

# Outlines of Sermons.

By the late REV. JOHN SINCLAIR, Bruan Caithness,  
Preached on 21st July, 1839.

“Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” – John 3:3.

Last Sabbath we mentioned four things in these words. –

- I. – The necessity of the new birth.
- II. – The nature of the new birth.
- III. – The marks of the new birth.
- IV. – The safety of those who have it, and the contrary.

I. – The necessity. We noticed that it was necessary.

1. Because “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.” The very body, because it is sinful flesh, needs the new birth. Also the flesh, that is, the old nature, cannot go to heaven. Do you think it is easy to go there? If we knew ourselves we would fear we would never go.

2. Because by nature we are the children of the devil. Not by creation, but by sin. We destroyed God’s workmanship. What we did was worse than if we had destroyed all the mansions of heaven; we laid the image of God under Satan’s feet to trample on. The understanding has become dark and wicked; the will, opposed to law and gospel; the conscience, seared and defiled; the memory, forgetting just what it ought to remember; the affections, all on the world and sin; the desires, all after other things such as “corn and wine,” not after God’s countenance; the imagination, full of smoke in the Lord’s nostrils.

3. Because the heart is bent on these evil ways. “The carnal mind is enmity against God, and is not subject to his law, neither indeed can be.” It must be destroyed; it cannot be renewed.

4. Because it is in captivity to Satan.

5. Because by nature we are children, not of heaven but of hell. “Children of wrath.” This is so

(1) by law and justice according to the covenant of works, unless brought back to God.

(2) By fitness; fuel for hell.

(3) By consent of holy Adam according to the terms of the covenant, and by evil consent on the part of sinners now. When a way of escape is revealed sinners will not take it. “We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement.”

II. – The nature of the new birth. It implies a change in all the faculties of the soul. Let us notice two things.

First, the part each Person of the Godhead has in effecting this change, and secondly, what is actually done upon the soul.

First: the part of each Person.

1. The Father, “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights.” “Of his own will begat he us.” The Father has to do with sinners; and so find they who are born again. It is the will of God that sinners be born again. It is hidden from us who they are. This is no discouragement. For the revealed will invites us to come. The Lord is “not willing that any should perish.” Those who have the new birth have no difference by nature. His will is the cause, not their worth. They are therefore humble. The

highest in heaven of the newborn are more lowly than those deepest in hell. Those who have not the new birth ought to apply for it. Cry, "Draw me," "Create in me a clean heart." You will never know whether you are among the elect until you come. There were never any disappointed who came. "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." Come to get the new birth. If there is a mark of reprobation, it is on those not coming. Hasten, and you shall find. The Father put the elect in the book of life and gave them to the Son.

2. The Son. "He is the first born among many brethren" Romans 8:29. If He had not become flesh these would never have been born again.

(1) He purchased their new birth, not at the hands of love, but of justice. Hence it is said they are "begotten by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." He had to become flesh to take the sin and guilt of their old nature. He was "made under the law." Not a sin of His people but He suffered for; the Father laid on Him the iniquities of them all. Every drop of His precious blood atoned for every sin of theirs. They have "redemption through his blood." "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." Every new birth was a painful birth to Him. Hence He shall see of "the travail of his soul." He has "joy when a man is born into the world."

(2) He opened the way for the coming of the Holy Ghost. Not that He purchased the Holy Ghost, or His love, but He satisfied justice. The Spirit could not renew until the old nature was atoned for. Christ was burnt up for the old nature that a new heart might be given. Hence the Holy Ghost is given Him without measure, and every drop of the Holy Ghost that is given to a sinner comes through Him. Justice having come entirely upon their side, Christ got this oil of gladness above His fellows so as to be able to renew as many as He will. "For as the Father has life in himself so he hath given to the Son to have life in himself" that He may quicken as many as He will.

