

Notes of a Sermon.

By the REV. EWEN MACQUEEN, Kames, Kyles of Bute.

“Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” – 2 Corinthians 6:17,18.

The Apostle in this chapter first calls himself and the rest of the Apostles, workers together with Christ, and shows what they had to suffer for His sake. Then at the fourteenth verse he begins to show that believers should not be yoked with unbelievers, and makes it plain that there can be no concord between Christ and Belial and no agreement between the temple of God and idols. Hence he comes to the conclusion that there must be a coming out from among them. The words of the text are quoted from the Prophet Isaiah. In considering these words, let us notice:

- I. – The command;
- II. – A few of the things implied in this coming out;
- III. – Some motives why we should “come out from among them;” and
- IV. – The promise to those who, through grace, comply with the command.

I. – The command, wherein we have, first, the Person who commands, and secondly, those who are commanded.

1. It is the Lord that gives the command. He has every right to do it. “Has not the potter power over the clay?” He rules over all, as He created all, and has a Sovereign right to command men everywhere to believe. He is our lawgiver. To Him we must all come, as our Judge, as He saith, “Unto me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess.” But here He calls as the Saviour of His people, as He is “in Christ reconciling sinners unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.”

2. Those who are here commanded.

(1) They are sinners who are in need of being saved from sin.

(2) They are such as profess to have been convinced of their sins and of their need of Christ as their Saviour.

(3) Men who are in danger of being led astray, and this is true of us all.

II. – Let us now consider a few of the things implied in this coming out.

It is a moral and spiritual coming out. Although these words had, when first uttered by the Lord through the Prophet, a reference to the coming out of the children of Israel from the land of their captivity, yet it is now to such as professed their faith in Christ, that such words were written, and they are for our “edification upon whom the ends of the world have come.” This is the last dispensation. The world has a freezing effect on the souls of God’s people. All who are taught by Him know that its carnal pleasures and amusements have the effect on the new-born soul, that frost has on living bodies.

1. We must see, by the teaching of God’s Spirit, the vanity of the things of the world. The Psalmist saw the end of all perfection here below, and we must see it, or be lost in it. Solomon saw it and bitterly lamented how he gave his heart to pleasure. “What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul, or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”

2. We must see that God is, and that He has a claim upon us. We must see that He is our King, that it is sinful to be away from Him, and that we cannot have Him and our idols. He

said of Ephraim, "He is joined to his idols; let him alone." We naturally love our idols, and their name is legion, for they are many – our own righteousness, self-love, vain glory, self-confidence, lusts, evil companions and evil practices. We must realize that the wrath of God is by nature on us, while we delight in those things. "For which things' sake, the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience." The end of those things is eternal death. We must understand, by the teaching of the Holy Ghost, that God is just in punishing us for our sins. His glory will He "not give to another nor His praise to graven images."

3. Again, we must be changed in our wills, so as to leave them all behind. "What have I to do any more with idols?" They must become gall and wormwood to the soul; as another said, "My soul hath them still in remembrance." This Apostle's own case is a clear illustration of this fact. He counted them all but dross and dung that he might win Christ. He found that there was something better to choose.

Oh, dear friends, what a poor lot they have who make choice of the world! It will leave them at last as the chief priests left poor Judas. "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not?" See the glory of Christ, as the God-man who can put His hand upon the Father and us, fairer than all the sons of men, altogether lovely. Oh, how suitable for our case in all His offices, in His obedience and sufferings, death and resurrection; how infinitely worthy of our love. His company is the best of all society.

"Whom have I in the heavens high
But thee, O Lord, alone;
And on the earth whom I desire,
Besides thee there is none?"

The Apostle counted all things but loss for the glory of Jesus Christ. Oh, young friends, seek His company in the days of your youth. How God's people have lamented in every age, how much of their precious time they spent in sin! And you will do so also, if the Lord will open your eyes in mercy, and, if not, you will eternally wail because of Him. "Every eye shall see Him, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him." How sweet it is to the soul when drawn by the love of Christ! "The love of Christ constraineth us" saith the Apostle in another place. It is a daily coming out. They feel the world a wilderness, a dry parched land wherein is no water. The unconverted think that God's people must be very unhappy when they do not "run with them to the same excess of riot." But there is more real pleasure in the soul, when on the arm of his Saviour he leaves the world behind, and speeds him on to think of the time when this mortal shall put on immortality, than was ever found by the worldling in any of his haunts of pleasure. How many precious souls, as they are nearing the New Year, think that they cannot live without something for their lusts! Oh, how much better it would be to take in the year pleading with Jesus, that He might give a word warm from heaven! "More joy thy testimonies way than riches all me gave."

III. – Let us now consider some motives why we should come out from among them.

1. The great example we have in the Glorious Head Himself in the days of His humiliation. Although in a sinful world, His thoughts were above the world – on the Father. Even in His sufferings and death His thoughts were on the will of the Father. Oh, friend, what an example in suffering! Should it not shame us all? Think of yourself, how corrupt your thoughts are! When the Lord but touches you with trouble, how like you are the troubled sea with all kinds of corrupt thoughts! Is it not troubling you as you come to the end of another year how unlike Christ you are? Oh how much we all need a faith's view of Him who, when He was reviled, reviled not again. If God were to deal with the best according to their thoughts even, would not the lake of fire be our portion? Oh mercy, mercy, what we owe thee! Take care, my friend, that your thoughts be not fuel to burn you eternally. The Saviour who was holy, harmless, in thought, word, and deed, calls you to look unto Him, that you may be made holy,

as He is holy. And it is only through faith in Him we can have our souls purified from an evil conscience, to serve the living God. By His example, we are taught that instead of following the multitude in sin, we should pray for, and weep over them, who follow the broad way that leadeth to destruction. Let us by His example, call them away from that which will prove their ruin if they persist in it. Many, who have the name of being His servants and children, encourage such as are votaries of pleasure, to continue in their foolish way. What will they have to say when He cometh to take vengeance on them who obey not the Gospel?

2. We were not created to bury our souls in the world. The soul of man is a spirit; and it is, to say the least of it, unreasonable that it should be prostituted in such a way. Our souls and bodies were created for the glory of God, and according to the teaching of the Spirit, through this same Apostle, to give our bodies to sin is to make them the members of an harlot.

3. Some of us profess to have another spirit, to be born from above – born of God – new creatures. “If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things that are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God.” Oh, how strange and unnatural it would be to see men living in company with seals and other creatures of the sea. So it is strange that such as profess to be born again should delight themselves in the pleasures of sin and forget the glory of Him who has called them from darkness to His marvellous light.

4. Our duty to the world demands of us to come out from among them. If those who profess the name of the Lord live like the careless, it will harden them in their sins and vanity. How many poor sinners, because ministers will be found at balls and at all the gatherings of Skymen and the Highlanders of Argyll – as may be seen from the public prints – I say, how many poor sinners are hardened by their example! It is the great day alone that will reveal the effect such conduct has on the careless. How much better it would be for us to be considered narrow in time than to have the lost cursing us in eternity for leading them astray! A holy living may, and will, make some shun your company, yet your holy walk will speak louder in their consciences than your words can.

5. Our own safety demands that we should come out from among them. “If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die.” It will infect us if we go with them. “Shall we sin that grace may abound? God forbid.” “Can a man carry fire in his bosom, and not be burned?” A baker has the mark of his work on him. Even so, we cannot delight in idols, and not contract guilt. “If in my heart I sin regard the Lord me will not hear.” It will take the presence of the Lord from us. “I will go and return to my place till they acknowledge their sin.” Look at all the examples you have in the word of God. Lot chose the plains of Sodom, and he had to leave it with his bare life. He had to leave all his cattle behind. And even his wife, he had to leave her on the plain a beacon to coming ages. Samson fell into the hands of the Philistines, and he lost his two eyes. Oh for grace to flee to Jesus Christ, who is a shelter from the storm!

IV. – The promise to such as will, through grace, obey the command, “And I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”

1. The person who gives the promise. It is the Lord, who has a right to do it. He is Lord that ruleth all. Herein is love, the Lord, against whom we have sinned, offering and promising to be a Father unto us, if we for His sake withdraw from a sinful communion with idolaters and scandalous persons. And He shows Himself as Lord Almighty, and as such can perform what He has promised, and can protect us from all the powers that be against us.

2. He will receive them into His favour and fellowship. As long as we are taken up with the creature, we cannot expect to have the Lord’s presence. He receives them in justification as to their state, and forgives them all their iniquities, receives them “as righteous in His sight only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to them and received by faith alone.” Oh, how many sweet hours we lose on account of our lukewarmness in the things that belong to His glory!

3. "I will be a father unto you." Yes, He will show even to their enemies that His arm is stronger to protect them than all the powers that be against them. "Stronger is he that is in you than he that is in the world." "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father is greater than all; none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." Yea, and He will at times give them to believe that He is for them. "The Lord was here and I knew it not." "Henceforth thy going out and in God keep for ever will." Oh, dear friends, how valuable it is to the soul to feel that there is an Almighty arm around him! It is a taste of heaven on earth.

