour and to promote holiness, all which are characteristics of true ministers of Christ; and the influences and operations of the Spirit upon their souls for these glorious ends are of a much higher order than those extraordinary gifts or even that miraculous information of the understanding, which were conferred in the days of the apostles. The latter were designed for particular purposes and ceased with the reasons which occasioned them, whilst the former are essential to the salvation of men, and to that holiness, without which, we must be eternally lost.

Let, then, holiness to the Lord be inscribed in deep and legible characters on the heart of the Christian minister. Let an ardent love to God and man inspire him with the most active benevolence. Let the love of Christ constrain him to consecrate all his gifts and talents to the glory of God and the benefit of his fellow-creatures. It is under the daily tuition of the Holy Spirit of grace and supplication that he can be thus animated and supported, in order to abound in every good word and work, to make full proof of his ministry, and to act the character of a faithful steward of the manifold grace of God, – of a careful and tender shepherd, of a vigilant watchman, and an indefatigable labourer in Christ's vineyard. It is the Spirit that will enable him to ask aright, and to perform aright, that can stimulate him to care, to vigilance and exertion – to foil temptations, to discipline the inward man, to regulate the heart, to mark the secret recesses and operations of sin, to pursue it in all its multiplied forms and branches, to guard against its insidious or more daring encroachments, and to attain, not only deliverance from its dominion, but also the lively and habitual exercise of these Christian graces that constitute the beauty of holiness, and to which the Lord has annexed His promises and blessings. It is the Spirit that will enable him to wrestle at a throne of grace for a blessing to himself and to his people, that will keep him often in prayer, secret meditation and communion with his own heart, that will teach him savingly in all truths, and bring them seasonably to his recollection, that will render him well versed in all the sacred writings, and that will capacitate him to use the sword of the Spirit successfully as a skilful master in Israel, with Gideon's motto, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon," and to repel all the fiery darts of the wicked one, with a holy dependence on that final victory and triumph which the Lord has promised to all His faithful witnesses.

Under the teaching of this Spirit, he will "give heed to the doctrine;" he will be enabled to declare "the whole counsel of God" and to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints." He will not be carried about by every wind of doctrine, nor teach every kind of doctrine to his people. The ballast of grace and spiritual understanding will enable him to weather out the wintry storms to which he will be exposed from the world, the devil and the

flesh, from external and internal enemies in the dangerous voyage of human life. Dangers and difficulties, opposition and contempt, he must calculate upon and expect. The very nature of his ministerial functions implies the former, and all the grandeur and dignity of it will not exempt him from the latter. “The truth itself” will offend. He will be regarded as an enemy by some for no other reason but because he tells the truth. The truth condemns the lax conduct of the unconverted, and their unscriptural creed founded on that conduct. To live in the consciences of such men as a witness against them is all that is desirable as long as they are at enmity with God. By consistency, however, you will command their esteem, for many often deny what they cannot disbelieve, and ridicule what they cannot but silently revere.

Whatever opposition therefore he may meet with from the supine indifference of some, or the intemperate zeal of others; whatever misrepresentations may, with secret but malignant industry, be circulated with a view to cloud his character or depreciate his ministry and usefulness; and however such vague and idle reports may be received, with a kind of inward complacency, by those who affect even candour and Christian charity, and from whom better things might be expected – let none of these things, however, move the Christian minister. Let not the storms of various opinions move him. Let not the applause or flattery or contempt of any person or persons whatever move him off the gospel ground on which it is his privilege to stand, and which he is commanded never to abandon, as he would wish his own salvation and that of his hearers. Neither let fastidious delicacy, which is often more shocked at a breach of the artificial forms of politeness than of the sacred duties of Christian morality, deter you from making full proof of your ministry, of approving yourself to God, as a workman that needeth not to be ashamed; recalling ever to mind Paul’s declaration to Timothy – a declaration of universal application – that all who will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. Let all his trials for righteousness’ sake remind him of the dignity of his character, and of his resemblance to his Lord and Master, that the disciple is not above his Master and the servant above his Lord. “It is enough for the disciple to be as his master, and the servant as his lord.”

If our own hearts be deeply affected with the important truths we deliver to others, we shall then walk with circumspection worthy of the vocation by which we are called. Let, therefore, a solemn sense of the terrors of the Lord, of the bitterness of sin, of the vanity and precariousness of all sublunary enjoyments, of the importance of eternity and the responsibility of our office, stimulate us to carry the momentous truths of the everlasting gospel with energy and life to the hearts of our hearers. For if our souls are not kept in the lively exercise of grace, our rounds of religious duties will unavoidably be cold, and our most sacred ministrations will be deplorably blasted. Let us always bear about us the dying of the Lord Jesus, and uniformly take heed that we are delegated ambassadors of Christ, to transact matters of everlasting importance between an infinite God and immortal souls. And if the honour of such a glorious embassy be so ineffably great, what inexpressible need have they of taking heed to themselves in all things, in the exercise of self-denial, ardent love to God, disinterested regard for His honour, and compassion for souls! What prudence, faithfulness, diligence, humility, holy zeal, spirituality of mind and conversation; what order and plainness and fervour; what just temperature of mildness and severity, are necessary as needs be! What heed for fear we may get careless and lukewarm in the Lord’s vineyard about His glory and the salvation of souls, for fear that we may be deserted of God, and that pride and sinister motives may bear sway!

2. Take heed that “the doctrine” be not your own, nor that of others, but “Christ and him crucified” – Christ in all His offices – justification by faith – the law of God as a rule of life – the covenant of grace, with all its benefits. No Arminian or Antinomian doctrines.

Let a man speak as the oracles of God. Let thy doctrine be accompanied with much humility and self-denial, so as to have God’s glory and the salvation of sinners in view. Let it

not be mixed with vain philosophy, so as to be delivered from seeking yourself and the applause of men in the excellency of speech. It is found that the holiest ministers preach most plainly, and that the plainest ministers are most successful. Let it be grave and weighty, sound speech that cannot be condemned, commending ourselves to every man's conscience. The power of the truth upon our own hearts will greatly advance this.

Paul preached with a demonstration that the Holy Spirit was in him, sanctifying him. He preached so as to give a demonstration that the Spirit was with him. He was out of weakness made strong. The grace of our Lord was made sufficient for him. The Lord renewed his strength; he received out of the fulness in Christ, and grace for grace. He preached by the Spirit to the heart of the hearers, with the demonstration of the Spirit and with power, from the heart to the heart, from faith to faith, and from experience to experience.

3. "Continue in them." Continue (1) in thy views; (2) in thy calling; (3) be laborious and diligent. Continue in thy principles and work; you must not abandon either while on earth. "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel!" Continue to seek after greater fitness for thy work, in prayer, reading, and meditations.

II. – The great promises and encouragements by which these exhortations are enforced.

1. "Thou shalt save thyself." Your continuing and persevering in the ways of the Lord will tend to promote the salvation of your soul daily. "This is our rejoicing, the testimony of our consciences"

"Thou shalt save thyself" from the guilt of other men's sins and ruin, if thou be faithful in the ministry. "Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked, and that he has not turned, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul" – Ezekiel 33:9. "I am clean," said the apostle, "your blood be upon your own head." "I take you to record this day that I am pure from the blood of all men, for I have not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God."

2. Thou shalt save "them that hear thee." It is in the proportion in which a minister of Christ is taught to promote his own salvation, that he promises usefulness in the Church as a means of saving others – of opening their eyes to turn them from darkness to light. He is to preach in season and out of season for this end, and they are to hear. God's glory and the salvation of sinners are the great ends of preaching, and the Lord promised His countenance to His ministers, even to the end of the world, for convincing and converting sinners, and for building them up in their most holy faith.

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A Sermon.

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"Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him" – Romans 5:9.

The doctrine of justification by faith, which is the leading theme of the earlier chapters of the Epistle to the Romans, is a doctrine which the word of God invites us to look at under

several aspects. On this occasion, in endeavouring to treat of the doctrine of justification in general, and of that aspect of this great doctrine, held forth in this 9th verse in particular, we shall, as enabled, take up the subject under the following heads: –

- I. – Notice a fundamental relation between God and men, which lies at the root of justification;
- II. – Very briefly indicate the nature of justification;
- III. – Endeavour to give an answer to the question, “What is the cause of justification?”
- IV. – Point out the safety of believers.

I. – Let us notice a fundamental relation between God and men, which lies at the root of justification.

To justify, in the highest sense, is a prerogative of God’s. “It is God,” says the apostle in the 8th chapter of this epistle, “that justifieth.” That God should either finally condemn, or justify, reveals and implies the doctrine that God in very truth stands in the relation of Judge to His morally responsible creatures. It is not an uncommon thing among men that one individual should stand in the relation of father to some, of master to others, and of judge to others. And these are relations which have their prototypes in God Himself. With God the primary and essential relationship is that of Fatherhood. And that relationship respects in the first instance not a creature but the eternal Son, in whom the Father from everlasting to everlasting beholds His own identical infinite divine nature. And to sinners saved of our race, it will for ever be matter for wonder and gratitude that from eternity God not only loved them when they were in a low estate, but that having loved them with a purpose to save them, He should have loved them in His own Son, with a purpose to adopt them into His family, and to bestow upon them the Spirit of His Son whereby they should cry Abba, Father. God, then, is revealed to us in the Scriptures in the relation of Father both to the Only begotten Son and to the many sons and daughters who are children by adoption. And as God reveals Himself in the relation of Father in those regards, so He reveals Himself in the relation of Creator to the universe of creatures which owe their existence to the good pleasure of His will. This relation is as to its actual realisation, one that has a beginning. The creation of the first creature marks the beginning of time, and this relation differing from that of Fatherhood in the highest sense, begins with the creation of the world. The last of the creatures which were created was man. Towards him, as towards angels who are all morally responsible creatures, God stands, not only in the relation of Creator, but of Lawgiver, and of Judge. Man has a conscience, and that conscience is itself a witness to the otherwise revealed fact that retributive justice is an essential attribute of the Godhead.

The truth, then, that, as there are morally responsible creatures upon earth, so God stands in the relation of Judge towards such creatures, lies at the root of the doctrine of justification. In that relation of Judge He will undoubtedly be glorified in regard to every human being, whether the ultimate sentence proceeding from His throne will be one of condemnation or justification. For we must all appear before the judgment of God that we may give account of the deeds done in the body, whether those have been good or bad.

II. – This leads us to explain briefly what in this connection is intended by “being justified.” To justify means more than simply to pardon. It carries with it the fact that the person justified is accepted by God as righteous in His sight, in other words, that God in His capacity as the Judge of all, declares that all the claims of law and justice have been met and satisfied in respect of the individual under consideration. Now, that God should condemn the wicked, as indeed He condemned angels that sinned, ought not to excite surprise. Sinners deserve to die the second death. Further, it is not surprising, but only what conscience assures us must be, that God should declare with regard to creatures that never sinned against Him, as

elect angels, that His law is satisfied in regard to them, or in other words, that they are justified. But what is incomparably surprising is that under the gospel, and in virtue of the gospel, God should justify the ungodly, or in other words, should declare in regard to the personally unworthy that not only are their sins pardoned, but that all the claims of His law and justice have been met and satisfied. Justification is the opposite of condemnation; and it is to be observed, that, as in the case of a righteous judge who condemns a wicked man, the judge does not thereby make the man corrupt by his act of condemnation, so, on the other hand, when the Judge of all justifies the ungodly, He does not in that regard make one that was inherently unholy, inherently holy by that sentence of justification. Justification is the declaration of a fact; it is not in itself a change of nature, but it carries with it a change of state. Now, when God declares regarding the ungodly that believe upon Jesus that all the claims of law and justice have been met and satisfied, He does not so act without good reason. If God justifies, we may be well assured that regard is had to law and equity in this case.