(3) He makes intercession. "Ask of me and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance." "Father, I will." His will and the Father's are one. He always does what pleases the Father, yet as the representative of sinners He intimates His will to the Father who grants all that His honour by Christ requires. Christ's blood is said to speak. When this blood makes intercession all existence cannot stop its voice. Christ's expressing His will also intimates His right and equality with the Father. He is a righteous advocate, and having fully satisfied justice claims the new birth and deliverance from the power of Satan on behalf of His people. When His blood speaks the work is done.

(4) He sends the word. This is "the rod of great power out of Zion." Sinners are born not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, with the power and demonstration of the Spirit. Oh, it is a day of joy in heaven when a sinner is to be called. The Father hearing the Son, the Son interceding on the merits of His blood, the Spirit coming down as at Pentecost, the word shaking hell, the angels rejoicing, the strong man bound never to be loosed to dominion over the soul again, an heir born to heaven, a baptismal feast!

(5) The direction is to conform to the image of the Son. As the Holy Ghost came upon Mary, so He forms Christ in the soul. All the faculties are renewed in the image of Christ. "If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his." All sin begins to be mortified. "All things are become new." A deadly wound is given to every sin. The soul is conformed to Christ's death. The person knows there must be shedding of blood, and dies with Christ. The soul is also conformed to His resurrection. It rises from the grave of spiritual death on Christ's right. His people enter the kingdom now on His right, and become fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God. They enter heaven on His right, being joint-heirs with Christ. They are no thieves or robbers, but justice goes before them.

3. The Holy Ghost is the agent. They are "born of the Spirit." The new birth has the sanction and work of the Father and the Son, but the Holy Ghost is the immediate agent.

(1) He acts by commission from the Father. “The Spirit of truth whom the Father will send in my name.” He does not speak of Himself, but what He hears. He has the sanction of heaven’s court.

(2) He acts in Christ’s name. The Holy Ghost is “shed abundantly through Jesus Christ.” There is no hindrance to the Spirit, Christ having opened the way by His satisfaction to justice.

(3) Yet the Spirit comes in sovereign power. He is called Jehovah, and though He holds His commission from the Father and the Son, yet He does not need any assistance. Sinners may do and actually do what they can to resist him, as a child opposes a giant, but He brought down Manasseh, Mary Magdalene, Paul, and the 3000. He is almighty. He can cast out the devil. He breaks the devil’s power to hold in chains. The Spirit has power over the heart. He can take away the stony heart. He has power over all the means of grace. He has power over the ministers of the gospel. The Spirit moves them to the very word. He led Peter to the 110th Psalm in the second of Acts. He knows the case, and suits the word to it; if not, there is no conversion. He has power over the word. They preached the gospel with the power of the Holy Ghost. He makes it a rod of great power, a fire and a hammer, a sharp sword. Hence though the hearers formerly sat unconcerned, now they are awakened and alarmed. The three thousand heard many a sermon before this time, likely many from Christ Himself. We may speak until death, but unless the Spirit come nothing will be done. He has power over afflictions. Hence we read of the Spirit of burning and of refining by the furnace, but the furnace cannot purify but by sanctification, and that by the Spirit.

Secondly: What is done by the Spirit on the soul. Those who enter the kingdom have a work done upon them as well as for them, and this work is a change upon all the faculties.

1. The first faculty is the understanding. It is turned from darkness to light. We said the understanding was dark, ignorant of self and of God. Now, the first light is from Mount Sinai, a very fiery light. It shows that the creature is a brutish sinner. This is sudden in some and gradual in others, but does not cease until it convinces of three things.

(1) That the sinner is completely ruined. “I died.” Less will not do, because the sinner is in the covenant of works, and must be shown he is there. This may begin with some particular sin, but soon the sinner becomes all sinful. He never believed this before. He may have given some assent to the truth, but no belief. This conviction has gone deeper in some than in others, such as in the publican and in President Edwards, but in all it came to this, “In me dwelleth no good thing.”

(2) That God is a holy God. Not altogether such as oneself; just in condemning. “Thou art clear when thou judgest.” Formerly the sinner thought that it would be hard in God to condemn him, but now he thinks it hard for God to justify him. The righteousness of Christ being out of sight, the poor sinner thinks it impossible for God to save him. It is not enough now to say, “God is merciful.”