4. "And ye shall be my sons and daughters." Yea, He will be such willingly and to your soul's comfort. Satan seeks to weaken the Lord's children in many ways, but that by which he succeeds most often is, when he is able to keep them looking at their own unworthiness and carnal nature, and thus causes them doubt their interest into Christ. Nevertheless, when the Lord enables them, through His word, to see that it is not what they are, but what He is for them, that is the ground of hope, they are ready to say with Thomas, "My Lord and my God." When this is given them, there is a joy which the world cannot give. "Ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory." We are called upon to give all diligence to make our calling and our election sure. Let us seek this above everything else, that we may fear and obey the Lord in all things. Amen.

[January 1913.]

The Spirit of Adoption.

The Substance of a Sermon

Preached by the REV. JOHN R. MACKAY, M.A.,

in the Free Presbyterian Church, Inverness, on Sabbath, 15th December, 1912.

"Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father" – Romans 8:15.

In dealing with this subject we have to notice a preliminary question which concerns the meaning of a single term. Are we to understand the preposition “of” in our text in the sense of giving origin to, or in the sense of issuing from? In other words, is the expression, “the Spirit of adoption,” equivalent to “the Spirit that causes or effects adoption”? Or does it mean “the Spirit that flows from or accompanies adoption, and therefore witnesses to adoption”? Not the former interpretation, but the latter, we take to be the true one. That the phrase, “the Spirit of adoption,” does not mean that it is the Holy Spirit that is distinctly the author of adoption, is shown by the circumstance that the Scriptures do not assign this authorship to the Holy Spirit distinctly, or as a Person distinct from the Father and from the Son. The Holy Spirit is indeed given, according to the Scriptures, (1) in order to faith, and (2) on account of faith, or at least consequent upon faith. But the act of adoption is, in the order of nature, after the gift of the Spirit in the former sense, and before the gift of the Spirit in the latter sense. The faith that saves has the Holy Spirit for its author, but in the order of nature faith itself must go before adoption. Thus the Apostle John (John 1:12) says that to them that believe on His name, Christ gives power to become the sons of God. And the Apostle Paul (Galatians 4:26) teaches that it is by faith in Jesus Christ we must become the children of God. Again, believers experience what is called a sealing by the Holy Ghost, but that is subsequent not only to faith but also to adoption. For not only do we read of the Ephesians (1:13), that after they believed they were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, but of the Galatians (4:6), that because they were sons (and therefore after their adoption), God had sent forth the Spirit of His Son into their heart. Two other facts, which will become clearer as we proceed, to wit, that adoption does not refer to a change of nature or disposition, and that as an act it is distinctly what belongs to God and the Father, compel us, when taken in connection with what has already been said, to come to the conclusion that the expression, “the Spirit of adoption,” does not mean that the Spirit is the author of adoption or effects adoption, and that therefore the phrase ought to be taken in the sense that the Spirit accompanies adoption – in a certain sense, flows from adoption – and witnesses to adoption as a completed act. We shall therefore, in what follows: –

- I. – Enquire into the nature of adoption as a benefit of our redemption;
- II. – Consider in what sense the Holy Spirit is given as flowing from, or accompanying adoption;
- III. – Refer to one of the activities of the Spirit as thus given; and
- IV. – We shall conclude with a brief application of the doctrine.

I. – We have to consider the nature of adoption as a benefit of redemption. To begin with: We are wont to distinguish between a change of state and relation, and a change of nature and disposition. Justification is a change of state and relation, but not in itself a change of nature and disposition. Sanctification on the other hand is a change of nature and disposition, and not a change of state or relation. Now to which of these categories does adoption belong? We answer that, like justification, it is a change of state or relation, and not in itself a change of nature or disposition. If we adopt the phraseology of our Shorter Catechism as correct, as well we may, we may observe that the fact that adoption, like justification, is spoken of as an act, and not, like sanctification, as a work is in favour of the view, although not absolutely decisive in itself of the view that, in the judgment of the Westminster Divines at least, adoption, like justification, referred to a change of state or relation. And the general truth of what we say is clearly brought out in the manner in which the Scriptures speak of the change experienced in adoption. In our justification the change is from a state of condemnation to a state of acquittal and acceptance. Those who before were under the wrath of God are, now that they are justified, no longer under that wrath, but are accepted as righteous in God’s

sight. Now, if justification means a change from the state of condemnation to that of pardon and acceptance, adoption means a change from being in the relation of servant to being in the relation of child or son. Thus the Apostle Paul (Galatians 4:7) says: "Wherefore thou art no more a servant but a Son." And the Lord Jesus Christ Himself has evidently the blessing and benefit of adoption in view when, according to John 8:36, he says, "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." Thus we see that the teaching of the Scriptures is, that adoption being immediately subsequent upon faith, it is an act, and not a work – it is a change of state and relation and not a change of nature and disposition, and it is distinctly the act of "God and the Father." This should be acknowledged from what has already been brought forward, but for further confirmation one may be referred to Romans 8:29, and to 2 Corinthians 6:18.

Not only does adoption mean a change of relation – a change from the relationship of a servant to the relationship of a son – but a relation may be said to be its own ground or source. When, however, we say relation here we use the word practically in the sense of Person. If we ask, "What is the ground of our justification?" the Scriptures answer that it is Christ's blood or Christ's obedience unto death. But when we ask for the specific ground of adoption, we conclude that it is the Person of the Redeemer, or the relation in which Christ stands in His own Person to the Father, as Son. Of course, when we thus distinguish between the ground of our justification and that of our adoption, it is not in the sense of excluding the Person from the blood, in the matter of our justification, nor of excluding the blood from the personal relation in the matter of our adoption. But that being understood, we reckon that the Scriptures bear us out in maintaining that the specific ground of our justification is the blood of Christ, and the specific ground of our adoption is the filial relation of Christ to God. Thus the Apostle John, in the prologue to his Gospel, connects the blessing of adoption with the doctrine of the Person of the Redeemer. Christ Himself, as we have already seen, seems, according to John (chapter 8), to connect the sonship of His people with His own sonship; and the Apostle Paul reasons in a similar strain in Galatians 4:1-7.

The fact is that, according to the Scriptures, Christ is, in the proper sense, in the order of nature, God's only Son. He is the only-begotten of the Father. It might be thought that angels are regarded in the Scriptures as sons of God. But according to the Hebrew idiom, "sons of God" need not necessarily mean persons standing in the filial relation to God, but may be understood as another way of indicating "strong ones," and the more one thinks of it, the more one is disposed to come to the conclusion that this latter is all that is meant when angels are spoken of as "sons of God," or "sons of Elohim." Nowadays one hears nothing more frequently than that all mankind are by nature sons or daughters or children of God, and indeed not a few preachers make that out to be the sum and substance of the Gospel. But very different is the teaching of the Bible. According to it, Christ is the only proper Son of God. And we become sons – in the sense of adopted sons – only if we believe in the Son of God, Jesus Christ. Is not that implied in the passage already quoted? Would the Apostle John have said that Christ gives power to believers in Himself to become the sons of God, if the implication were not that, apart from such faith, we are not sons? Would the Apostle Paul have declared that all believers were sons of God, if the implication were not that unbelievers did not belong to the family of God? But all believers are, at the same time, the children of God, and the faith, in virtue of which they are adopted, regards Christ as the eternal Son of God, and therefore as Himself God.

This doctrine by no means intends that believers are deified. They are sons, and their sonship arises out of Christ's Sonship, and Christ's Sonship is eternal. But it must be observed, in order to bring out the difference of the status of the two, that Christ Himself (John 20:27) distinguishes between the sense in which God is His Father and the sense in which He is His people's Father. One has to note at least two things. In the first place, it was not simply

necessary that Christ should stand in the relation of Son to God, even such a Son as is all that God is, in order that He might be the medium of the sonship of believers in respect of God; He must be more than Son in order to be such a medium; He must also be a brother, His people's brother. And such a brother, according to Hebrews 2, He could not be if He did not assume human nature. True it is that the assumption of our nature did not result in two Christs, nor in two Sons, nor even in two Sonships within the One Person. Yet the fact that it is only because Christ is Son in human nature that He becomes the medium of our sonship with God, is enough to shew that adoption does by no means intend deification. And secondly, even in human nature itself, Christ has the pre-eminence. He is the Head; we are only members.