III. – We proceed, therefore, in the third place, to endeavour to give an answer to the question – What is the cause of justification? Now, to that question several answers may be given, all of which it is necessary we should take into consideration in endeavouring to arrive at the Scripture doctrine of justification. For if the question be asked –

(a) What is the cause of justification? The first answer that occurs in this Epistle to the Romans is that justification is without a cause. That is the real meaning of the word “freely,” which occurs in Romans 3:24 – “Being justified freely.” The word here rendered “freely” is the same that is rendered “without a cause” in the utterance “They hated me without a cause,” which occurs in John 15:25. There is positively nothing in Christ why any one should hate Him. It is the just judgment of God that whosoever does not love Christ deserves to be anathema, or a thing accursed – 2 Corinthians 16:22. Those who hate Christ must hate Him without a cause – must hate Him when they ought to love Him. They that hate Him can never assign any good reason why they should be so minded toward Him, and so we say that when God justifies the ungodly He justifies them without a cause; but when we say *that*, we mean that He does not find the reason for the act in the character of the person justified. On the contrary, if He were to enter into judgment with us, if He were to deal with us on the ground of the covenant of works, He should certainly condemn us as creatures who had brought upon ourselves the wrath of God. It may occur to some that, although the reason of justification is not found in the ungodly (who are justified) prior to their regeneration, that, after regeneration and effectual calling, inherent righteousness enters into the grounds of justification. But that is not so; the sentence of justification has ample grounds, as we shall see later on; but inherent holiness is no part of those grounds. The Psalmist had long been in a state of grace ere he said in Psalm 143:2 – “In thy sight shall no flesh be justified.” He certainly includes himself here among all flesh, and his declaration is, that neither those who are dead in sins, nor those upon whom, through grace, a new heart has been bestowed, should miss condemnation, if God were to deal with any of them on the ground of their own personal merits. Not only so, but even in heaven itself, and after believers have been myriads of ages perfect in holiness, they will never regard their inherent holiness as at all entering into the ground of their justification or as constituting their right to heaven. Justification is an act which is without a cause, if only the personal worthiness of the justified be regarded; nay, it is an act which takes place in spite of reasons, which are as the sands of the seashore innumerable, on account of which they justly deserve condemnation.

(b) We therefore ask again – What is the cause of justification? and in answer say that the cause of justification is the grace of God. Although we are justified without any cause found in ourselves, we are justified by grace. In other words, *the moving cause* of our

justification is grace, as grace is in Him who is Jehovah – Jehovah, God, merciful and gracious. Grace may be taken as including the pity that thought upon sinners in their low estate, and the love that provided a Mediator whereby a way was found wherein all the attributes of God should be magnified, His justice not less than His mercy in the salvation of lost sinners of mankind. This love that provided a Mediator is the theme of the Apostle in the immediate context. The love which the Holy Ghost sheds abroad in the heart of believing sinners is the love which hath been commended, in that Christ died for His people when they were yet sinners. The highest reason that can be given why God should have purposed to save sinners of mankind at all is that He is God; He found in Himself the reasons why He should pluck brands out of the fire. It is to the praise of the glory of His grace that He should do so.

(c) But *the meritorious cause* of justification is stated in the words of our text. It is the blood of Christ. “We are justified by his blood.” The blood of Christ is the righteousness of God, that is, the righteousness which God has provided for those who had no righteousness of their own, in order that He might be just and the justifier of the ungodly who believe in Jesus. The sentence of justification has this righteousness, the obedience of Him by which we are told many shall be made righteous, as its basis in law and equity. Now, righteousness, we may say, is that which the law as a covenant of life demands. That law demanded from our first parents in innocence a continuing in that purity of heart wherewith they were created, and also obedience to God’s revealed will, which obedience, if it had been rendered, would have been as pure streams of water issuing from a pure fountain, and that would have constituted the righteousness of the race. Now, that we are fallen, the law demands not only what it required of Adam in innocence, but also satisfaction for the sins that are past. This is evidently what none of us can render, and thus if we are Spirit-taught we shall join with the Apostle in saying from the heart that by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified. But God hath Himself provided a righteousness for sinners who had left themselves spiritually naked, in the obedience unto death of His Only begotten Son, in Emmanuel slain. The Son of God assumed the nature of the ungodly whom He came to save, so that He was made in all things like unto His brethren – sin only excepted. He came under the law as a covenant to save them who were under the law. And by that obedience of His unto death He put away sin, He made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in an everlasting righteousness. We say with reverence that the loveliest sight God ever beheld on this earth was Christ crucified. Christ crucified was the object of His infinite appreciation, and such indeed is the nature of this unspeakable infinite appreciation that whosoever renounces his own righteousness and seeks acceptance with God, only in virtue of the excellence of Christ’s obedience, is accepted by God, though he might have been before this, in his own and in other people’s estimation, the chief of sinners. The meritorious cause, then, of justification is the blood of Christ.

(d) But yet again, when the question is put, “What is the cause of justification?” the Scriptures answer that faith is a cause. We are “justified by faith;” that is, faith is *the instrumental cause* of justification. It was not God’s purpose to save any sinner apart from an atonement. Neither was it His purpose to save any impenitent unbeliever. On the other hand, it was His purpose to save every believer, and we may say, that as the atonement flows from the unmerited love of God (John 3:16), so faith itself flows from the atonement. It is given to some for Christ’s sake to believe upon Christ – Philippians 1:29. What, then, is this faith which is an infallible pledge of salvation? It is, in the words of our Shorter Catechism, “a saving grace whereby we receive and rest upon Christ alone for salvation as He is offered to us in the gospel.”

Faith is spiritual eyesight. Men generally possess a power of sight by which in greater or less degree they discern the beauty of natural objects. But we have no eye by nature to behold the matchless beauty, and suitableness of Jesus Christ as a Saviour, nor even to apprehend our own deformity and emptiness in the sight of the Omniscient One. The eye that beholds

divine and spiritual loveliness in Jesus is never blind to the utter corruption of the sinner as he is in himself, to the impossibility of a sinner of mankind rendering the satisfaction demanded by divine justice in respect of one that has come short of the glory of God. But Jehovah opens blind eyes, He raises up the bowed down, and in a set time, a time of love, He bestows upon the sinner convinced of sin and misery, the ability to behold such a divine attractiveness and excellency in Jesus Christ as draws the sinner towards the foundation laid in Zion, towards the perfection of moral beauty which is Christ crucified, so as that in contrast with one's self-righteousness, which is felt to be but a horrible pit and miry clay, Christ is felt to be a rock, a living stone, chosen of God, and chosen of all who receive His Spirit. When, then, Christ the righteousness which God provided, is thus received into the heart, the obedience of Christ is reckoned as fully and as freely to the chief of sinners who thus receives Him, as though all that magnifying of the law which Christ accomplished when His obedience was a sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour, had been rendered by the believing sinner in his own proper person. This righteousness is ours, not by its being infused into us, but by imputation, and is received by faith as by an eye that through grace appreciates Christ crucified as the wisdom of God, and His power unto salvation. This righteousness, being thus reckoned to the believer, is, in that sense, the believer's righteousness, and God now as the Judge of all, and in virtue of His gracious arrangements towards the salvation of that which was lost, regards the believer as one in respect of whom all the demands of law and justice have been met and satisfied, and the declaration of this primarily in the court of heaven and consequently in the court of conscience is justification.

It is only when the sinner has been called into the fellowship of the Son of God, which is but the Godward aspect of the act or process whereby a sinner comes unto or believes upon Jesus Christ, that Christ's meritorious obedience unto death is reckoned unto him, and that, as we suggested, in such fulness and freeness as that the sinner to whom this obedience is imputed is spoken of (2 Corinthians 5:21) as the righteousness of God in Christ. He who was rich became poor in order that the poor might become exceeding rich, and truly exceeding rich are they who in Christ are the righteousness of God. We thus see that, while justification, which is an act of God in the capacity of judge, is without any cause tending thereto in the sinner, it is an act which has grace even as grace is in God as its moving cause, the blood of Christ as its meritorious cause, and faith as its instrumental cause.

IV. – This leads us, in conclusion, to endeavour to indicate how in the words of our text, the ultimate safety of believers is brought out. "Much more then being now justified by his blood we shall be saved from wrath through him." Those, we are here taught, who from being exceeding poor have become in the manner already set forth exceeding rich, are not again to sink into that poverty out of which they were rescued. They are not again to become children of wrath. Being, indeed, during all their sojourn as believers but imperfect in holiness, passing as they do through a wilderness full of pits and snares, and surrounded as they are by many subtle, powerful, and cruel enemies, they should certainly again become children of wrath, if their justification meant merely pardon for sins past, and if after forgiveness they must, in order to live, render, in their own person, full satisfaction to God's law. But through Christ Himself believers are saved from wrath. "They are saved by His life," even that life of intercession which He lives for them at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty on high. Now this arrangement of the everlasting covenant to which our text brings us implies –

(1) That when such promises are given as "No one can pluck them out of my hands," or "He is able to save unto the uttermost" the most desperate efforts will be put forth, and will be felt by believers to be put forth to pluck them out of the Good Shepherd's hands.

(2) That yet, notwithstanding all, believers are safe, being manifestly a people for whom Christ died, even in their room and stead, so that the thought is not to be entertained

for a moment that after God has given Christ for them, even unto the death of the Cross, with a purpose to save them, they may after all be lost.

(3) Christ did not so die in such a way as that He must needs die over again, if all those, who in a day of His power put their trust in Him, are to be saved with an everlasting salvation. He did not so finish the work given Him to do, as that, in the case or for the sake of any who put their trust in Him, the work should have to be done over again if they are all to be saved from being ultimately lost. By no means: "by one offering He perfected for ever them that are sanctified." He suffered once for sins; and now because the advocacy at the right hand is an advocacy that pleads the merits of the obedience which was unto death, that advocacy is always an effective, all-prevailing advocacy. It is true the children of God may sometimes feel more wrath after they become believers than they ever did in their natural state, but that does not imply that they are fallen from grace or that they have again become children of wrath.

(4) That faith by which a sinner renounces all dependence upon mere creature merit, and is drawn to the obedience of Christ as the one meritorious cause of salvation, is itself a sure pledge of Christ's having died in one's room and stead, and therefore of a divine purpose of saving one, a purpose which is unchangeable, and from everlasting, and cannot be frustrated. For as, according to the whole argument of the Apostle in this fifth chapter of Romans, believers are, by the fact of their believing, manifested as the people for whom Christ died, if, notwithstanding His having died for them – done thus the utmost for them – they were not at length completely saved, it were tantamount to saying that God's purpose and contrivance to save them had failed; and that were blasphemy. Israel shall be saved in the Lord Jesus with an everlasting salvation, and they shall not be ashamed nor confounded, world without end.