(3) That the sinner is entirely helpless. What shall we do to be saved? The sinner comes with his righteousness as filthy rags. Sometimes he thinks God cannot deliver – “If thou canst do anything” – but oftener that He will not – “If thou wilt.” Now, remark where this enlightening is saving, it leaves the conviction of ignorance in the understanding ever after. “I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man.”

2. The conscience is renewed. It was seared before, but is now alive. A flash of the law may cause Pharaoh to say “I have sinned.” The devils believe and tremble, but the truly awakened conscience, though it may slumber a little, arises again and finds no rest till it come to the blood of Jesus. The conviction of sin may go very deep, and the sinner may see his sin greater than to be forgiven, and yet rest short of the right foundation; but it is not so when the work is saving; the conscience will not rest until the soul obtains an interest in Christ. Thus it is renewed. The renewed conscience shows sin against God. “Against thee, thee only.” The

sight of mercy or of pardon will only aggravate the pain of the stung conscience. It will not allow new sin wilfully. "The seed of God abideth in him, and he cannot sin." The incorruptible seed of the word is hid in the heart. The renewed conscience may be defiled through ignorance, temper, or weakness, but then the soul mourns.

3. Here there is another ray of light let in on the understanding, not from Mount Sinai, not from the law, but from Mount Zion, from the Sun of righteousness. "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." The word is just suited to their case. They are taught that none else can save. To Him alone they are made to look, away from all others. "I said, Thou art my portion alone." Look on all other hands, and refuge fails. Whether they get Christ or not, they are convinced there is no other Saviour. They are made to see him sufficient, if they only could get Him. "He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by him."

4. The will is renewed. All other steps are nothing until the will be overcome. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." Notice here "thy people." These are all given to Christ by the Father. It is the elect who shall be willing. They *shall* be willing. Not they may, but they shall. This "shall" will bring them. A day of power is needed. It requires omnipotent power to make sinners willing. It is generally in youth that the day of power comes – "Thou hast the dew of thy youth." "They that seek me early shall find me." Hasten, young people.

(1) They are made willing to leave *all* sin. "I hate every false way." This is not easy. Much self-examination is here needed.

(2) They are made willing to leave the sinful company and pleasures of the world. "Come out from among them, and be ye separate."

(3) They are made willing to leave all self-righteousness. They will esteem it filthy rags and dung. The Lord will write abomination on all duties which come between the soul and Himself.

(4) They are made willing to leave all relations who come into competition with Him. Father, mother, wife, child, lands, life. Not of course from natural hatred – then it would be no sacrifice – but notwithstanding attachment. They are made willing to reprove what is contrary to God's will. "Asa removed Maacah his mother from being queen because she had made an idol in a grove" 1 Kings 15:13. David would worship the Lord, though it displeased his wife Michal.

(5) They are willing to take Christ as a prophet. "Teach me, teach me. What shall I do?" Their thirst is for His teaching by the Spirit.

(6) They are willing to take Christ as a priest. Their heart is bent upon acceptance through His sacrifice.

(7) They are willing to take Him as a king. "What have I to do any more with idols?" They seek sanctification as well as justification. They seek it more. David in the 51st Psalm has two cries after sanctification for one after justification. Many are going to eternity without any concern about these things. Hell within them is hiding hell without from their eyes as they approach death.

5. The affections are renewed. "Set your affections on things above where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God," The affections are raised. They are not lessened to temporal relations; nay, more, they are increased. The relative commands are as binding as ever. But they are regulated by two things.

(1) Temporal comforts are seen as undeserved mercies. They are received only through Christ and with Him.

(2) If they come into competition with Christ they are forsaken for His sake. Christ is precious to believers; in His person as God-man; in His offices, not merely for their

advantage, but for His own sake; in His people, they who are begotten of Him; in His word, "O how love I thy law," and in His day, they call it a delight. All these have rivals in their affections, yet they prevail and grow. We cannot lower the standard of the word.