On the other hand the blessing of adoption, although far from being deification, is a tremendous privilege, if one may so speak. It is a great matter that a sinner should through faith in the Redeemer be saved from hell, but there is more in redemption than that. It is implied that believers gain a title to heaven. It is a great matter that sinners should through faith in the Redeemer be acquitted and accepted as righteous, but there is more in redemption than that. It is implied that from being enemies we have become friends. Not only so. There are friends and friends. Adam in innocence was a friend of God, but not in the high sense in which sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty are now friends through faith in Christ. Elect angels are indeed friends, but not in the sense of being sons of God, at least in the high sense in which believers are sons, for otherwise it should not be said of them, from the highest to the lowest, that they are but ministering spirits sent forth to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation (Hebrews 1:14). The privilege of adoption to be bestowed upon believers in Christ occupied the mind of God and gave it satisfaction before the eternal ages. Believers, says the Apostle Paul (Ephesians 1:4,5), were, before the foundation of the world, predestinated unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ. According to Romans 8:29, the summit of the purpose of their election was that they should be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren. The Apostle John cannot find words in which adequately to express all it means. "Behold," says he (1 John 3:1,2), "what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God! And it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." And that only Christ's second coming and the consequent resurrection of His people from the dead, would alone bring adequately to light the gracious implications of adoption, is the teaching of the Apostle Paul also. "We wait," he says (Romans 8:23), "for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." Continue, then, to think of it.

II. – But we must now proceed, in the second place, to consider in what sense the Holy Spirit is given to believers, as flowing from or accompanying their adoption.

That He is given, as described, should be evident if there were no other passage to quote than Ephesians 1:13: "After that ye believed ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." And it is utterly unwarrantable to imagine that this sealing of the Holy Spirit was not intended to continue in the Church until the end of time. On the contrary – although we do not say that this sealing is equally distinctly felt by all that are partakers of it, and although we should be extremely sorry to say anything to wound the weakest of Christ's true people – we are bound to ask those whose consciences tell them that they are utter strangers to what it was that the Ephesian or Corinthian or Galatian or Roman believers experienced when thus sealed – (see 2 Corinthians 1:22; Galatians 4:6; Romans 5:5) – we are bound, I say, to ask such persons, how they expect to be with those Ephesian, Corinthian, Galatian or Roman believers in heaven for ever, if they are utter strangers to the experiences of those believers here in this world? Many are apt to think that religion is a matter about which we can have no certainty. But, if this sealing be a fact, as it is a fact, believers are in virtue of this sealing alone made as sure of the

truth of the Gospel as that they have a being, although I do not mean by that that they are not liable to be tempted with infidelity and even atheism: as what sin are they not liable to be tempted with? Now, adoption, as we have seen, is an act involving a change of relation. As such it is primarily known only to God. But He is pleased to accompany this act with this giving of the Holy Spirit to which our text refers. The subject now therefore before us is a large one, and one in connection with which we can discuss or note only one or two things.

To begin with, we note that believers receive more than the graces of the Holy Spirit exclusively. They receive Himself. It is to the receiving of a person that the Apostle Paul refers when, in Galatians 3:2, he puts the question: "This only would I learn of you. Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" And he evidently expects them to answer that by the hearing of faith they did receive the Spirit. The matter is put, if that were possible, still more clearly in the fourth chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians. For in that chapter the Apostle speaks of the mission of two, the first sent being the Son of God, who is surely a person, and the second sent being the Spirit of the Son, whom by parity of reason we must regard as also a distinct person, and as having been sent or given in the sense of person. Thus also Christ (John 14:17) says that His disciples knew the Spirit of truth, because He dwelt in them. Surely then it was a person they knew, and it was as a person He dwelt in them?

When God sent forth His Son, He sent Him into the world, and the mission of the Son involved His becoming man, His being obedient unto the death of the cross, and His being exalted. But when God sends forth His Spirit, He sends Him into the heart of sinners. But although He is a person that is sent and He is received, as Dr. Thomas Goodwin was fond of putting it, not merely in His graces, but rather with His graces, we are not therefore to suppose that the Spirit unites believers to Himself in a personal union, so that He and they should be but one person. The diversity of personalities is always understood, and is brought out perhaps most clearly of all, in Romans 8:16, where the personality of the Spirit of God and that of believers is sharply distinguished: "The Spirit itself," we read, "beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." The gift of the Spirit is the gift of a person. When, however, He comes into the heart, it is not to form a personal union with any or all believers, as the Son of God took human nature into personal union with Himself. But, notwithstanding that the Spirit does not come into the heart to take up that heart into personal union with Himself, He does come with a purpose never to leave, never to forsake the heart, or the people whom He has thus visited. He is, indeed, in time the very principle of their soul's life. And when the resurrection comes He will be a principle of life to the entire person of believers, soul and body being then reunited. So must we understand the language of the Apostle Paul in Romans 8:10, "The body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness." That is to say, it is on the ground of Christ's obedience unto death that the Holy Spirit comes to dwell in believing sinners, and He so dwells in them that He is in time itself a principle of life unto their souls. Adam, we believe, enjoyed this principle of spiritual life in innocence, but through disobedience he lost it, and at once became spiritually dead. Believers now have the Spirit as a principle of life and that life is life eternal, because as it was for Christ's sake alone that He became theirs, Christ merits that for His sake He should never leave a member of Christ's mystical body, who has become such by faith in Christ. And we are taught further, that He, who is a principle of life to the soul in time itself, will become a principle of eternal life to soul and body, or to the entire person from the resurrection henceforth. "For if," says the Apostle Paul (Romans 8:2), "the Spirit of Him that raised Christ from the dead dwell in you, He that raised Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you." And thus we are brought again to have regard to a consummation such as eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man.

Secondly, we should reckon that the gift of the Spirit is a marvellous manifestation of the love of God to poor sinners. There is a sense in which the gift of the Son is the gift of gifts, the unspeakable gift, not because the Spirit as a distinct person is one to whom less glory belongs than to the Son Himself, but because of the sense in which the Son was given. He was given in order to be humbled, to die; not so with the Holy Spirit. Yet the gift of the Spirit is an infinite gift, because the Person is infinite. And although it is in Christ crucified that the love of God to sinners appears as the sun at its noonday height – (see John 3:16; Romans 5:8; 1 John 4:10) – yet it is only in virtue of the gift of the Spirit that, according to Romans 5:5, the love of God to sinners can be subjectively realised. It is, indeed, primarily the work of the Spirit to glorify the Father and the Son by leading those, in whom He comes to dwell, to have respect to the fountain of their salvation in the love of the Father, and to the channel by which that love became theirs in the blood of Christ. Yet is He Himself an infinite gift, and an infinite token of love, and a proof of the unchangeableness of God’s love, for the believing soul may well say that surely God does not upbraid him or her for the death of His Son, seeing that He has followed it with the gift of the Holy Spirit!

III. – We proceed in the third place to refer briefly to one of the activities of the Holy Spirit as thus given. He is said to enable those, unto whom He is thus given, to cry “Abba, Father.” Abba and Father mean one and the same thing, only that Abba is Hebrew, or speaking more accurately, Aramaic, whereas Father is English. Of course, the Apostle used an Aramaic and a Greek word. Possibly a term may have been drawn from the language of the Jews, and another term from the language of the Gentiles with a view to intimate the unity of these two sections of the Church of Christ. Or it may be only for intensification. But, however that may be, our text teaches us, that the same Spirit that was upon Christ Jesus, and in which He prayed, “Righteous Father,” etc., is the Spirit that believers are sealed with. In Galatians 4:6, the Holy Spirit Himself is said to have come into the heart of the Galatians with this cry, “Abba, Father.” In our text the same Spirit is said to enable us to cry, “Abba, Father.” The sense of both passages seems to be combined in Romans 8:16, “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.” Of course, we should err if we said that true believers are, at all times, enabled with perfect confidence to claim that God is their Father. We only make the following observations.

(1) It is with this cry, “Abba, Father,” that the Holy Spirit always enters the heart of believers, and, accordingly, you will find that there are few of the Lord’s people who will not look back to some moment of their life when they reckoned that they got a glimpse of an eternal day.

(2) Albeit it be the case with regard to those who were favoured with such a glimpse, that on account of the machinations of the devil, and the corruptions of their own heart, and the allurements of the world, their evidence of sonship became possibly very dim; yet will it always be the case, that if in any measure their soul is restored, they will reckon that during all the time of their doubtings they were actually in possession of all they needed for a perfect salvation, to wit, Christ.

(3) It is a sure sign of sonship, if we regard such an interest in God as adoption implies as more than all the world to us. In earthly families, where there is natural affection, the children reckon that their father’s and mother’s favour is to them worth more than gold. Such as are dead in trespasses and sins reckon very little of God’s favour, but those that have the Spirit of adoption, have this instinct that a sense of the favour of God, if they could only come at it, would be as an eternal inheritance to them.