This doctrine of justification by faith ought to be highly regarded by all – by those who have not yet entered into the rest which comes from faith, and by those who have, by believing, entered into this rest. For let it be observed by the former, that Christ crucified is the righteousness which God has provided and accepts, that *that* righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and that sinners, as such, are in the Gospel asked to renounce their own righteousness, and to submit themselves to this God-glorifying and conscience-satisfying righteousness of Christ, with the assurance that if, as is their reasonable service, they so submit, they shall be accepted in the Beloved, and set among the princes of His people. On the other hand, let it be observed that the Word of God and the experience of individuals, make it plain that everyone thus become wise to make the good choice, owes that wisdom to the grace and power of the blessed Spirit; it is in a day of Christ's power that sinners, heretofore dead in sins, obey the Gospel call. It was, as one has put it, in effectual calling that the Lord's people got their faith, and if our conscience bears us witness that Christ is being received by us for all the ends for which He has been revealed in the Gospel as the Saviour of sinners, we have warrant to conclude that we have found favour, and that, as our faith is connected with our effectual calling, and our effectual calling connected with the death of Christ, so the death of Christ is connected with an infallible, unfrustratable purpose to save us.

[June 1906]

Notes of a Sermon.

By the REV. DONALD MACFARLANE, Dingwall.

“Who is he that condemneth?” – Romans 8:34.

The Apostle in this chapter discourses on the privileges of God’s people. No doubt they have troubles in this life, caused by, among other things, remaining sin in their souls, and many enemies without them in the world, but their privileges are great and many, a summary of which he gives in this chapter. Among these privileges the Apostle mentions this – that they are free from “condemnation.” With this he begins the chapter: “There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus,” and he again takes up the subject in our text, “Who is he that condemneth?” In considering these words, we shall notice –

- I. – The accusers, which the question implies.
- II. – The challenge; for the question is a challenge to the accusers to substantiate their charges; and

III. – The proof the Apostle adduces in support of his implied statement, that there is “no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus.”

I. – The accusers.

The *first* accuser we shall mention is Satan. He is called in Scripture by various names, each of which is descriptive of his character as the arch-enemy of God and man, and everything that is good. Among his other names is “the accuser.” He is called “the accuser of the brethren.” These are God’s adopted children, who are brethren of His incarnate Son, Jesus Christ, and also brethren in their relation to each other as members of God’s family of redeemed men. Satan accuses these before God day and night – that is, constantly during their time on earth. He is like the troubled sea that cannot be at rest. An instance of his evil work in this respect we have in the case of Job. He appeared before God to condemn righteous Job, to whom there was no condemnation. As he could not lay hold on anything in the conduct of that holy man of God, who was, according to the testimony of the Most High, “perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil,” he tried to accuse him of insincerity and hypocrisy in his profession and worship of God. He charged him with serving God from selfish and worldly motives – that is to say, that it was because God was so good in His providence to Job he served Him. “Does Job fear God for nought?” Satan insinuates that Job’s religion is a mere pretence for worldly gain, and that, if the Lord deprived him of all the wealth He bestowed on him, his religion was gone. The matter was put to the test, and Satan was once more proved to be liar. I shall not follow this instance farther. I refer you to the history of the case as it is recorded in the Bible. Job is now, and long since, in heaven, where Satan cannot disturb his peace and happiness; but the accuser of the brethren is still busy at his unrighteous work towards God’s people on earth. They are not ignorant of his devices. He gathers up all kinds of charges against them, in order to condemn them. He lays to their charge their old sins, which God long ago pardoned, for Christ’s sake; their present infirmities, their shortcomings, over which they themselves mourn, and from which they groan to be delivered. The evil one lets alone his own children to enjoy their false peace; but he is busy day and night to disturb the peace and happiness of God’s children. If we are God’s children, we may expect to be assailed by this enemy in every way he is permitted during our imperfect state here; but we shall come off at last more than conquerors through Him that loved us.

The *second* accuser is the world – that is, the men of the world who are still of the world that lies in wickedness, and on Satan’s side in his enmity and opposition to the Church of God. Accordingly, Christ, speaking comfort and warning to His disciples before He left them to go to His Father who sent Him, says – “These things I command you, that ye love one another. If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But these things will they do unto you for my name’s sake, because they know not him that sent me” – John 15:17-21. You will thus see that it is because of their relation to Christ, and interest in Him, the world of unrenewed sinners hate His people. This was predicted early in the history of redemption: “I will put enmity between thee (Satan) and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel” – Genesis 3:15. This enmity has been kept up ever since, and put in practice by Satan and his seed, and it shall be continued in the world to the end of time. The history of God’s Church in the past gives ample proof of the fact that sinners, who were of the world, have done their utmost, under the instigation of Satan, to heap up calumnious charges against God’s people in order to

condemn them; and graceless professors of religion often manifested their enmity in this respect in a greater measure than their fellows who made no profession at all. The spirit of Cain is more devilish in a graceless professor than it is in the atheist. The chief priests, who claimed to be the servants of God, were ringleaders in their enmity and opposition to God's Son, and when they could not prove any charge against Him worthy of death, they suborned false witnesses in order to condemn Him! At the time of the Reformation all kinds of infamy were falsely charged against the Reformers by those who claimed to be the only Church of God on earth. This is still the spirit and practice of the world towards God's people in order to condemn them. I do not say that all, in their natural state, are equally hostile to God's people, and desirous to condemn them. Some are kind to them, and take their side against their accusers. This is a good sign, and may be a forerunner of their conversion to God before they leave the world. We have seen an instance of this. We have known some young persons who were kind to God's people, and fond of their company, and it was evident that they ended their life in this world as children of God and heirs of glory. Still, it is the nature of the carnal mind to be at enmity against God, and to show enmity to His people. If we are God's people we cannot escape the attacks of the world, and especially the attacks of graceless persons in the Church, to accuse and condemn us.

The *third* class of accusers are believers themselves. They become their own accusers. If you are in Christ Jesus and without condemnation, you are condemning yourself, and you find in yourself many grounds of condemnation. "Every mouth is stopped, and all the world is become guilty before God." All are condemned by Him, who is the Judge of all. But, ah! it is another thing for the sinner to begin to condemn himself – to begin, like Ephraim, to smite upon his thigh, or, like the publican, to smite upon his breast – as much as to say, "Here is the evil, I am the sinner; I am guilty, I deserve to be condemned." If you are without condemnation, you have, through the teaching of the Holy Spirit, begun this work, and you have not yet come to the end of it. It is true of God's people that, from the time in which they had been convinced by the Spirit of their sins till the end of their life here on earth, they condemn themselves. Even after they are justified, and acquitted from the guilt of all their sins, they still condemn themselves for the sins which God, for Christ's sake, freely and fully pardoned. Though God forgave them, they cannot forgive themselves. When we add to this the fact – the sad fact – that their nature is but partially renewed, that the fountain of iniquity is still within them, and that, consequently, they daily sin and come short of God's glory, they find many causes for self-condemnation during their state of imperfection. This makes them walk humbly before God all the days of their life here below, and makes them more dependent upon the blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, which cleanseth from all sin, both in its guilt and depravity. That blood is their only ground of hope for justification and sanctification, and the longer they are in this world the more they are shut up to that gracious and efficacious remedy. "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross (death) of the Lord Jesus Christ." Until they are perfectly sanctified, and conformed to the image of Christ, they must condemn themselves. This much concerning the accusers.

II – The challenge – "Who is he that condemneth?" There are those, as we have seen, that bring charges against God's people calculated to condemn them; but the question is – Who is able to condemn them *justly*, seeing that, in the sight of God, there is to them no condemnation? The challenge amounts to an assertion of the impossibility of establishing any charge against them on account of which God should again cast them into the state of condemnation in which they had been by nature. Let Satan, the world, and their own consciences come forward, with all the accusations they can gather, and they shall find that their effort to condemn "them who are in Christ Jesus" will be in vain. None in the past, from the beginning of God's gracious dispensation of saving sinners, has been able to condemn

them; none at present is able to do it, and none for ever shall be able to do it. The challenge remains unanswered, for it is unanswerable. “There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus” is the proposition the Apostle lays down in the beginning of the chapter, and in our text he challenges all accusers to be able to overthrow his statement, or the truth of his assertion.

III. – The proof the Apostle adduces in support of the statement that there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus. For this purpose he brings forward four arguments in their proper order. These arguments, though linked together as so many links in one chain, we may consider them separately, and,

1. The act of God in *justification*. “It is God that justifieth.” In justification there is an acquittal from all guilt, and there can be no just ground of condemnation but on that of some guilt. Therefore, the Apostle says, “Who shall lay anything – the least thing – to the charge of God’s elect?” It is impossible to lay anything to their charge, because God justified them. We ought to lay to heart that justification must be at the foundation of our being in a state in which there is no condemnation to us. As nothing can justly be laid to the charge of those whom God justified, so their freedom from guilt and condemnation is complete – so complete as if they were already in heaven! Though the act of justification does not of itself remove the least stain of the depravity of our nature, yet it removes the whole guilt of our sins. All our sins are forgiven and forgotten by God, according to His promise, “For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. – “Hebrews 8:12. Therefore, there is no condemnation to them. This is the first argument, and it must, of necessity, have the first place.

2. The second argument is *the death of Christ*. “It is Christ that died.” It was on the ground of Christ’s death God justified His people. There is no other ground, and there is no need of another, for the death of Christ is all-sufficient, inasmuch as, by His death, He rendered full satisfaction to the requirements of divine justice in the room of His covenant people. This is a just ground; and God is just as well as gracious when He justifies the guilty sinner that believes in Jesus. Here, then, the Apostle brings forward the death of Christ in answer to all the charges that might be brought up against believers. And we have nothing else to bring forward to meet and overthrow similar charges against ourselves. We make mention of the righteousness of Christ, even of His only, as our only plea. When pursued by our enemies, who would condemn us, let us, like the Psalmist, flee to Christ, that He may hide us (Psalm 143:9). Let us take shelter in His death – in the blood of His atonement.

3. The third argument is *the resurrection of Christ*. “Yea, rather, that is risen again.” The resurrection of Christ is the proof that He fully satisfied the law of God for His people. The law arrested Christ as the surety of His people – not, however, against His will, but of His own free accord and mere good pleasure – and kept its hold of Him till He had paid the whole debt which they incurred, and for which He of His grace (2 Corinthians 8:9), became responsible! But when He had paid the debt, God, as the righteous judge, discharged Him from His obligations. He raised Him from the dead – set Him free. He, so to speak, put a receipt in His hand. The resurrection was the receipt given to the glorious surety, a copy of which Christ left to His Church in the form of *the Christian Sabbath*. You will see the force of this argument which the Apostle uses against the condemnation of those whom God justified, and for whom Christ died. If you pay a debt, and if the matter of payment is again disputed, what will you do? You will just produce the receipt you received when you settled the account. That will settle the case once for all. The receipt is the best argument in such a disputed case. In like manner the Apostle mentions the resurrection of Christ to prove the non-condemnation of His people. “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? who is he that condemneth?” in the face of these clear evidences – God’s act of justification,

Christ's death and resurrection? The text is a quotation from Old Testament Scripture – Isaiah 50:8-9 – where Christ speaks, challenging all His adversaries to be able to condemn Him since God justified Him by raising Him from the dead. Now, there is such a relation between Christ and His people – He, their federal Head; they, the members of His mystical body – that they may plead His resurrection as an argument against their condemnation. “Jesus is risen.” Look not for Him in the grave, for He is risen; “He is even at the right hand of God.” “He was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.” Paul, in encouraging young Timothy, exhorts him to “remember that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead.”