6. The soul's desires are renewed. They are now after God. "The desire of our soul is toward thee." Put the person in what circumstances you will, and he will not be long at rest without God. He has desires after God's presence, and after tokens of the unction of the Spirit. Moses was not satisfied in the court of Egypt.

7. The memory is renewed. They remember the things they used to forget. "My sin I ever see." Sin itself now keeps them mindful of many things. So does the devil who walks about as a roaring lion. Their sense of need keeps them mindful. They remember the ordinances and means of grace. They remember the Lord and His goodness.

8. The imagination. There is now a well of water in the soul constantly running, showing the mud and cleansing it out.

The whole soul is renewed in part. All things are made new, and yet only in part; but the work is carried on till the day of redemption. The carnal mind is nailed to the Cross, and the enemy's power is broken. Believers are taken out of the covenant of works, and so cease to be children of wrath. They are now "light in the Lord;" they have a pure conscience; they say "Thy will be done;" their affections are above; their desires are after God; and their memory and imagination are being sanctified. They are being renewed day by day. They think themselves to be getting worse, and are thus kept mourning and wrestling.

### *Application.*

Whose image and superscription hath your soul? God's or the devil's. Believers are only complete in Christ. Those who think themselves good by nature, and are clean in their own eyes, are rejected. Those saying "I am black" and crying "Wash thou me" are accepted. Those who have lien among the pots shall have their wings covered with silver and gold. They are Christ's ornaments. If others get their morality plucked off it will leave nothing but enemies. "Create in me a clean heart" should be the prayer of all. May He bless the word, and to His name we desire to give praise. Amen.

[January 1901]

*The above is continued overleaf:*

## Outlines of Sermons.

By the late REV. JOHN SINCLAIR, Bruan Caithness,  
Preached on 4th August, 1839.

“Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” – John 3:3.

We mentioned four points: –

- I. – The necessity of the new birth.
- II. – The nature of it.
- III. – The marks of it.
- IV. – The safety of it.

III. – We intend, if the Lord will, to state some Scripture marks of being born again. Scripture marks, for these alone will stand. “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” When heaven and earth pass away, not one jot or tittle will pass from the Word. They whom the Word looses now, shall be loosed then, and whom it binds now, shall be bound then. Had we knowledge of the heart, there is here what will decide every case as clearly as at the day of judgment. They shall be “judged by the law.” The Lord will not reject one of His own words then. Oh, if we would search and try our hearts by these words now!

1. The first mark we give is – they do not commit sin. “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God” 1 John 3:9. See also the tenth verse, and the fifth chapter and the eighteenth verse. “We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not” – a sin unto death – “but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.”

(1) Those born again cannot sin *habitually*. They cannot make sin their trade, as the word means. Like David under temptation, they may sin nine months and twenty days – for a long time – but though thus in blindness, Nathan shall be sent, and perhaps the pestilence after him, and they shall be told, “Thou art the man.” Others may be permitted to go on till their iniquities be full as the Amorites’, but these get the word, and if that is not enough, the rod. And the rod will be a teaching rod. “Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest and teachest thy law.” Ask then: First, Are you allowed to go without reproof from word or rod? Second, Have word and rod, as a holy hammer, broken a sin in the soul? Third, Have you been led to apply to the fountain opened for sin? And fourth, Though temptation return, is the word a holy watch, “hid in the heart,” that you may not sin against Him?

(2) Those born again do not sin *wilfully*. As they have sin in them, and yet do not sin habitually, so though they have a will, the old will, to sin, yet they have a new will against it Romans 7:14, etc. “For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not, but what I hate, that do I.” See also following verses. Here is a commentary on these words, “doth not commit sin.”

(1) This is principally sin in the heart. “If I regard iniquity in my heart.” There is a new heart given, warring against the old heart.