IV. – Application. – To the righteous, we should like to say but two things:

(1) An assurance of God’s love, and that, in virtue of the promptings of the Holy Ghost in the heart, ought to be regarded as the healthy state of a Christian. The believers in the days of the Apostle enjoyed it in large measure. It was a sense of this that made the Reformers such

giants in their labours for God. Calvin in the Prefatory Address to his *Institutes* gives it as the cause of much of the enmity which Papists bore to the Reformed that the latter dared assert such blessedness as adoption means as belonging to themselves. “They attack us,” says he, “and loudly maintain, that this sure confidence is not free from arrogance and presumption. But as nothing is to be presumed of ourselves, so all things are to be presumed of God; nor are we stripped of vainglory for any other reason than that we may learn to glory in the Lord. Why go farther? Take but a cursory view, most valiant King, of all the parts of our cause and count us of all wicked men the most iniquitous, if you do not discover plainly, that ‘therefore we both labour and suffer reproach because we trust in the living God’ (1 Timothy 4:10).”

(2) Consider that if we have but an occasional glimpse of God’s having made us the recipients, first, of the gift of the Son, and, second, of the gift of the Holy Spirit, what obligation we are under to live for God. What shame each of us, who profess the name of Christ, ought to feel and express on account of how little we have lived to the glory of Him who loved and favoured us so!

Of those whose consciences tell them that they are utter strangers to the experiences of which we have now tried to speak, I would, again, ask how they can expect to have the company of New Testament saints eternally if a rehearsal of what they enjoyed here in this world, be to them as one speaking a foreign language? And further, I would point out, how infatuated rejecters of the Christ of God must be! We are naturally wedded to our self-righteousness. It was that condition of things that made the Jews as a rule to reject the Son of God in the days of His flesh. To us, as to them, Christ still says: “If the Son make you free, you shall be free indeed.” He is offering Himself to us in the Gospel; and in offering Himself, He offers the Holy Spirit, He offers pardon, He offers life, He offers adoption, and all that this implies. Will you not strive, then, with the great object in view, that the Christ of God should become your own?

[February 1913]

A Sermon.

By the REV. NEIL CAMERON, ST. JUDE’S, GLASGOW.

“In the year of this jubilee ye shall return every man unto his possession” – Leviticus 25:13.

In the first five books of the Bible we have a perfect code of laws to regulate the conduct of the people both as regards their civil and ecclesiastical duties. Some of these laws are morally binding on all to the end of time; others were typical and, consequently, vanished away at the appearance of their antitypes. This was true of many of their civil laws as well as of the most of their ecclesiastical ones. The moral law contained in the ten commandments was not

destined to pass away, as will appear to any unprejudiced mind. It lays down man's duty towards God and his fellow. These duties can never cease. But there are other laws which have long ago ceased to be binding, as this of the jubilee has, because their significance was to have its fulfilment in Christ's spiritual kingdom. In reading this part of the word of God, it is very helpful to the proper understanding of it, to keep this fact before one's mind. We have in this chapter enactments of Sabbaths which were to be observed by the people.

The weekly Sabbath began in Eden. We are told, in Genesis 2:2,3, that God rested on the seventh day from all His works which He created and made. It can be proved that He commanded man to rest on this day, and to spend it in the fellowship and worship of his Creator. In Exodus 16:22, the Sabbath day's rest is introduced in a manner that cannot be explained otherwise. We read there – "That on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one man; and the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. And he said unto them, this is that which the Lord hath said, to-morrow is the rest of the Holy Sabbath unto the Lord: bake that which ye will bake to-day, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you, to be kept until the morning. And they laid it up till the morning, as Moses bade; and it did not stink, neither was there any worm therein. And Moses said, eat that to-day; for to-day is a Sabbath unto the Lord: to-day ye shall not find it in the field." This happened before the law was given on Mount Sinai. It was then proclaimed as the fourth commandment of the moral law, and it shall continue in force till the end of time. It had to be observed over and above the other Sabbaths commanded in this chapter.

At the end of six years there was to be observed the Sabbath of the land, which was to continue during the whole of the seventh year. Again, at the end of seven times seven years, or forty-nine years, there were to be two years of rest, the fiftieth year being the jubilee.

In order that the weekly Sabbath would be kept, God gave double the usual amount of bread on the sixth day, and none on the seventh. The Lord gave three signs to the people that He would have the seventh day kept as a holy Sabbath to Him.

(1) He gave twice as much bread on the sixth day;

(2) He caused that it did neither stink nor breed worms, although, when kept other nights, it did both; and

(3) there came none of it down for the morning of the seventh day.

He has given many tokens of His favour since to such as sanctify the weekly Sabbath, and many tokens of His displeasure to such as profane it. The Lord can, and will provide now as well as then, ample provision for man's needs on the other days of the week. He is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. He also promised that on the sixth year the earth would bring forth fruits sufficient for the seventh year, and till the fruits of the eighth were ripe. On the forty-eighth year He promised abundance for three years – that is, till the fruits of the fruits of the earth were ready the year after the jubilee. We lose much by the atheism of our hearts, inasmuch as we do not acknowledge God's providence either when favourable or adverse to us. He says – "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

There are many opinions held by divines concerning the law of the seventh year Sabbath; but all who know how to work the earth properly are aware of the fact that the earth needs rest, as otherwise it will lose its vigour if it should be ploughed every year. From this fact we learn that God not only created man, and the beast of burden, in such a way as that, without the rest He has commanded, they become useless, but that He has also created the earth under the same law. "In wisdom thou hast made all thy works."

In our text there are three things which we will endeavour, as the Lord will enable us, to consider at this time.

I. The condition of them to whom the jubilee brought relief;

II. The foundation upon which this relief was based; and

III. The nature of the relief itself.

I. – We are to consider the condition of those to whom the year of jubilee gave relief. This law was a very merciful one. It made provision for the man that lost his possessions, whether through adverse providences or folly, to come into possession of them again. A foolish father might squander his inheritance and bring himself and his family to penury, but this law provided that all should be restored again. Adam deprived himself and all his posterity, through sin, of all he possessed. Let us consider some of the possessions which Adam had and which he lost.

(1) Man lost God by the fall – “Our iniquities have separated between us and our God.” This is the greatest loss that any rational creature can sustain. All the other losses of man are like a drop of the bucket in comparison with this one. The Apostle Paul, writing to the Ephesians, reminded them of their sad condition before the gospel came to them. “At that time,” he says, “ye were without Christ . . . having no hope, and without God in the world.” We see also that, when sinners are convinced of their lost condition, this becomes their, paramount misery. “In those days and at that time, saith the Lord, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping they shall go and seek the Lord their God.” This is true of every sinner who realises the nature of his lost condition. He feels now the loss of God, as his own God, swallowing up all his other losses, and it becomes the gall and wormwood that he drinks in anguish of spirit. There are no words in the Bible to be compared with the cry – “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” It makes one’s heart faint even to think of being forsaken of God in eternity. This is verily the wages of sin; and it must be, should a sinner die without being reconciled to God, that he shall lose God and all the blessings of His fellowship for ever and ever. So great was this loss in the sight of God that He sent His Son into the world to seek and to save that which was lost. This loss is real and of such a nature that none can trifle with it at last. Many do not consider it now as being any loss at all, so they go on carelessly dancing, singing vain songs, and they laugh scornfully at any serious thoughts of it; but they will certainly change their mind as regards this vital matter either in time or in eternity. The poor little lassie, who came all the way from the west of the island of Skye to Inverness, bare-headed and bare-footed, asking the question of every person that met her on that very long journey” – Can you tell me where I can find the Lord God to whom the issues from death belong?” – felt keenly her need of Him. So will every one that will be saved of the human race seek Him while He may be found.

(2) Man lost the image of God. This image consisted in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. We are told in God’s word “that man is born like a wild ass’ colt.” Before man fell, the light that shone in his understanding is seen by the fact that on first sight he knew the nature of every creature which the Creator brought to him, and gave each of them its proper name. Man now is lower in spiritual knowledge than the ox or ass – as it is written, “The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master’s crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.” Yea, we are told that we have so completely lost our knowledge of divine things, that “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.” We hear, in the word of God, the cry of them who realised the truth of this – “Give me understanding, that I may know thy testimonies. Give me understanding, and I shall live.” These petitions show how every one that is taught of the Holy Spirit feels that spiritual knowledge is life, and that spiritual ignorance is death to the soul. So our Lord prayed – “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” Why do awakened sinners read their Bibles much and often, travel long distances to hear the gospel preached, and consider that they are well paid for all their pains if they get to understand even a little? Is it not because they realise that “it is not good that the soul be

without knowledge”? One who deeply felt the ignorance, or darkness of the carnal mind, expresses it in these words – “Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man. I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy.” The word of God, and the experience of His people, agree perfectly as regards the painful fact that man has lost this part of the image of his Creator.