4. The fourth argument is *the intercession of Christ*. “Who also maketh intercession for us.” “We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the Righteous.” Though Christ finished the work of Redemption, yet He did not yet finish all His undertaking as Mediator between God and man. We are not only reconciled by His death, but also (further) saved by His life as our Advocate in heaven. He ever lives to make intercession for His people. He pleads on their behalf on the ground of the merit of His death, and not on the ground of anything in them. Therefore, when the Apostle John mentions that we have an Advocate with the Father, he is careful to add, “And He is the propitiation for our sins.” You who are conscious of your own imperfections may be tempted to say, “I am so sinful, so unworthy, and so imperfect in my endeavours to serve God, that I am afraid I cannot be well pleasing in His sight, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity.” But, ah, Christ intercedes for you, believer, and He intercedes on good ground – the ground of His own merit. It is to Christ's merit the Father looks for the acceptance of your person and services, and not to anything in you – not even to grace in you, or any good work which you may have performed through grace.

In conclusion, let us make use of the subject.

1. For the comfort of believers. These, as to their experiences, may be divided into two classes –

first, those who have in the past received such tokens of the Lord's goodwill towards them as that they are assured of their interest in Christ, and whose faith fails not, notwithstanding the working of unbelief within them;

second, those who are still doubting their interest in Him for want of clear evidences of their state before God.

Both may take comfort from our text; for, however they may differ in their experiences, there is no difference in their state in the sight of God. Both rest on Christ alone for salvation. The former class can say, “My Beloved is mine, and I am His;” the latter may say, “To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.” Both are in Christ, and without condemnation. These two classes differ as to their experience; but there is one thing common to them both, viz., that they have accusers. These accusers we have mentioned. But, O believers, think of the strong and impregnable garrison God has built around you, to defend you against all your enemies that labour day and night to condemn you, His own act in justifying you, the death of Christ, His resurrection, and His continual intercession at the right hand of God. Looking at that sure defence, you may take up the challenge, “If God be for us, who can be against us?” “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?” “Who is he that condemneth?” You cannot be condemned, for your glorious surety has been condemned for you. But He is acquitted, He is risen again, and you are risen in Him, *virtually* in His resurrection, and *actually* in your justification. It is as impossible that you shall fall again into a state of condemnation as it is for Jesus Christ to come down again to His state of humiliation to begin the second time the work which He had already finished by His death. You need to remember that Christ died for your sins, according to the Scriptures; that He rose

again the third day, according to the Scriptures; and that He ever lives to make intercession for you. You have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the Righteous. You pray, but you come short in that duty, and your prayers are, at the best, mingled with much sin and imperfection; but His intercession is perfect, constant, and all-prevailing. Put Christ between you and all that seek your ruin; put Him between you and all the guilt of your sins – actual and original; put Him between you and all remaining corruption in your nature; put Him between you and the wrath of God you deserve for your sins; put Him between you and your own righteousness of filthy rags; put him between you and Satan, the world, and the flesh, and all enemies whatsoever. In all your approaches to God in the way of worship, come by Jesus Christ – the way, the truth, and the life; for no man can come to God with acceptance but by Him. Make use of Christ in all the aspects in which He is presented to you in the Gospel, and for all the purposes for which He is given by the love of the Father, as “He is made of God unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.”

2. For the encouragement of anxious enquirers. Are you convinced of your sin and misery, and asking the important question, “What must I do to be saved?” There is but one answer to that question, namely, “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” It is not by your own doings you can be saved, but by the doings and sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ, “who suffered the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.” Are you conscious of your inability to believe, to repent, and to change your nature? Instead of faith you find unbelief; instead of a soft heart you find a hard heart; instead of the burden of your sins being removed, it is still pressing you down to the pit of perdition. In this condition, are you on the verge of giving up all hope of being saved? Come as you are, with your sins, your unbelief, and impenitence; come, I say, as you are, sinful and lost, to Jesus Christ, who came to seek and to save that which was lost. Cast yourself upon Him, as, in yourself, a lost sinner, crying, “Lord, save, I perish,” and He will hear your cry, He will save you. Do not look for anything in yourself as the ground of salvation, though, if saved, the Spirit will work a good work in you; but look to Christ alone, His finished work on Calvary, as the only ground on which God accepts of sinners, even the chief. If you thus come to the Saviour of sinners, He will not cast you away to be lost in eternity, for He has promised, “Him that cometh unto me, I will in nowise cast out.” Confess your sins, forsake them, plead the merit of Christ, accept of His righteousness, and, on the ground of that righteousness, God will forgive your sins, and accept of your person as righteous in His sight as if you had never sinned against Him! You will then be entitled to join the redeemed of the Lord in their challenge, “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?” “Who is he that condemneth?”

3. For conviction to the careless sinner. O, poor sinner, who live without any concern about the salvation of your immortal soul, there is condemnation to you. You are already condemned, and if you continue in your impenitent state you shall be condemned finally and for ever at the day of judgment. Consider this, I beseech you, in time, while it is yet “the accepted time, and the day of salvation.” Forsake your wicked ways, and your unrighteous thoughts, and turn to the Lord, and He will have mercy upon you, and “to our God, for he will abundantly pardon” you – Isaiah 55:7. You live now without prayer, but if you die without being born again, and without faith in Jesus Christ, you shall at the day of judgment pray to the rocks to fall upon you, and to the mountains to hide you from the wrath of Jesus Christ, before whose bar you must appear to be for ever punished for your sins. Your prayers *then* shall be of no avail. You now turn a deaf ear to the call of Christ in the Gospel to come to Him to save you, but at the day of judgment you must obey His command, “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels” – Matthew 25:41. But it may not yet be too late for seeking and obtaining mercy. The door of mercy is still open; Christ is able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by Him. I invite you to come to Him; but if you refuse the gracious call, your blood shall be upon your own head. I am free

from your blood, if you perish in your sins. “Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die?” May God add His blessing. Amen.
[July 1906]

Brief Notes of Sermons.

By the late REV. ARCHIBALD COOK, Daviot.

Preached in John Knox’s Free Church, Glasgow, on Friday Evening and Saturday
before Communion – 6th and 7th April, 1849.

(Taken by a North-Country Hearer, and hitherto unpublished.)

“But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread
and drink of that cup” – 1 Corinthians 11:28.

The few moments we have in this world are precious. We may say that our eternity depends upon them. Therefore, our precious time ought not to be spent in vain, for as the tree falleth, so it must lie for ever. If we do not attain to an interest in Christ in this world, we will not attain to it in eternity. We will never repent in eternity of having attained to an interest in Christ in this world. Therefore, “let a man examine himself.” We are accustomed to examine ourselves, to look into the state of our souls in view of the ordinance of the Supper, but it would be profitable for us to be daily employed in the work of self-examination.

We find that the Corinthian Church had fallen into many corruptions, even in the Apostle’s day, and no doubt they were permitted to do so that the Church in all ages might have the benefit of the exhortations addressed to them. We see that they went about the

sacred ordinance in a wrong way. The Apostle said to them, and through them to us: “Whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself not discerning the Lord’s body.” In discoursing from the words before us, I intend to show –

- I. – Some of the difficulties that attend the performance of this duty;
- II. – The preciousness of the fruits of self-examination;
- III. – How the duty is to be done; and
- IV. – The seasons that especially call for the performance of this duty.

I. – I am, in the first place, to show some of the difficulties that attend the performance of this duty.

(1) There is a difficulty in the performance of this duty from the weakness of the soul regarding things spiritual. Man lost all his spiritual strength by the fall; he is strong to depart from God, but weak to return unto Him.

(2) But, again, there is a difficulty in self-examination from the want of spiritual discernment in the soul. Man is by nature blind to “the things of the Spirit,” and man’s condition and character belong to these things. There is a new creation necessary for self-examination. A natural man cannot discern grace. The Spirit of life and light must be imparted to the soul before a man can know his real condition and character before God.

(3) Further, I observe there is a difficulty in self-examination, because man is away from himself. Man, by nature, does not know he has a soul. A man may pray without a soul, and he may hear a great many sermons without a soul; yea, he may go to the Lord’s Table, and eat bread and drink wine there without a soul. We read of the prodigal that “he came to himself.” He was away from himself. And we read, also, that the fool’s eyes are in the ends of the earth. But when God draws near to a man in the day of regeneration, He gives him to know that he has a soul, and that it is a sinful soul.

(4) But, more particularly, I observe that there is in us by nature a secret fear to see our true state before God, because we are afraid things are not right in His sight. It is an awful thing, indeed, to look at ourselves in the light of the Word and Spirit of God, and, at the same time, to be ignorant of the grace of God in Christ Jesus. O, my friends, if men were to be judged at last by the appearance they have in this world, they would come off well; but the Lord will say to many a fine professor in that day, “Depart from me; I know you not, ye workers of iniquity.”

(5) Further, I observe that there is a secret peace in the soul by nature, and there is a secret love to that peace in the soul. “When the strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace.” And there is another word; “We shall have peace, though we walk in the imagination of our hearts.” There is no profit in that peace in the soul. There can be no salvation for that soul until the Spirit of God breaks its peace; and if the peace of the soul is not broken in time, sin in that soul will break its peace through eternity. The people of God do not get into His kingdom sleeping.

(6) I observe further, that there is a difficulty in self-examination for want of time. When Adam departed from God, his affections were wholly taken up with the body, and so we, his children, are so much taken up with the body that we have no time to examine how matters stand between God and our souls. Even the Lord’s own people are often to blame in this matter. Remember the word, I pray you, “Having food and raiment, let us therewith be content.”

(7) But I might observe further, that there is not anything that so torments the wicked One as to see a poor sinner reflect how matters stand between God and his soul. The devil

does not care how many prayers you say, how many sermons you hear, or how often you sit down at the Table of the Lord, provided you do not reflect upon the state of your soul before God. There is no generosity in the wicked One. One might think that when a poor sinner had served him faithfully for twenty or thirty years, he might allow a man to reflect peaceably upon the state of his soul before God. But no; even at the eleventh hour he will roar like a lion, if a poor sinner offer to reflect upon this matter.

But I observe that, although there are difficulties in self-examination, it *must be done*. I observe, in the first place, that there is a necessity for self-examination, because we must die, and there is no saying when; it may be the next moment. O! my friends, it is an awful thing to be ignorant of how matters stand betwixt God and our souls, when we come to die. But when we reflect again that we have to do with One who is no respecter of persons, “it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” It is a fearful thing even for His own people to fall into His hands. And when we think of the character of God, of His infinite purity – His eyes are as a flame of fire – my friends, it is an awful thing to come near the Holy One. “If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.” But again, my friends, when we think of the value of the soul, let us remember the words of the Saviour, “What shall it profit a man, though he should gain the whole world, if he lose his soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” Eternity will show the value of the soul. There is none but God can fill the soul. No; the whole universe cannot fill the soul of man. Man was made originally for the glorification and enjoyment of God, and nothing less than God can give rest to his soul. O! think of what the soul is capable of, in the way of enjoyment and in the way of misery. Think upon this, ye secure professors; examine yourselves. The people of God are engaged in the work of self-examination from day to day.

I observe, further, that there is a necessity for self-examination, because it is possible for a man to lose his soul. We read of a deceitful heart and of a deceitful devil. We read also of “ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.” It is quite possible, my friends, to lose our souls. There is also a necessity for self-examination, because it is an awful thing to come to a dying-day without grace. Many neglect the well-being of their souls till the midnight cry is heard – “Behold the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.” They feel their need of oil then, and they may, perhaps, apply to their neighbours for oil. The religion they had will serve them no longer. O! my friends, God will not give a word to anything on a death-bed but a new creation. How precious is it for a soul to get a word from God! How precious is it to get a word from God on a death-bed! It is an awful thing for God to be silent to a man upon a death-bed.

This brings me to speak, in the second place, of the preciousness of the fruits of self-examination, but this I must reserve to another time. But, in the way of

Application

I observe, in the first place, that we ought to be exercised in this duty of self-examination. The soul is of more value than the body. It is a solemn thing to draw near to God at His table, and it is a solemn thing to die and appear before His judgment seat. Let the people of God engage in this duty at this time, and see how matters stand between God and your soul. Seek fellowship with God in Christ through faith and repentance. Poor sinners, examine yourselves. A grain of grace is of more value than a million of worlds.

Secondly, it is a precious thing, a broken spirit. It is a fruit of Christ’s death. Christ will not despise a fruitful soul. But oh, a *hale* heart, a *hale* heart, a *hale* heart!

(SUBJECT RESUMED, SATURDAY, 7th April)

It is a great thing that repentance and forgiveness of sins are revealed in the Word of God. The Lord here opens a door of hope to poor sinners, but those that are strangers to faith and repentance are without hope in the world. Seek faith and repentance from God. God hath exalted His Son Jesus a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance to Israel and remission of sins.

II. – Having in the former discourse from the words of the text mentioned some of the difficulties that attend self-examination, and also some of the reasons that make this duty necessary, I now go on, in the second place, to make some observations on the preciousness of the fruits of self-examination.

(1) I observe, in the first place, that there is preciousness in the fruits of self-examination, because it is an evidence of spiritual life. The dead are unconscious.

(2) Self-examination is precious, because it is a means in the hand of the Spirit of increasing concern in our souls for applied salvation. We thereby discover the need we have of deliverance from the innumerable evils that compass us about, and also the pressing necessity of conformity to God in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness.

(3) But I observe, further, that self-examination is precious, because the soul will thereby discover the idol that reigns in the soul in the absence of the enjoyment of God. It is from this that self-loathing arises in the soul. Here the soul sees its degradation and wretchedness and folly, guilt and pollution, and this is precious. The soul feels its need of the blood of atonement, and is thereby led to “the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness.”

(4) Self-examination is also precious, because it humbles the proud heart of the sinner. The sinner comes thereby to feel his own helplessness. The Lord took His people by the hand, when they were as dry bones before Him.

(5) But I observe, further, that when spiritual self-examination comes to the soul, it will feel the need of a new creation. There is a cry in that soul from everything in the universe, “There is no help for thee in me.” Jesus Christ is the fountain of the new creation. There was a fallen nature ready for us in Adam before we were born; but Jesus Christ had a new nature for His people from eternity.

(6) I observe that self-examination is precious, because it prevents a gracious soul from thinking much of its own duties. The soul, in the light of the Word and the Spirit of God, sees enough sin in the best duty to carry it justly to hell. The soul is still led to the blood of Christ as its only refuge, even in duty.

(7) I observe, further, that self-examination is precious, because it preserves a penitent and broken frame of spirit in the soul. Repentance and pardon are joined together in the economy of grace. “Who is a God like unto thee that pardoneth iniquity and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage, who retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy?” “To this man will I look,” saith the High and Lofty One who inhabiteth eternity, “even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit and that trembleth at my word.” This is the precious fruit of self-examination.

(8) But I observe, further, that self-examination is precious, because it is a means of keeping up short accounts with God. It is said of Ephraim, “The sin of Ephraim is bound up; therefore the sorrows of a travailing woman will come upon him.” A gracious soul will be concerned about the manner in which self-examination is conducted, and this will lead to a keeping of short accounts with God. It is a precious thing to walk with God.

(9) I observe, lastly, that self-examination is precious, because it leads the soul to a dependence on the Mediator. The soul feels its need of an advocate. Christ is the fountain of life to the soul. He says, “Because I live, ye shall live also.”

III. – We come, in the third place, to show how self-examination is to be done.

(1) I observe we ought to examine ourselves in the view of eternity. We are apt to forget eternity. The means of grace in themselves will not keep alive the thought of eternity in our souls. Nothing will do this but what comes from eternity. God is the fountain of eternity. The world comes to occupy its proper place in our souls when eternity is spiritually realised.

(2) But I observe further that there is need of a fear of being deceived in the examination of our state before God. We would need the concern from God to know our real state in His light, and there is a necessity of being anointed by the Spirit of God that this concern may grow in our souls. Here the creature would need to retire into a corner, that he may go about the duty of self-examination in a composed way.

(3) And here, I observe, that conscience must do its work in connection with prayer, that God, by His Spirit and Word, would open up the depths of the soul to the creature. The Word is the standard of self-examination.

IV. – We come now, in the fourth place, to show the seasons, when it is specially required at our hands.

(1) I observe there is need of self-examination when the Lord is speaking to us in the dispensations of His providence, either by affliction in the family, or by afflicting ourselves in our own person. We would need to examine into the cause of these dispensations. We will thereby, if suitably exercised, under the mighty hand of God get the sanctified use of these dispensations of God toward us.

(2) But I observe further, that when the soul is allowed to fall into sin, there must be something wrong between the soul and God, and this is a season for self-examination. It is a dangerous thing to disregard Divine dispensations, either in providence or in grace.

(3) I observe also that, when a light spirit takes hold of the soul, there is evidently something wrong between the soul and God. Here the soul ought to examine into its state before God, and humble itself and seek a right spirit before Him.

(4) But again I observe here that, when a secret lust is let loose upon the soul, there is need of taking alarm. The Lord hath a controversy with that soul. There may be some among you that know nothing of such a thing as this; but “the lame take the prey.”

(5) I observe further that there is occasion for self-examination, when the Lord withdraws from the soul. “I will go and return unto my place till they acknowledge their iniquity; in their affliction they shall seek me early.”

(6) There is occasion for self-examination, when the Lord withdraws from His table, but I cannot dwell on this point at present.

The saints are called to live upon God through means of the promise. What is the reason of their not being able to do this at all times? Let this night be spent between yourself and God. Amen.

[August 1906]

Notes of Sermons.

By the late REV. ARCHIBALD COOK, Daviot.

Preached in John Knox's Free Church, Glasgow, on Sabbath Evening and Monday
of Communion – 8th and 9th April, 1849.

(Taken by a North-Country Hearer, and hitherto unpublished.)

[There is a complete and remarkable Sermon by Mr. Cook on the same text in "Ministers and Men in the Far North,"
by late Rev. A. Auld; but the present notes contain fresh and valuable matter. – ED.]

"But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us; for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent.
And he went in to tarry with them" – Luke 24:29.

There are two classes of persons in the world, and each of the children of Adam is included in one or other of these classes – the righteous and the wicked. Every sinner that has not the Saviour with him through eternity must have the enemy of his soul with him. All must appear at the judgment seat. It is a precious thing to go there accompanied by the great Advocate, but it is a fearful thing to go to the judgment seat with God as the soul's enemy. In this verse we have the fruit of the great sermon preached by the Saviour to His two disciples on the way to Emmaus. We have as much need of the Saviour abiding with us as they had. It is a pity, when people have been at the Lord's table, if they have no desire for the Saviour to abide with them. That is an awful judgment. But those who get the benefit of His ordinances, will desire Him to abide with them. It is "evening" with many. Many have gray hairs: it is certainly evening with them, and they would need to constrain Him to abide with them. From these words, we will endeavour to shew: –

- I. – That the Saviour may be constrained to abide with a soul;
- II. – The nature of this constraint; and
- III. – The fruit of this abiding with the soul.

The soul that finds these three particulars, will shine in glory as surely as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

I. – I observe, in the first place, that *the Saviour may be constrained to abide with a soul*, and that on several grounds.

(1) He may be constrained, because He is our Creator. When Jesus abides with a soul, He abides with the work of His own hands; “All things were made by him.” The power of creation is a perfection belonging to God, which He does not impart to any creature.

(2) He may be constrained to abide with a soul, because He is “the mediator between God and men.” Jesus had a love from eternity to immortal souls. “I was set up from everlasting from the beginning, or ere the earth was . . . and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men.” Were they not in a fallen state in His eye at that moment? Yes; yet they were an infinite delight to Him. It is said that the Lord “rests in his love.” He loved His people, though He had to swim through an ocean of wrath before they could be saved. His love originated with Himself. It is co-eternal with His own being, and in that view it is as unchangeable as Himself. To call forth our love, there must be something lovely in the object. We do not love a serpent; but this was the character of sinners, “a generation of vipers.” From this, it appears that the Saviour may be constrained to abide with a poor broken soul.

(3) He may be constrained, because it is on account of His own merit and fulness that He abides with sinners. “Thus saith the Lord God; I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name’s sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went.” So the Saviour may come and abide with a sinner, because the preparation of the soul for fellowship with Him is from Himself. He asks nothing from the sinner but his sins, and He gives him grace. He takes away the hard heart, and gives him a new heart; He takes away ignorance, and gives him light. Light, life, righteousness and holiness were set apart in the eternal covenant on purpose for the elect, and when Christ comes to the soul, He brings this furniture with Him. We are so proud that we think the Saviour would love us more, if we were better. No, poor sinner; but He says, “Behold I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him; and will sup with him, and he with me” – (Revelation 3:20). He brings a feast in, and the soul enjoys it. A poor empty soul may therefore seek the Saviour, and He will come in and bring the furniture with Him to fit the soul for fellowship with Himself.

(4) He may be constrained by the poor soul, because the lower and more polluted the soul is in its own eyes, the more room there is for Jesus. In this way God shews that He is what He is. “I am that I am.” In this way the poor broken soul may seek and wrestle that the Saviour may come and abide with him. O, sinner, you can live without prayer, but an impenitent heart will be a bad companion in sickness, at death, and through eternity.