Man lost also his righteousness. When God created man he loved the Lord his God with all his heart, soul, strength, and mind, and he loved also his neighbour as himself. All his thoughts, words, and actions were perfectly conformed to the law of God. He stood before his Creator in perfect innocence, and without fear. Instantly man sinned, guilt fell on his conscience, and fear of punishment revealed itself. His righteousness was gone, and he fled to hide himself from God among the trees of the garden. The character given of the children of men in God’s word is – “There is none righteous, no, not one.” This is proved by man’s conduct in the world. Our thoughts concerning God are unrighteous. We consider Him austere, and hate Him without a cause. We daily break His commandments, that are holy and just and good, in our thoughts, words, and actions. The desperate wickedness of the human heart reveals itself in the conduct of some more than others; but the hearts of all men are alike evil in their imaginations every day. Nothing can change this terrible bias of the heart but the grace of God.

Among men in the world unrighteousness reigns supreme. Man defrauds his neighbour, and excuses himself because he does it in the name of what men call business. They tell lies, deceive, and exact more than is right, and never lose an hour’s sleep on account of these sins. Others slander, backbite, hate, envy, and harbour malicious thoughts against their neighbour, and justify themselves in doing so. Yea, men have done all these things who would be mortally offended if one doubted their piety. But these sins prove how unjust man has become, and the fact that man’s conscience does not condemn him for them manifests it. This is not rendering to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, nor to God the things that are God’s.

The Lord convinces all His children of this woeful depravity of their hearts and spirits. One of them cried – “Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.” This cry comes often from every one of the Lord’s people, but you will not find it among the unregenerate. The Lord’s people smite their own breast and thigh for their sins against heaven and in God’s sight; others smite their neighbour for sins that are not nearly so heinous in the sight of the Lord as their own. This was the way of the Pharisees in Christ’s day; they said that John the Baptist had a devil, and that the Lord Jesus was a wine-bibber; a friend of publicans and sinners. But the poor publican that went up to the temple to pray “stood afar off, smote upon his breast and cried, God be merciful to me the sinner.” This is the way the penitent cry unto the Lord, and it is their cry that He hears.

Man lost also his holiness. He was perfectly holy in his heart when God created him; but sin polluted man’s heart. It is out of the heart the things that defile the man proceed, as it is written – “But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornication, thefts, false witness, blasphemies; these are the things which defile a man.” Instead of love to God’s law, which is the image of God Himself, we love sin. We, by nature, love idols, and after them we go. “If any man love the world, or the things that are in the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” The impurity of our affections is the fuel that sets fire to our vile lusts. These lusts degrade man, and bring him lower than the beasts. Many deny the fact that all mankind fell in Adam; but even the heathen observed that human nature was corrupt. If men were conscious of the abominable lusts of the heart, it would cause them to feel their need of a clean heart. An adulterous thought is a committing of that sin in the sight of God, as our Lord Jesus taught – “But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.” O how abhorrent in the sight of a

holy God are the thoughts of the hearts of young men and women even in the house of God! If men were made conscious of this abomination, they would cry before the Lord, "Unclean! unclean!"

We have the cry of them that were quickened to feel and know a little of their defilement in the word of God. David cried – "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." Paul cried also – "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Natural men do not cry thus, for they are dead in sin, and consequently they do not realise it. But the Lord's people have the same cry now, and often pray with the same words. The loss of a holy nature is a terrible loss – "For, it is written, without holiness no one shall see the Lord."

(3) We are not now in the family of God as we are born into the world, but in Satan's family. Christ told the Jews that they were of their father the devil, and that they did his works. It was not so at the beginning. You will have noticed that, in the genealogy Luke gives, he records the father of each one till he arrives at Adam, and he says that – "Adam was the son of God." We are told in Genesis that, after Adam fell by sin, he begat a son in his own likeness; that son was Cain, the murderer of his brother. We are all by nature in Satan's family, "walking according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." If the Israelite who lost his family needed a jubilee to restore him to that privilege again, so do we need the gospel of the grace of God to restore us into His family by the spirit of adoption.

Poor Ruth felt her heart alienated from the people of Moab, and united to God and His people when she said – "Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me." This was a sure proof of the grace of adoption in her case, and this will be the best mark of it to the end of time. As others felt it – "For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquettings, and abominable idolatries;" as if they had said, "It is more than enough of our precious time spent in the house and family of Satan."

(4) Paradise, or the garden of Eden, was a type of heaven. Adam was driven out of it when he sinned. This was done to convince him and his posterity that sin closed them out of heaven. So that man lost heaven by sin, and opened the gates of death, in its threefold aspect, to himself. This fact was very forcibly impressed on our first parents when the flaming sword of justice was placed at the gate to debar them from entering to the tree of life. None could enter heaven of the human race, were it not that the second Adam, who is the Lord from heaven, met this awakened sword, and opened a way by His own blood into heaven. He entered the holiest of all, and thereby obtained eternal redemption for all the people given Him by the Father. It is only through His blood that we have boldness to enter into the holiest of all, which is heaven. The vain dreams of men that they will go to heaven by their own merits, will certainly have an awful awakening at last.

(5) We have also lost our freedom, and have become slaves to Satan, the world, and the flesh. No slave was more bound than we are to our own lusts, as we are by nature. A slave differed from a hired servant, inasmuch as being sold, he received no wages. He could never earn one penny wherewith to regain his freedom, but continued a slave till the day of his death. This is a very true picture of our condition spiritually. Justice demands of us to pay that we owe; but we can pay nothing, although our debt is set forth by the sum of ten hundred talents. A kinsman in Israel might repurchase his poor brother's freedom, and put him again into possession of all he lost. No brother can restore to us what we have lost spiritually but Jesus Christ. If we will be restored to freedom it will be by Him. He has restored that which He had

not taken away, and consequently it is written – “If the Son therefore make you free, ye shall be free indeed.”

II. – Let us now consider the foundation upon which the blessings of the jubilee was based. The trumpet was to be sounded immediately the high priest came forth from the holiest of all on the great day of atonement.

This great day of atonement had to be observed once a year, by God’s authority, under the Old Testament dispensation from Moses till Christ died on Calvary’s cross. This covered about fifteen hundred years. In the eye of God there was but one great day of atonement. This was the day on which His own Son poured out His soul unto death to make an atonement for the sins of all the true Israel of God. This was done once, and never to be repeated. “He by one offering perfected for ever all them that are sanctified.” Christ by His one offering did magnify the law and make it honourable, and did also satisfy divine justice for all the elect. The merit of His obedience and death procured for His people all that they had lost. He made up, as their surety, the covenant of works, and also procured for them all the blessings of the covenant of grace. These great blessings are freely offered in the gospel to men who are lost themselves, and who lost all they had in the first Adam. The year of the jubilee was a very vivid type of the blessings offered to sinners in the gospel. The proclamation of the gospel is based on the atonement made by our Lord Jesus Christ. It offers freely to every one who hears it an immediate deliverance from sin and all its consequences, as well as an inheritance which is undefiled and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for every one who believes it. We shall notice briefly a few of the striking resemblances between the jubilee and the gospel.

(1) The trumpet of the jubilee was not blown till the high priest had offered the sin-offering on the great day of atonement. On that day once a year he went into the holiest of all, and sprinkled the blood seven times on the mercy-seat and before it, and interceded for the people that their sins should be forgiven. This was a real type of Christ’s atonement and intercession. He entered into heaven itself by His own blood having obtained eternal redemption for us. The blood of calves and of bulls could not take away sin; but “the blood of Jesus Christ, God’s Son, cleanseth us from all sin.” The call of the gospel rests upon the satisfaction made to God’s justice by the blood of Christ. As it is written: “Save him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom.” “I have found a ransom,” is the voice of justice on the day of the sinner’s justification by faith in Christ.

(2) We further notice that, on the day of atonement, all the people were to afflict their souls for their sins while the high priest was in the holiest of all, and the soul that did not do so was cut off from the congregation of Israel. This sets forth the urgent need of repentance in order to forgiveness; and that repentance has a direct connection with the blood and intercession of our Great High Priest. “Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins.”

(3) The gospel preached on the day of Pentecost was the true spiritual antitype of the trumpet of the jubilee. Peter declared that day that the marvellous effects which followed the doctrines set forth were the direct operations of the Spirit of promise given by the Father to Christ as a reward for His sufferings. The Holy Ghost that day convinced three thousand men of their lost condition, wrought true evangelical repentance in their hearts, and saving faith in Christ.

(4) Such as preach a gospel without the atonement as its foundation (which is no gospel) deceive themselves and their hearers, and will bring all who will trust in their false doctrines to certain and unremediable ruin. There is much pernicious talk in our day about love, mercy, and goodness in God which, these dreamers declare, to be inconsistent with any need for an atonement for sin on the part of God. But God is just, as well as merciful, and justice required death as the wages of sin. “Without shedding of blood is no remission.” His justice required an atonement; His love, mercy, and goodness provided a Lamb for a burnt offering.