(5) The Saviour may be constrained because, as mediator, He veiled His glory with His human nature in order that He might abide with sinners. We see in Daniel that when he saw the glory of a created angel, he fell at his feet as dead, but when Christ, in the form of one of the sons of men, appeared, He revived. He veiled His glory, and came into the world. “The world was made by him and the world knew him not.” This human nature was taken out of the very substance of the woman, the very substance of the children of Adam. “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.” It was the work of the eternal Father by the Spirit to create this human nature. “A body hast thou prepared me.” The Invisible One now became visible, and yet remained invisible. The Fountain of infinite joy became a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and yet remained the Fountain of joy. The Immortal now became mortal, and yet remained immortal. In this nature the law

took hold of Him. There was no redeeming of sinners, but by magnifying the law. The Lawgiver was too high for the law, but He took a nature to Himself of which the law could take hold. Whenever He assumed human nature, the law took hold of Him in the womb, demanding satisfaction for all the sins of the elect. Each command of the law condemned the sinner, and asked the Saviour, "Is he to be saved?" "Yes," was the answer. "Then, I must have your heart's blood." It is one of the mysteries of the gospel that the law must have satisfaction from the nature that sinned, to show the purity of law and justice. If He gave this satisfaction, may not a poor sinner find rest in Him? You, that are coming to the Saviour, are coming to mercy, to love, and to the sympathy of God.

(6) The Saviour may be constrained, because He submitted to every misery in this world for sinners. He suffered all that was included in "the curse." He was hungry, thirsty, weary. He was persecuted by the malice of carnal men. He knows from experience the weakness of a creature in the midst of suffering. Having suffered "being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted." You, that are poor and despised in the world, may go to the Saviour and speak to Him; He sunk deeper than any creature ever can. Though the case of a poor sinner may pass the understanding of men and angels, it cannot pass the understanding of the glorious Saviour. The Captain of salvation was made perfect through suffering. He was despised and cast out by the sons of His mother, but not by the sons of His Father. Careless professors, can you go to bed without Him? If so, the devil will go with you, and he will be in your bosom, and you will not know him.

(7) From the nature of His death, the Saviour may be constrained to abide with a sinner.

This was chiefly in His eye in taking human nature. As God He could not suffer. It was their death – the death due to a sinful people – that He died. Justice required the death of no person but a sinner. The nature of justice required the death of the sinner, or the death of his substitute. What an infinite love in God to provide a substitute Himself, and that His own Son! If Jesus died to keep sinners out of hell, you despise the blood of the Son of God if you do not accept of Him.

There were many deaths in Christ's death. Though justice demanded the death of the sinner, yet the death of a sinner will not *satisfy* justice. Only the death of a righteous person will do it, and Christ's death gave the necessary satisfaction. When you think of the countless millions of souls whose death Christ took on Himself, what a death He died! If every creature in a town like this had their blood shed, what a quantity of blood there would be! And what a quantity of blood if every creature in the world had their blood shed! What an ocean of blood! Christ died for the elect, and it was counted to them as if their own blood had been shed. O what a death was this! When we think, further, how the Scripture represents them as "dead with him," as "risen together with him," in glory, we see that it was in this way – by His death and resurrection – He obtained their redemption. Before He could enjoy the fellowship of the soul, He had to endure the strokes of justice. "I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse: I have gathered my myrrh with my spice: I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey." What is the honeycomb but the fruit of His own sufferings? "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations; and I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me." This is the fruit of His sufferings and death.

If this fruit was so dear to Him that He considered not His death too much to obtain it, oh, may not a poor sinner look to Him? Not only that, but it is He that creates a desire in the soul after Himself. A poor sinner is content with a stony heart and with ignorance of God, but the Saviour comes and puts a drop of concern in the soul. You that have a drop of desire after Christ, this did not begin with nature. When He begets a drop of grace, then there is a constraining of Him. Perhaps He will hide Himself from the soul, and let the soul be crying after Him. There is a pride in man, that, unless he gets salvation as soon as he asks it, he frets

and says, "There is no mercy." How long has God waited on you? How many years? Twenty, thirty, or fifty? When He leaves the soul long seeking, He is for sharpening the appetite.

Application

If there is any soul here to-night that has a desire that the Saviour would abide with him, that would be something; but sinners must be at the world – the world is their god: but if there was any soul in which there was a drop of desire that the Saviour would abide, He may be constrained to abide with that soul. You that were at the Lord's table, you were professing Jesus. Why were ye professing Him? "I must profess him to take away my reproach among men." Can you go to the Lord's table, and can you lie down, without Jesus? Christ can be in eternity and glory without you. *You* can be content without Him; but you that cannot be content without Him, He cannot live without you. Someone will say, "My heart is so hard." Tell that to Jesus; He will say at the great day, "You never said to me you were going to hell – you never prayed for mercy. If you had told me, I would have kept you out of hell." Oh, do not go to hell without telling Him of it; and if He do not prove a Saviour, He will not be faithful to His own promises. All the saints in glory will say through eternity, "We placed our souls in His hands, and He proved a Saviour to us." But you, that despise the Saviour, will reap the fruit of this.

(SUBJECT RESUMED, MONDAY.)

One visit of the Son of God would be an evidence of endless glory to an immortal soul. One visit from the great Mediator would give him an evidence of being an heir of endless blessings. Those that will be lost – those that will go to hell – will never get a visit from the Son of God; they will be content without Him. They may have a kind of form to take away their reproach from among men; but there will be spiritual ease in the soul without the enjoyment of the living God. There is no greater honour put on a sinner on earth than one visit from the Saviour. It would be a great honour if an earthly king would give a visit to a poor beggar; but what is an earthly king in comparison with the King of kings, before whose eyes the inhabitants of this world are as grasshoppers? Yet he condescends to be constrained by sinners to abide with them, and He has no respect of persons. He is as well pleased with the company of a poor, ragged beggar, as with the company of a king. Why? It is on the immortal soul that the Son of God looks. All need the same God, the same Saviour, the same love, the same Father, the same endless felicity.

In our former discourse from these words, we said that we intended, in the first place, to show that Jesus may be constrained by a sinner to abide with Him; and we were showing that He may be constrained, as He is Creator and Mediator, from His infinite love to His people – having taken bone of their bone, and flesh of their flesh, and having died in the room of the guilty.

(8) I observe, further, that He may be constrained, though He is the high and lofty One, exalted at the right hand of the throne. He is the same Saviour as when He was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. Although He laid down the humiliation of His human nature, He did not lay down the human nature itself. He is bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh on the right hand of God; and though His sufferings are over, yet the remembrance of these is not over. In this view He has a fellow-feeling in Himself – the very same as when He was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief in this world; and though he is, as man, the great Advocate before the throne, He is, as God, as near His people as when He was on earth; and in this way He can have sympathy and fellow-feeling, so as to be constrained to dwell with His people.

(9) I may, lastly, observe several views that the Scriptures give of Him, as showing further that He may be constrained. “Shall God in very deed dwell with men on the earth?” He is Immanuel, God with us. He is represented as “the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.” “The name of the Lord” is represented as “a strong tower.” “The righteous runneth into it, and is safe.” In this way, faith beholds the Saviour near, and as one that may be constrained. Further, He is offered in the gospel freely to sinners, as the only way of our being reconciled to God. That is the language of the gospel: “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” “Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.”

And indeed, when the Saviour takes hold of the soul by an inward life, the sinner will see God near, though, as to spiritual fellowship, God appears far off. The poor sinner will find himself in the hands of God. There are three chains in which the soul will find himself bound – the chain of guilt, the chain of the curse, the chain of spiritual death; and these chains will make the devils miserable through eternity. But the Saviour may be constrained even when the sinner cannot pray and cannot weep. What was the cause of the deliverance of Lazarus? It was Christ’s own sympathy, His own blessing. We read of the poor woman who was bound by the devil for eighteen years. The Saviour’s own fellow-feeling constrained Him to deliver her. The concern of the soul is given the Son by the eternal Father, and is connected with His own glory, and He must therefore needs be easily constrained by the soul.

II. – We now come to *the nature of this constraint.*

(1) It implies in it a spiritual concern about eternity. Till there is this spiritual concern about its eternal interests implanted in the soul, there is no constraining of Christ by the soul.

(2) In the day of His love there is a spiritual discernment imparted to the soul, that now discerns between the means of grace, and Christ in the means. Why were the foolish virgins without oil in their vessels? Because they did not know the difference between the means, and God in the means. You will see a professor praying and hearing twenty years, and he will never miss God out of the prayer or sermon. This is what brings millions of the hearers of the Gospel to hell. It is an amazing thing to see a sinner coming from a throne of grace quite careless; but to see a poor sinner coming home from a sermon mourning because he did not meet with God is a rare thing. Job said, “O, that I knew where I might find him!” There was a spirit of discernment imparted to him which prevented him resting in anything less than God. The Spirit of God imparts a drop of concern about the soul’s spiritual state, and a drop of discernment between the means, and God in the means.

(3) The soul, under the fear of an awakened conscience, will be looking for the Saviour by the promises or means of grace. That is a wonderful word: “Sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites.” There is nothing under heaven like the pure ordinances to an awakened soul. The hearing of a Saviour in His two natures, in His offices and offers, is the only way by which a sinner will be brought to reconciliation with God. Though this faith was no greater than the first movement of a child in its mother’s womb, it has something in it that will bring the soul to venture on Christ for eternity. The soul is brought to say, “I will just fall into His hands, whatever He may please to do with me.” These are wonderful words: “And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem.” When the Spirit of God begins to speak in the conscience, the cry of the conscience is very loud – louder than the voice of “the blood”; but when the Spirit speaks of the blood and righteousness of Christ, the voice of the blood will be louder than the cry of the conscience; and this brings the soul to trust in Christ, and peace enters the soul. Until the voice of the blood is louder than the voice of the conscience, the soul will never have peace.

(4) A spiritual desire is awakened by the Spirit of grace in the soul for a revelation of the Mediator in the glory of His person and offices. The Spirit of God begets faith in the soul; but the poor soul sees a veil between him and the spiritual glory of Christ. This begets a spiritual desire after a revelation of that spiritual glory, and this is the only object the poor soul has in view in going to the ordinances, and perhaps he returns home under a sense of a barren soul. But there is a constraining here that will not be satisfied with anything but the opening of that glory. This is what Job had: "Oh that I knew where I might find him!" Nothing but a revelation of the glory of Jehovah would heal that wound. Job said: "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." Faith saw something within the glory of the Lord that it could rest upon.

(5) But I observe, further, that here the soul comes to know the need of the promises in order to constrain Christ to abide. When God, from all eternity, put himself and the blessings of grace in a promise, He knew what He was doing, and He knew all the needs the soul would experience in its journey through the world. He may come to the soul with a word, or with a promise, and perhaps in the promise, He may give pardon, perhaps His own love. Perhaps He may give Himself; and the power that comes with the word hangs the soul on Himself for the fulfilment of it. "I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and give you an heart of flesh." Perhaps the poor sinner never felt the stony heart so hard as he did that day. "I will pardon their iniquity." Perhaps the soul never felt guilt as he felt it that day. There will be wrestling here.

I will be asked: "How, will the soul know it was from God the word came?" When the promise comes from God, He will keep the soul looking to Himself for the fulfilment of it. But here the gracious soul meets some token from God, some token of encouragement, and this will encourage the poor sinner to wrestle for Christ coming to him, and abiding with him. The Lord enables him at times to confess sin, at times to exercise repentance and self-loathing, being wounded in spirit for having sinned against God. At other times, he may have discoveries of the cross and the death of the Mediator. Again, at other times, the springs of the sovereign, the infinite love of God, may be opened up to him. Every child of God will know at times something of the sweet milk of humility. O that this would abide with us, that we could keep this always! There will be a spiritual wrestling to keep this. There is nothing that the soul is so much afraid of as to lose the broken heart and self-loathing in the sight of God. The soul is often afraid to grieve Christ away, and hence you see the soul becomes retired and leaves the customs of the world. He becomes a retired poor creature in a corner, but one is not alone that has God. You that have not God are alone indeed.

But here, if there is a gracious soul, something will be let loose in his nature, in order to humble him, by which he feels that, unless restrained by grace, he will ruin himself, though he were locked up in his closet till the day of his death. Something will be left in the soul, some lust that would crucify the Saviour and destroy the broken heart. It is the work of the Spirit of God to mortify sin. "If ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." Now, the Spirit never does this without the Saviour. The Spirit shows that these sins will separate the soul from God for eternity, but He also leads the soul to look to the wounds of the crucified Saviour, and it is this that will mortify the love of sin in the child of God. Is there any state in the world like that? Going to bed at night, and your souls thirsting after God. Rising in the morning, and feeling your souls thirsting after God. Do you not think there will be a constraining of Christ here? A poor unconverted sinner, the world lies down with him; but there is no state on this side heaven so sweet as that of a broken soul.

(6) I further observe that the Lord puts arguments into the mouth of the soul to constrain Him to abide with him. It is said in Scripture that "the preparation of the heart, and the answer of the tongue, are from the Lord." What is the answer of the tongue? The Saviour said to the poor Canaanitish woman that the children's bread must not be cast to dogs.

“True,” said the poor woman, “I am a dog, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from their master’s table.” These were sweet words to the Lord. They originated with Himself, and yet He was as pleased with them, as if they had come entirely from the woman. “O woman,” He said, “great is thy faith.” When the Lord thus fills the mouth of the soul with arguments, these arguments are just the fruits of His own love, and they prevail with Him. The centurion said in effect, “Lord, I am not worthy; yet I need thee, though I am not worthy;” and Jesus replied, “I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.” The soul longs to get something that will stand the trial – that will put its state out of question. These are wonderful words: “Although my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure; for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow.” This everlasting covenant is the seal of God.

(7) I may observe here, that in those who constrain Christ to abide, the nature of God in Christ – the new nature – is growing. Love to the Lord grows with the growth of the soul. Something will be felt of Job’s words: “Separation from God was my terror.” O, my friends, this world will not spend eternity so easily without God as they now spend time without Him. They had the sweetness of salvation once in their offer. The loss of the world and the loss of heaven will be great, but the loss of the sweetness of God will be greater. You, that enjoyed God in Christ once, know this by experience. If you saw one in a high station in the world coming to poverty, his former taste would remain with him, and this would make his poverty sorer to him than if he had been always poor. You, poor children of God, that were in town forty years ago enjoying the means of grace and the great ordinances, it is no wonder though you be mourning under a sense of an absent God. It is no wonder to me, although you feel this world as if it were another world, and that you offer the lament of the Psalmist: “Woe is me! that I dwell in Mesech.” Yet a taste remains that leaves the soul not contented without enjoying God in Christ in His ordinances. Oh, the infinite glory of the Three-One God! The least ray of that glory breaking out on the sinner in carnality would soon make shivers of him.

III. – I now come to consider *the fruit of Christ’s abiding* with the soul.

(1) I observe that it is by the Saviour’s coming first to the soul that *the hope of eternal blessedness* is begotten. As for the hope of the world, it is with them from the cradle; it never was broken. But the “good hope through grace” is begotten from above. The first gleam of spiritual light that breaks in upon the soul begets hope; and this hope will be in proportion to the spiritual knowledge of the Mediator. We read and hear of an unknown Saviour; but when you come to grapple with eternity, that Saviour will vanish. But when a ray of divine light broke in on the Apostle Paul, a ray of hope entered his soul, and he was enabled to say, “I know in whom I have believed.” You, that venture your soul on the Saviour by a ray of spiritual light, He will take care of your soul and will abide by it at the great day of judgment. It is in this way that the hope of the child of God is not only begotten but nourished, and it is no wonder that the poor soul desires the Saviour to abide with him.

(2) Again, it is by the Saviour abiding with the soul that the poor soul has *peace of conscience*. Whenever a soul is made truly alive about his eternal state, that soul has nothing but challenges. But the Saviour is such a one that the soul, that sees Him, would be content to go into eternity, trusting Him. These are wonderful words; “As sorrowing, yet always rejoicing.” In Him is peace, in Him is righteousness, holiness, life and light. A view of Him as the fountain of all grace, faith in Him, and love to Him in the heart, will make the soul venture on Him for eternity. He was among the Jews, and they did not know Him, because this grace was not in them. This grace is like dew upon the flowers in summer. When the dew is not on them, they lose their strength. Without the dews of grace, the soul cannot live.

(3) It is by the Saviour remaining with a soul, that something of the nature of *spiritual tenderness* remains with it, according to these words; “I will take the stony heart out of your

flesh, and give you an heart of flesh.” What is an heart of flesh? A soft heart that mourns for sin in the soul. “I saw transgressors,” said one, “and was grieved.” The grace of God put tenderness within him, so that sin grieved him. Lot’s righteous soul was grieved within him from day to day in Sodom. Can the gracious soul be content without spiritual tenderness before God? It cannot be content. By the abiding of the Saviour with the soul, tenderness is preserved in the spirit, so that sin wounds and hurts it.

There is a bewitching power in the world; but when the Saviour is with the soul, this beauty is taken away from the world. Things created appear changeable; things untreated appear unchangeable. If you had more of God, do you think He would keep worldly good from you? No; He might give you more of it. Why is there a worm at the root of your worldly prosperity? Because you are committing whoredoms before the gracious God. “Whosoever will come after me, let him take up his cross and follow me.” The cross may be felt in various ways. A carnal husband, or a carnal wife, may be a cross. But let a poor soul get a glimpse of the face of the Lord, and that will reconcile the soul to its cross. You, poor child of God, that enjoys God, you must have some cross to keep you humble, while you are on this side Jordan. Many a time bitter crosses make the soul go to God. But look at the wretched creature, that knows not a throne of grace, and has not a God to go to, when he meets with crosses; he is miserable indeed.

(4) Preservation from sin is another fruit of the Saviour’s abiding with the soul. Something of these words is implanted in the gracious soul: “The fear of man bringeth a snare; but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe.” I have often thought of poor Joseph. The secret Majesty of heaven knew his temptation beforehand, and permitted the temptation to come; but He prepared Joseph to meet it. As long as you do not put Satan under your feet, you and he will agree; but when you put him under your feet, you will know that he is a serpent. Poor Joseph was more afraid of losing the presence of God than to encounter the bitterness of a prison. The three children said to Nebuchadnezzar: “Be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods.” They were more afraid of the everlasting fire of God than of the fire of this world. Without the Saviour, the child of God is as weak as any other person. It is the spiritual presence of God alone that will make His children as strong as a lion; without this, they are as weak as water. Look at a poor child of God trying family worship; perhaps a household of only two or three is a burden to him; but, if he gets a view of God, there will be nothing before him but God and eternity.

(5) *Conformity to His image* is a fruit of the Saviour’s abiding with the soul. The soul is made to see the Saviour as in a glass. If you get a glimpse of Him in a corner, you will be changed into the same image. Jesus removes the gloom off eternity. There is a gloom on eternity to a soul without the Saviour; but the knowledge of Jesus, and the experience of His grace and love, will remove this gloom.

I must now draw to a conclusion. It is drawing “toward evening.” We read in Scripture of “the shadows of the evening.” There are evenings of trouble and trial, and the shadows of these evenings are approaching. There is the evening of life, and you know, child of God, that evening is coming, and you would need to have the Saviour with you. There are evening times in the Church. When you see God gathering home His children, you may be sure the evening is coming. When you see the Church becoming barren and without fruit, under the means of grace, this is a shadow of the evening. After a season of barrenness, the Church needs to be ploughed and manured to bring it again to fruitfulness. What is the manure of the Church? The blood of the saints.

Concluding Exhortation. – You, poor people of God – seek, that the Saviour may dwell with you; and if you do, He will preserve you as the apple of his eye: “Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation which shall

come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.” When we see formality among the people of God, that is a shadow of the evening.

When you come to grey hairs, you may say that this is the evening of your days. O, old sinner, will you go to eternity without Jesus? You might be content with the days and years you have spent without him, without spending more. Many a barren Sabbath you had without a Saviour, and it never troubled your soul. May you not be content with that? Is it not time to think that you have a soul to be eternally lost or saved?

You, young people, be not content with a poor form. Going to the Lord’s table – that will not save you; it will not bring you to heaven. How can you look Him in the face, you that have been at His table, if you are among His enemies at the great day? You have professed to enlist under Christ; you have vowed to the Lord. You are not fond of liars? See that you be not a liar yourself. Make sure of an interest in Christ; seek to be found in Him. Seek the broken and contrite spirit that trembles at His word.

You, poor people of God, keeping near God does not consist in means and ordinances. No; there must be grace in exercise. If you are in a calling, and if God has put you in it, you will find God with you in it. There will be a savour of God with you in your calling during the day if you get a glimpse of Him in the morning. And you will find it the “one thing needful” to have your state right with Him, that he may acknowledge you in that day as one of His jewels – that He may acknowledge you in eternity in the place where His people shall eat of the tree of life, and shall drink of the rivers of His pleasures for evermore. That is worth the wrestling for. “The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.”

[September 1906]

Brief Notes of Sermons.

By the late REV. JOHN MACRAE, "MACRATH MOR,"
then of Greenock.

Preached at Rothesay, on Friday and Saturday, before Communion,
25th and 26th January, 1850.
(*Hitherto Unpublished.*)

(I.)

"And call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee,
and thou shalt glorify me" – Psalm 50:15.

The best exercise for a believer in the time of trouble is to call upon the Lord. The promise is given that He will deliver.

It would be well that every believer would write this in his note book at the beginning of his spiritual career; that he must be conformed to the Man of Sorrows all the time that is allotted him on earth. The first thing that a day of trouble brings is coldness, as if there was a total absence of the Sun, and a freezing in every duty of religion. Every believer must lay his account with this. "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." "Ye now therefore have sorrow, but I shall see you again, and your hearts shall rejoice."