(5) The trumpet of jubilee was blown first in Jerusalem, and then throughout all the land of Canaan. The gospel was preached first at Jerusalem, and from thence to the ends of the earth. All who lost their possession were the objects of the merciful enactment of the jubilee; those who lost all their possession by the fall are the objects of the free offer of eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

(6) The law of the jubilee was decreed and declared by God; the gospel is also good news from the Lord to a perishing and lost world. It has His authority, and is a declaration of the eternal purpose that, whosoever would hear and obey it, should have eternal life. It requires nothing of the recipients but an acquiescence in its terms as God's remedy for poor, needy, and lost men. "The poor have the gospel preached unto them."

III. – The nature of the relief conferred on the year of the jubilee.

There would be in Israel only a few who lost their possession, and these only looked forward with expectation to the year of the jubilee. When the year came and the trumpet was blown, the larger number paid no attention to it. They had not lost their possession, and they would not as much as lift their heads when the sound of the trumpet was heard. So there are very many in gospel lands, who are not conscious of having lost their souls and their all in Adam, and consequently the preaching of the gospel is foolishness to them. This shows the need of the teaching of the Spirit of truth, for He alone can convince men of their sinful and lost condition. The Word of God declares man's lost condition by nature; but, if the Holy Ghost will not awaken, and enlighten men, our thoughts will be – "We are rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing;" while we are poor, and miserable, and wretched, and blind, and naked. But let us beware; for the slave who refused to go free when he heard the trumpet, and said, "I love my master, and his service, I will not go out free," was brought to the door post of his master's house, and had his ear bored with an awl. That man was bound, by the decree of God, to serve his master for ever. Should he live to the next jubilee, it could bring no relief to him. So gospel hearers are in great danger when they refuse the call of the gospel, and say in their hearts, "I love the service of sin and Satan, and will not leave them yet," that God may decree that they shall be the slaves of sin and Satan for ever.

Others as soon as they heard the trumpet (and you may be sure that the trumpet gave no uncertain sound) immediately threw down the implements with which they laboured in their bondage, and began to bend their steps toward their lost possession. If you were standing at their old home, you would see the father coming from the north, the mother from the south, the son from the west, and the daughter from the east, to take possession of all they had lost. If their masters should ask, "Where are you going, or who authorised you to leave my service?" they could answer: "I have the authority of God's word for leaving you and your service, to take possession again of all that I have lost." What beaming faces, from real joy of heart, you would see as one after another came back to their former habitation! How loudly they would praise God for the trumpet of the jubilee! One would say to the other: "It was the most joyful sound that my ears ever heard."

The joyful sound of the gospel, in the ears of a man who is convinced of his guilty and lost condition under the curse of the law of God, brings him a spiritual relief greater than the jubilee brought to Israelites. We are told that God brings them by His word and Spirit out of the lands from the east, and from the west, from the north, and from the south. There is joy in heaven as one after another of them turn to God by repentance, and there is joy also in the true Church on earth. Each one receives back all that was lost in Adam.

He receives forgiveness of sins through the blood of Christ. God justifies him by imputing to him the obedience and death of His own Son, and bestows faith on him to embrace Jesus Christ as his righteousness. His person is accepted as he stands in that righteousness before God, and He enters into a covenant with him to be a God unto him. God and the lost sinner are reconciled, and the peace made between them by the blood of Christ is everlasting in its

nature. So, the poor sinner has the greatest part of his loss made up, and made sure for ever. All the other parts of his lost possession will assuredly be restored to him.

God puts His Spirit within him, and gives him a new heart and a new spirit. He is created anew in Christ Jesus. The image of God is restored on the soul, which, as we said before, consists in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness. The knowledge that he now has of God (though it is yet very imperfect) is more than that which Adam had before he fell. He knows Him to be a sin-pardoning God, and that His love, pity, and mercy were so great that He gave His only begotten Son to die for His enemies. Christ, in that great and wonderful prayer, said: – “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” He has to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ; but this part of the image of God is imprinted indelibly by the Holy Ghost on his soul. This knowledge cannot be lost again.

Righteousness is also imprinted on the soul. The man now is in full agreement with God’s law. Formerly he considered it too exacting. Now he says from the bottom of his heart: “The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.” He has changed his mind entirely about the law, and instead of finding fault with it, he smites his own breast because he cannot fulfil its holy claims. The will to fulfil both tables of the law, is always present with him. He delights in the law of God after the inward man. Is this not a fulfilment of the promise: – “I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people”? This makes the man truthful, honest, faithful, sober, and trustful towards his neighbour. It will make him contrite in spirit towards God, and all that belongs to Him in this world. He does not act so in order to merit eternal life by his obedience, he is entirely indebted to Christ’s obedience and death for that; but he does it because he has been already saved, and because the grace that is planted in his heart moves him powerfully thereto. Formerly, he walked according to the carnal inclination of his own depraved will; now he takes the word of God as his rule of faith and practice.

True holiness is a part of the image of God. Man lost it entirely in the Fall. His affections fell to the dunghills of this world, and instead of love to God there sprang up enmity: “They hated me without a cause.” In regeneration the affections are raised “to the things that are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God.” It is this renewed heart that hates the thoughts of vanity, and that loves the law of God. The law becomes sweeter to it than honey, and more precious than gold. The law here means the word of God – both law and gospel. But corruption remains in the heart still; and therefore the cry is heard “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.” None ever cried so in truth, but such as were changed inwardly by grace. Notwithstanding that both holiness and corruption strive for the mastery in the heart, we are told that that which is born of God sinneth not. Sometimes, the corrupt nature gets the upper hand so much that no trace of grace can be discerned; but grace in the heart will overcome all opposition at last. David had a sad experience of this, and so had many of the children of God. Grace in the heart is like Gad: “Gad, a troop shall overcome him; but he shall overcome at the last.” Thus, the image of God, which man lost when he fell by sin, and which consisted in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, is restored in regeneration. It is not yet perfectly restored, but it will be so on the soul at death. Justification is an act, and is perfected in an instant of time; but sanctification is the work of God’s Spirit, and is progressive.

All those that are justified are also born of the Spirit, and as the righteousness of Christ is the foundation upon which justification rests, so the new creation made within by the Holy Ghost is the foundation of sanctification. The Spirit of truth dwells in this renewed part as the Spirit of adoption. He gives the renewed sinner the disposition of a son, whereby he claims God as his Father. This disposition of sons and daughters manifests itself in love to the Lord’s people, His cause, house, and name in this world. David, although he was the King of Israel,

would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of God than dwell in the tents of iniquity. This adoption, by the Holy Ghost, brings the soul home to God's house and family. As it is written: – "Ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel" They are "no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." They are in God's family as they are born of water and of the Spirit, and the Spirit dwells in their hearts as the Spirit of adoption. They are in the kingdom of grace in this world, and the kingdom of glory is theirs by the absolute promise of Christ: "I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

Man receives his freedom from the slavery of sin, Satan, and the world that lies in the wicked one. He becomes free from the slavery of sin, as it is written: "For sin shall have no dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace." Sin is still in him, and seeks to regain the old mastery over him; but grace reigns through righteousness in him unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord. He is now the free man of Christ, as it is written: "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." He is free from the curse of the law; he is free from the dominion of sin; and he is free from being the slave of the god of this world, the spirit that rules in the children of disobedience. It was by the gospel that he obtained this freedom; not by any power or wisdom of his own.

The jubilee was God's plan to restore to men their lost possession in this world. It was entirely for men who lost their all. So is the gospel. It is God's mercy and goodness to sinful men, who have lost all they possessed spiritually by sin. The call of the gospel is like the blowing of the trumpet of the jubilee. Every one who hears it, has the authority of God to turn to Him by Jesus Christ in order to receive all and more than man lost by the Fall. All is free in the offer of it, and the promise is sure to every one who will come. Christ says: "All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

[March 1913]

A Sermon.

By the REV. ALEXANDER MACKAY, Oban.
(Taken down by a Hearer.)

Psalm I.

I should like to direct your attention to-night, as the Lord may be pleased to enable me, to the whole of this Psalm. We have been familiar with the Psalm from our infancy. We have read it for ourselves and we have heard it read by others. We have heard it sung over and over again; yet it is to be feared that it has been a meaningless song to the most of us. This Psalm is a most beautiful Psalm, and every word in it is significant. It is brimful of meaning from beginning to end, and if we took one verse without considering the Psalm as a whole, we would lose the meaning of this precious Psalm, for it is concerned about two things from beginning to end. It is concerned about the godly and the ungodly, or we might put it otherwise, and say it deals with the two divisions into which men have been divided since the Fall, and into which they will be divided till the end of time, and shall be divided throughout an endless eternity. Let us consider, then, these two divisions of this Psalm.

I – You notice here that the Psalmist begins the Psalm with “the blessed,” or “the righteous,” or “the godly,” and in dealing with the blessed man, the Psalmist speaks

- (1) about his *character*; he speaks
- (2) about his *state*; and he speaks
- (3) about his *end*.

(1) You find the character of the righteous man brought before you when it is said that “he does *not* walk in the counsel of the ungodly; that he does *not* stand in the way of sinners; that he does *not* sit in the seat of the scornful”; and further, that “his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night.” This is the character of the good

man. And you will notice, further, that his character is also divided. It has, as it were, two sides. It has an outward side and it has an inward side, or, to speak otherwise, it has a negative side and a positive side. In dealing with the character of the righteous man we shall notice, first of all, the negative side. "He does not walk in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stand in the way of sinners, nor sit in the seat of the scornful." That is to say, the godly man is known outwardly by his walk and conversation. There is a difference between the righteous and the wicked as to their outward walk and life in the world, yet you often hear such an expression as this, "Oh, we must not judge men." Well, you find Christ Himself saying, "By their fruits ye shall know them." Now, here we have the outward character of the godly man. He is one who seeks to abstain from all appearance of evil; he is one who is not found associated with the world and with its vanities in any shape or form. In our day religion has come to such a low ebb that there is practically no difference to be seen between the world and the professing Church; but God has put a difference between the world and His Church, and the difference is seen by the godly in this life – even those whose eyes have been opened by the Holy Ghost – and it will be seen by an assembled universe on the day of judgment.

Nevertheless, we have to say about this negative part of the character of the righteous man, that an unconverted man might, to a certain extent, lay claim thereto. You remember the young man in the gospel. He laid claim to this negative side of the character of the godly. "All these," he said, "have I kept from my youth up. What lack I yet?" So we see that men who are unconverted may have in their life and conversation this outward side of the Christian character. It may not be laid to their charge that "they walk in the counsel of the ungodly, that they stand in the way of sinners, or that they sit in the seat of the scornful," yet they lack something still – they lack the "new heart." It ought to be true of every one to whom God has sent His word, that they should be circumspect in their life and conversation, but at the same time, while all this may be true, they may be still "without God and without hope in the world."

We see, however, in considering the positive side of the character of the godly, that there is a great distinction drawn here between outward morality and inward religion. Men may have outward works, commendable in themselves, and yet be destitute of vital godliness; and here we have a distinction drawn between the outwardly moral and the truly pious as to their minds or dispositions with regard to the word of God. We see that the Psalmist says, "But his delight is in the law of the Lord," or "in the law of Jehovah," for that is the meaning here. Not only does he keep himself unspotted from the world, but he has a heart to know the word of God – he has a heart that delights in the law of Jehovah; and no unconverted man can lay claim to that. This is where the distinction comes in between the unconverted and the converted. It is not at all so much as to their outward character in the world, but the inward religion of the heart. "Man looketh at the outward appearance; God looketh to the heart." And it is said here, "His delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate *day* and *night*." Does this mean that the godly have unbroken fellowship with God? Does it mean that the godly have a sense of constant delight and unbroken meditation in God's law? Oh, no; it does not mean that. What does it mean, then? It means, just in one word, that it is the bias of their minds to meditate in the law of the Lord. And you see that may be a test for each one of us. We may ask ourselves the question – "Is it true about us that we do not walk in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stand in the way of sinners, nor sit in the seat of the scornful?" Is it true about us that we have outward morality? And if we answer "Yes," then let us consider further this question – "Do we love the law of the Lord?" Can we say what the Psalmist says in another place?

"Upon my heart, bestowed by thee,
More gladness I have found
Than they, even then, when corn and wine

Did most with them abound.”

Can we say that about the law of the Lord? Now, the law of the Lord means here the written Word of God. The Psalmist had not the Bible as we have it. It is very probable that he had only the five books of Moses, but there was enough in the five books of Moses to give delight to the heart of the Psalmist.

What does this delight in the law of the Lord mean? It means that one has found in the Scriptures more joy and more satisfaction than can be found in anything else under the sun. It means that one has come to experience joy which the world cannot give, even life, through the Word of God. This is then the first thing to which our attention is drawn here – the *character* of the godly man. He is outwardly religious, but he is also inwardly religious. He has a heart to know God; he has a heart to love holiness, and I may ask yourself the question – What do you know about this delight in the law of the Lord? What do you know about finding in the Word of God more consolation and more happiness and more joy than ever you found in anything in this world? Did the Word of God become to you the “Word of Life?” But some of God’s people may say: – “Well, the Scriptures are often very empty to me, and I cannot say that my delight is in the law of the Lord, as the Psalmist puts it, “day and night.” You may say: – “It is true about stony-ground hearers that they rejoice for a while, and who knows but I may be one of them? “The Psalmist, however, takes away the foundation from the stony-ground hearers when he says: – “His delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.” To “meditate day and night” means simply this that they continue to meditate in the law of the Lord, even in spite of sin and Satan. You see sin claims our thoughts as well as our actions, and God’s people will be carried away in their thoughts very often by sin. They are often led into captivity in their minds. Sin robs them of this delight; robs them of this sweet meditation. Sin wants them to delight in itself, wants them to have their meditation on itself. Oh! how miserable sin makes God’s people! When they consider how much of their life is spent in the grasp of the carnal mind, and how little of their life is spent in delight and meditation in His law, they are ready to conclude that the character of the righteous does not belong to them, but at the same time it is true of God’s people that their mind is continually biassed towards the Word of God. They know this for a fact that, if they are to have any enjoyment in this world, if they are to have any comfort in this vale of tears, it must come through the Word of God.

(2) In the second place the Psalmist draws our attention here to the *state* of the godly; and how does he describe the state of the godly? Well, he describes the state of the godly by a comparison with something in nature, and he takes here a tree – “a tree that is planted by the rivers of water”. And you will notice that when he makes mention of a tree he does not say any kind of tree, but he makes mention of a tree that is *planted* by “the rivers of water.” God Himself hath planted His people in His own vineyard in the world, and this vineyard is watered by a river “whose streams make glad the city of our God.” And what are the rivers of water by which this tree is planted? Well, there is the river of the pardon of sin, as we sang in the thirty-second Psalm

“O blessed is the man to whom
Is freely pardoned
All the transgression he hath done;
Whose sin is covered.”

The stream of pardon of sin flows by the roots of this tree. And another stream that flows by this tree is the stream of grace – the grace of God! “By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.” We might say also that the streams here are just everything that God has done for His Church in connection with her salvation; that all the provision of His grace is, as it were, streams which continually keep this tree living, for we

have here this tree said to be “bringing forth fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.”

You know yourselves that in the winter trees lose their leaves; and is it true about God’s people that they are in such a state as that they are always green? Oh, no! God’s people have their winter as well as their spring and their summer. You also know that there is a great difference between a tree that is withered and a tree that is leafless in the winter. You have seen trees which were altogether withered, and they were easily distinguished from those which were not withered, and you have also seen trees which were leafless in the winter, and when the spring-time came those trees broke out in leaves as if they had never seen a winter. That is what is meant here when he says: “His leaf shall not wither.” It does not mean at all that they have not got their winter at times. You remember what Isaiah said: “We all do fade as a leaf.” That meant that, as far as the feelings of God’s people were concerned, they were just like trees in winter – without a leaf at all; but when “the time of the singing of birds is come,” then the leaves will appear as if there never had come a winter, and they will be thinking then that they really have marks of grace.

The Psalmist says here also that this tree “shall bring forth his fruit in his season.” Now, God’s people have their seasons. They have their seasons of joy and their seasons of sorrow. They have their seasons of prosperity and their seasons of adversity, and they bring forth fruit in these seasons. When they are troubled and tried, their faith appears and brings forth fruit which they may not, however, be seeing, but God sees it. You remember that, when Abraham was tried, he brought forth the fruit of great faith, and he was recommended for the fruit that he bore. You remember Job also when he was afflicted, and how the great patience that he exercised is spoken of as “the patience of Job,” as if there never was any patience like this. And so right down through the Scriptures you see God’s people in different circumstances, bearing fruit in all their seasons. You see them in their spring, in their winter, in their summer, and in their harvest. You see them in their youth, in their manhood, and in their old age; and they bring forth fruit in their season.

(3) Now, in the third place the Psalmist describes the *end* of the godly. Remember, friends, there is an end before you and before me. And what is the end of the godly? The end of the godly is this: “They shall stand in the judgment; they shall form the congregation of the righteous” at last, and in that congregation there will not be found one of the wicked. There is no congregation of the righteous just now but the wicked are to be found along with them, but when the end of all things will have come – when God shall call the world to an account – then there will be an eternal separation made between the righteous and the wicked, and the righteous shall form one congregation then. They shall stand on the right hand at the judgment of the great day, and shall be eternally welcomed into the everlasting happiness that has been prepared for and awaits them. Such, then, is the Psalmist’s description of the righteous man – of the godly man. He brings before us his *character*; he brings before us his *state*; and he brings before us his *end*. Many a one has said, “Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.” And likely every one here would like to die the death of the righteous. Well, lay this to heart: you will never die the death of the righteous unless you live the life of the righteous. The two things are inseparable. The end will correspond with the life. “As the tree falleth, so shall it lie.” And if the tree has not been like this tree – “planted by the rivers of water” – then the fall into eternity will be a terrible one indeed.