I think the command to call upon Him infers, that we are apt to call on other things, second causes and instruments. It also infers that we are apt to relax our spiritual diligence, and to get easy and without life. This, some of us should know by experience. Christ says: "Call upon me, for I have flesh and bones, which a mere spirit has not; I am set upon my mediatorial throne. Call upon me, however guilty you are; mercy and truth go before my face. These having met in me, justice and judgment are the pillars of my throne, so that it shall never be shaken; I am able to deliver you." It is not an easy thing to pray with the soul. To engage in religious exercises is an easy matter, or to bend the knee once or twice a day! The formalist, the hypocrite, and even those who make no pretensions to religion at all, may do that. Christ says, "Call on me; I am in a condition to deliver you; I have satisfied justice." The taking away the *legal* hindrance – the law in its penalty – was with a view to the removal of the *moral* hindrance – sin in the soul. It is an amazing fact that God can stretch the hand of mercy to sinners at all. But Christ hath obtained by His satisfaction to justice, the right and power to deliver His people from sin and all its consequences. He can and will do it, as His heart is set on doing it. He will do it in a sovereign way. Prayer in itself cannot do it. Yet I hope the earth is not destitute of a few who can remember the sweetest seasons in the depths of days of trouble. So, have patience, brethren, "Ye have need of patience, that, after ye have

done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.” “I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.”

I am certain that those, who were living nearer the Lord than many of our present professors, found Satan busy among them at a season like this, endeavouring to cause them to doubt of their interest in Christ. I care not for easy, unexercised professors, sitting at the table of the Lord, whom necessity never sent to a throne of grace. Oh, pray for your mother’s house, and your mother’s children. I fear too many of us are at ease in Zion. O seek Christ above all things. If we would pass by means and instruments to Him, then we would not despise these. It is by knowing God in Christ that we come to give everything else its own place.

(II.)

“Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly;
but the proud he knoweth afar off” – Psalm 138:6.

The Most High is a name more for faith to admire than for reason to comprehend. What can be more odious and abominable than a proud man before the Most High? Man would be equal to Him; yet it is a most unseemly rivalry. We have the example of Pharaoh saying, “I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.” And, again, there is Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 4) who, in the height of his pride, would discard God out of His own universe, walking on the battlements of his palace, and saying, “Behold, is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?” But witness the result; he was driven from among man, and did eat grass as oxen. If you wish to see another proud man, look at the Pharisee, standing and praying thus with himself; “God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.” Pride, when it does not attack us in a gross aspect, may attack us in a religious aspect.

The lowly man is one brought to his knees in repentance, like the prodigal son, when he came to himself. There are some, however, whose repentance is not of the right stamp. For example, in our towns in the south, men are in the habit of going out in the evening, and meeting with company, they get heated with strong drink; and so, when the man comes home to a cold room, and sees his weeping wife and ragged children, he may come to himself by the pangs of remorse; but no sooner does the temptation occur again, than he falls in with it. But the case of the prodigal son is different. No doubt, when he set out with his portion, he thought he could set up wherever he pleased and be the admiration of the whole country; but instead of this, he came to feed swine; he came to the pig-stye. He is brought very low, to see his sin and misery. And this is the way the lowly man comes to himself; this is the beginning of that character. Truly, the publican is a lowly man, smiting on his breast, and saying, “God, be merciful to me a sinner.” This is what we would all need to come to, to be exercised about our own individual case, as sinners. “Be clothed with humility.” This garment is the beauty and ornament of a believing soul. Another example is Saul of Tarsus, setting out proud from Jerusalem, but when the Lord met him, he was brought low. Mary Magdalene kissed Jesus’ feet. Oh, was it not strange to see a woman bending her lips and kissing a man’s feet? But oh, she saw reason to kiss this Man’s feet, which were to stand in the furnace of God’s wrath to deliver her from it. He came as it were, from heaven to hell, to deliver her from it. The Syrophenician woman cried, “Lord, help me.” This is the prayer of a lowly soul, and He Himself shut her mouth by answering all her desires. She said in effect, “I am so hungry, and so unworthy that I can sit under the table and take a crumb as a dog.” This is a lowly person. But, perhaps, the greatest distinction that can be made between a legal and a gospel spirit is to be seen in the case of Paul, who would accept salvation as of rich, free, and sovereign grace; he does not deny what grace did, yet he ascribes it all to grace.

A man cannot be selfish without being proud. You will not find a lowly man, in truth, but one who is willing to take on the yoke of Christ, and to try and obey His commandments. I need not say that the lowly man is a modest man.

I might show that God will not spare any pains with a lowly man to keep him lowly. The chastisements of the rod are quite in keeping with a lowly state. See David in 2 Samuel 7:18: "Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto? . . . Is this the manner of man, O Lord God? And what can David say more unto thee?" A lowly man is a gracious man – a great man.

(1) There is none in such a fair way of giving display to the grace of God as a lowly man. A proud man ascribes all to himself, while the other will say, "How astonishing every act of grace toward me! This is the doing of the Lord and wondrous in our eyes." He is in a condition to magnify the riches of divine grace.

(2) Lowliness is the effect of the Spirit's work, and a grace of the Spirit in the soul, and so the Lord has respect to it, and complacency in it.

(3) It is astonishing to observe that lowliness is a part of the image of the Son of God.

(4) Lastly, consider the difference between Cain and Abel. Though you do not think much of Cain, and are apt to speak ill of him, at the first stage of his history he came out on the Sabbath to offer sacrifice unto God. But God only accepts the humble services of His people, through the merits of His Son.

The lower a man is in his own sight, the higher he is in the sight of God. The Lord will raise the poor from the dust and set them on high among princes. In short, they will be lowly in heaven. God loves lowliness; His people are lowly; and so humility shall be there. Pride is the seat of Satan, and lowliness is the seat of God. Oh pray for the multiplication of the humble ones.

(III.)

Saturday, 26th January, 1850.

"Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate" – Hebrews 14:12.

The slaying of animals under the Old Testament dispensation was a type of Christ's suffering without the gate. The former mode of sacrifice was the gospel during that dispensation. I would be far from taking all the world as "the people" mentioned here; but I conceive it to be those whom Christ had in His heart from eternity, whom the Father gave Him to redeem. I shall shew: –

I. – Where Christ suffered, "without the gate";

II. – What He suffered; and

III. – The object He had in view in suffering "that he might sanctify the people with his own blood."

I. – Where Christ suffered. The evangelist John tells us that He was led out to Golgotha to be crucified. It was not in the streets of Jerusalem, the holy city, that He was slain. When man fell, he was driven out of the garden of Eden, and there was a flaming sword placed at the gate of the garden, so that he could not approach the tree of life without going over the point of the sword. I think of Jesus being led through the streets of the holy city, bearing His cross, faint with present suffering – led out to the place of execution for the greatest malefactors. Think of this inflicted upon an innocent man, whose thoughts, words and actions were always agreeable to the unerring rule of God's will and law; yet He suffered on account of the

iniquities of His people, which were laid upon Him, though personally innocent. Behold Christ going forth without the gate, till He reaches the place of a skull – Golgotha.

II. – What He suffered. Here Christ endured reproach which he felt keenly, more so than any of us would, because he was perfectly holy. He was called a malefactor – even a devil. He endured the shame of the cross – the greatest amount of it that ever was endured by man. Can you think of Jesus’ flesh pierced with nails, fixed to the accursed tree? Here His Father’s wrath at its highest pitch is manifested. Think of Him putting the cup of His Father’s wrath to His mouth and swallowing the whole of it into His inmost soul! Oh, followers of Jesus, think of this. What else can prepare you for the feast of to-morrow as the contemplation of Jesus’ suffering without the gate? He said not a word about His body; it is, “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death.” Oh, it is not easy to conceive what it is to have all the capacities of a soul filled with mercy or wrath. Woe to that soul that leaves the body ripe to receive its fill of God’s wrath! Think of the suffering of Christ’s soul that was of a greater capacity than any of ours, and which was in the habit of drinking in the love of His Father, and receiving communications of His favour, enduring the full extent of God’s wrath. O, God’s wrath! I tremble to think of it. Christ’s sufferings were beyond human or angelic comprehension.

His manner of endurance was with meekness and calmness. His sensibilities were moved to the highest pitch; and yet the calm of holiness sat upon His soul, when men and devils united to torment Him. He could command a season for prayer in the midst of this awful season. He cried, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do” – while He might have consumed them by His power. He left an example that we should follow in His steps. Pray for friends – for foes – for all. Oh, bring to the Lord’s table a forgiving spirit. Christ cherished the great principle in His heart of love to God and man.

O, think of the Father, raising the sword of justice, burning with holy fire, and drawing the stroke with all the power of Deity to smite the Son, and the Son, in return, saying, “Oh, Father, how I love thee in the righteous execution of thy justice against the sins of my people, for whom I stand!” and loving and kissing the holy law, while it was smiting him. May I not say that He suffered meritoriously? God never saw the like, and He shall never see the like again; it attracted His attention and His heart. In suffering, Christ shed His blood. See Psalm 22:15 – “My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaveth fast to my jaws; and thou hast brought me to the dust of death.” The blood is the life, and as it was separating from His holy flesh, His strength as a man was wearing away, and when the last drop of it ran, the work was finished.

III. – The object He had in view was to sanctify His people “with his own blood.” It was consistent with the rectitude of the divine government that Jesus should go out to the place where He suffered as the substitute of sinners, and where His people were driven, in a spiritual sense, that He might bring them in and sanctify them by the shedding of His blood. Had it not been that He died, there would have been indiscriminate slaughter of mankind.

It is only that which satisfied the justice of God that will satisfy the conscience of an awakened sinner. Christ gave satisfaction to all the law’s dire sentences, as well as obeyed all its direct commands. Oh! ye dear people of the Lord, how hard are you become, if this will not move you – the life of your Redeemer in the lap of divine justice! O, what a glorious contemplation for you, believer, that, while Christ is exalted as a Prince and a Saviour at the right hand of God, His Spirit is taking the branch of hyssop, and sprinkling a soul here and there in every generation, as they come forth into being, according to the eternal purpose of God, sprinkling them with His own blood. I might speak of the work of the Spirit in showing them that it was a wonder that God did not cast them to hell long ago, and they cast their own righteousnesses to the four winds of heaven. If any of these remain, they are regarded only with shame.

They are sanctified that they may behold the glory of Christ. O, Christ's people here are weary, fatigued, heavy laden, bearing many burdens, but He cleanses and sanctifies them, and prepares them for glory. O, think of the love of God in Christ, and realise the warmth of its beams as they shine forth through the suffering humanity of Jesus. Oh, open your leaves and receive the softening, warming, cheering beams of the Sun of righteousness, as philosophers say some flowers do to the natural sun. The communications of God's love stir up to zeal and the putting forth of every effort in the life of grace, through the faith that worketh by love. Oh, let the poor and needy come, past all means and instruments, and you will find Him whom your soul loveth, and whose absence you lament. "When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them." I would not give the groan of a true believer for all the prayers of all the Pharisees that ever lived.

Christ crucified is the rock whence living water flows. Remain not in the court of the Gentiles. Come and see the beauty and heart of the Saviour. Golgotha was not a place for concealing anything that was in His heart; it was a trial made as by fire; it was an offering made as by fire unto the Lord. O, sinner, either you shall drink of the cup of salvation, or of the cup of God's wrath, with its dire effects. Unbelief is the stabbing Christ under the fifth rib. O, if you believed the truth about your own character and state, there would be a rush to the closet or some secret place, saying, "O thou, Son of David, have mercy on me." This evening go to Golgotha, where Jesus suffered without the gate; go to the Bible records of His sufferings and death, and get a warrant and spirit of prayer there.

[October 1906]