II. – Let us turn our attention now to the other man that is brought before us in this Psalm, or the other class or the other company – even the ungodly. And what does the Psalmist say about the ungodly man? The Psalmist speaks also about the ungodly

(1) as to his *character*;

(2) as to his *state*; and

(3) as to his *end*.

(1) Let us, first, then consider the *character* of the ungodly. You notice here that there are degrees in a life of sin – that he speaks about *walking*; that he speaks about *standing*; and that he speaks about *sitting*. Some men begin to walk in a course of sin in their youth, and then they begin to stand in the way of sinners, and at last they sit down in the seat of the scornful; and it is a terrible thing to be sitting in the seat of the scornful. I cannot bring this matter before you better than by a practical illustration. There is such a class in the world as drunkards. Well, the drunkard is not a drunkard to begin with. The drunkard becomes a drunkard by degrees. The drunkard begins his career by listening to and walking according to the counsel of his companions. Many a young man begins a course of sin by just walking first of all in the counsel of his ungodly companions. When they say to him, like this, “There is no harm in taking a little whisky now and again,” the young man might be ashamed perhaps to refuse, and perhaps ashamed also to begin to take strong drink; but he does not walk very long in the counsel of his associates until you see him standing in their ways. You will soon see him drunk on the street, and there is not a word about shame now. Perhaps, to begin with, he was ashamed to be seen going into the public-house – he would sneak in; but he has cast his shame aside, and now he will stand at the public-house door and enter it quite boldly, glorying rather in his shame. But, again, the matter does not end there, for the aim of sin, friends, is to ruin the creature – body and soul. And when the drunkard has begun to stand in the way of sinners – when he stands boldly up for strong drink – he will very soon “sit down in the seat of the scornful.” He will ridicule religion altogether, and he will go headlong on in the ways of sinners, as if there was nothing now to be done but “to eat, drink, and be merry.” We might take another illustration to bring out the significance of this walking and standing and sitting. If you saw a man going through a miry place, and if you saw him walking through it, you would say – “There is hope that the man will come out of it when he is only walking through it;” but, if you saw the man standing in the miry place, you would say – “What does the man mean that he stands in such a place as that?” but, if you saw the man sitting down in it, you would say – “This is a terrible case indeed. A man sitting down in the mire!” This is the way, friends, sinners begin courses of sin which may not appear, and which are not so terrible to begin with, as that to which such courses lead.

This is then the character of the wicked. They “walk in the counsel of the ungodly,” they “stand in the way of sinners,” they “sit in the seat of the scornful,” and these three conditions are terrible conditions, and any one of them is sufficient to ruin you for ever. In other words, if you are walking in the counsel of the ungodly, although you are not standing in the way of sinners, walking in the counsel of the ungodly will bring you to hell; and if you are standing in the way of sinners, and not altogether ridiculing piety and godliness, yet your standing in the way of sinners, if you do not repent of it, will bring you lower than the grave. If, on the other hand, it is true about you that you are sitting in the scorner’s chair, and that you laugh at everything that belongs to God and the everlasting welfare of your own soul, then mark this, that there is only a step between you and going down into everlasting woe. You remember what was true about Lot’s sons-in-law – “He was to them as one that mocked,” and that is what is true concerning those who are sitting in the seat of the scornful. Everyone who speaks to them seriously is just “as one that mocked,” but the fire and brimstone from heaven soon put an end to the indifference of Lot’s sons-in-law. Now, how is it with yourself? What is your character? Are you going along with the ungodly and taking their counsel? Well, if you are, rest assured of this that the end of these things is death. Or, is it true of you that you are standing in the way of sinners, that your delight is in wickedness? If your delight is in your ungodly ways, then know assuredly that you are in a terrible condition. Or is it true about you that you are just a mocker? Well, if it is so, as I said already, there is nothing between you

and hell but the very breath which you breathe, and, if you slip a mocker into eternity, you will lie down in everlasting sorrow.

(2) Secondly, the Psalmist describes the *state* of the ungodly, and he describes their state also by a figure. And what figure does he use? He uses the chaff, and there is a great difference between chaff and a tree. You see the chaff is the most worthless thing that is to be found on the face of the earth. You remember what John the Baptist said about the chaff – “He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” Why do you think does the Psalmist describe the state of the wicked as being like the chaff? Well, you know yourselves that it requires a high wind to have any effect upon a tree, but very little wind will carry the chaff away. There is a storm coming, friends, which will try our standing, and, if we are not like the tree planted “by the rivers of water,” we shall be carried away like the chaff before the wind. That, then, is what is meant here when the Psalmist compares the state of the ungodly to the chaff. They are in such a state as this that, if a breath of the wrath of God will blow upon them, they shall be carried away into outer darkness. There is nothing at all about which the farmer is so indifferent as he is about the chaff. The husbandman was not indifferent about the tree, although it was not bearing fruit. He said – “Let it alone this year also until I dig about it,” but there is no thought taken about the chaff at all. It is a thing that is very easily got rid of, and the farmer has no thought whatever about sustaining any loss when the wind carries away the chaff. Ungodly man and woman, remember this, that God will not consider that He sustains loss in sending you away into hell, if you persist in following a course of sin. Remember that, and remember this also, that your present condition is just like the chaff – you are liable at any moment to be driven away by the wrath of God. You would think that the farmer would be willing to get rid of the chaff at once. Why does he keep it in his barn? Because it is mixed with the wheat. That is the reason, but the day will come when it shall be eternally separated from the wheat. “He will gather his wheat into his garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

(3) Let us now, in the third place, consider briefly the *end* of the wicked. What does the Psalmist say here about their end? He says – “The ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.” They may now be side by side with the righteous, they may be associated with them in such a way that they may be counted by their fellowmen as righteous, but the day will come when the wicked will be calling on the mountains and on the rocks to fall upon them and cover them from the face of Him who shall sit on the great white throne, because they shall not be able to stand before Him. God will separate the wheat from the chaff, and He will send the wicked away everlastingly into outer darkness, as we have it brought before us in the 25th chapter of Matthew, where Christ speaks about the great day of judgment. He says there that the wicked will be on the left hand, separated from the righteous, and He will say to them on the left hand – “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.” This is then the awful end of the wicked.

Well, how should we be disposed towards these things? How should these things affect us? We have here the two classes brought before us, and their different characters, their different states, and their different ends, and we must belong to either class. We must have the character of the godly or the character of the ungodly; we must be in the state of the godly or in the state of the ungodly. And if we are like the tree “planted by the rivers of water,” then let us rest assured of this, that our end will be a happy one indeed; but, on the other hand, if we are like the chaff – if we are the servants of sin – if we are like a dog which never did a good turn for his master, but, on the contrary, snarled and barked at him continually – then let us lay this to heart, that the Great Master will soon get rid of us. You would think that the master who would keep an animal that would be of no service to him at all would be a foolish master. God will not be foolish. He will bear

long with sinners, but He will not bear for ever with them. He will get rid of those who are His enemies, and who delight to be alienated from Him, and who have not a thought about His claims upon them.

The Psalmist closes this Psalm by saying, “The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous; but the way of the ungodly shall perish.” Now, what does he mean here by saying, “The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous”? He means by it that the Lord knows and delights in the way in which the righteous walk. You remember the Church said of old, “My way is hid from the Lord.” Now, her way was not hid from the Lord, for “the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous.” He knoweth their way when their way is through troubles and trials, and God will see to it that, whatever will befall them in the world, He will bring them at last to be with Himself. Yea, He says that all things shall work together for good to them who are His people.

It is said here, on the other hand, “that the way of the ungodly shall perish.” And what does that mean? It means that the ungodly shall not find satisfaction in their ungodliness in another world, for their very way shall perish. There will be no strong drink to satisfy the drunkard in eternity, for “his way shall perish.” No satisfaction there for the unclean; no satisfaction there for those who spend their time and their talents and their substance in the sinful pleasures of this world.

Oh, then, what manner of creatures ought we to be! Do you think it is wise on your part to say that you will go on a little while longer in your wickedness? Do you think it is wise for you to say you will turn some day? Remember this, that the longer you go on in a course of sin, the more entangled you become; the more impossible, humanly speaking, you make it ever for yourself to turn again to God. God says in His word – “Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation,” and He counsels us in this Psalm to make choice of Himself as the way to blessedness, and He warns us, on the other hand, what the end of a course of sin will be. Do not then contemn His counsel and His warning, but turn now to God in Christ, who is “reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.” “Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” All manner of sin is forgiven freely through the efficacy of the blood of Christ. God invites you to come unto Himself, and He will not cast you out now on account of your sins, but if you enter eternity and meet Him there clothed in the guilt and corruption of your sins, He will cast you out for ever into the place where He hath forgotten to be gracious. “He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.” May God bless our meditation on His word!

[April 1913]