(2) This sin may affect the members of the body. Hence, “I made a covenant with my eyes.” The new nature prompts to the use of means. “Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity.” It prompts to put on prayer. So the Psalmist says, “Set a watch before my mouth.” “I put a bridle on my lips when the wicked were before me.” “I stayed my foot from every evil way.” “Oh, that my footsteps were ordered aright in thy word!”

(3) Sin is a burden to them when it is raging. “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” “My soul is weary because of murderers.”

(4) It is through Christ they hope for victory in the end. “I thank God through Jesus Christ, our Lord.” As they despair of justification but through Him, so also they despair of sanctification but through Him. Many are not so exercised. Sin may be laid asleep; it cannot

be crucified but by Him. Ask then: First, Is there a war with sin in the heart? “Create in me a clean heart.” The new-born soul is against sin in the heart. You may cut the heart of a dead man to pieces and he will not feel it; but give a sickening draught to a living man, and he feels it. There is a difference between a dead and a living child. Second, To what does the war lead? Is it to prayer for victory? Are the cries of the new nature going up against the old nature, as in David? Third, Is prayer followed by the use of means? Is there the avoiding of occasions, companies, plans, times, incitements to sin? Is there also the employing of the preventatives prescribed in the Word, even outward means, as on the eyes, ears, and feet? Fourth, Is sin accompanied with groans? “Oh, wretched man!” These are, when genuine, true Scripture signs of a new nature. The apostle gives the reason, “his seed remaineth in him.” This may refer (1) to the divine nature of which he is made partaker. The Spirit wars against the flesh. The Holy Ghost is in every new-born soul. It is by the Spirit he is born, and He never leaves the soul fully and finally. “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” If sinners want the Spirit we may deny them to be His. He is promised to abide for ever. And as God cannot bear sin, so they cannot bear it in whom the Spirit abides. Or (2) this may refer to “the incorruptible seed of the word.” “Thy word have I hid in my heart.” The word leaves a stamp when it comes, and is written in the heart. And the word returns, as Nathan to David, to wound sin by threatenings, leaving an effect on the heart, and loosening sin from the conscience and the affections; and to give a new life to grace through the promises. And so “the wicked one toucheth him not,” that is, has not dominion over him.

2. A second mark is – they overcome the world. “Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world” 1 John 5:4. The world, as it is God’s creature, is not an enemy to grace; but there is in fallen man a principle which perverts every created thing to a wrong purpose. We hear people crying, “O, the weary world!” but they little mourn what is in us leading to the abuse of the world. But there are wicked men in the world, whose God is Satan, and there are wicked dispositions in us which have to be overcome.

(1) We observe they overcome the *doctrine* of the world. “Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them” 1 John 4:4. There are as many false prophets in the world as there are unrenewed men and women, and they teach that if men get everything right in the world, there is no fear for the future. Now, the new nature discards every doctrine of the world.

(2) They overcome the *company* of the world. “Come out from among them, and be ye separate.” As sure as they are born again, and are made “sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty,” so sure there is a separation from the world. The reason is, they find two things as consequences of the world’s company: God, in His name, day, cause, and people, is dishonoured, and their own minds are injured. Joseph was in Pharaoh’s court, and Peter in the High Priest’s hall. This was not sin on the part of either; but it would be sin to continue in these places any longer than duty called. Moses soon fled from the court of Egypt, and it is written of the disciples that “they went to their own company.”

(3) They overcome the *pleasures* of the world. These are made an intolerable burden instead of a pleasure, when they are sinful. Any forbidden pleasure is sinful. And the more attached one was to such a pleasure before the new birth, the more hatred to it one cherishes now. And at this the world wonders! Solomon tried the whole of the world’s pleasures, and left “Vanity and vexation of spirit” inscribed on all Ecclesiastes 2. They are not only unsatisfying, but are vexation of spirit to those born again.

(4) They overcome the *riches* of the world. Covetousness and greed of hoarding up, and not putting to use for God or men, are things they overcome. “Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.” Gold and silver are cankered when kept back by fraud or any other sinful cause. All say that one penny wrongfully handled may destroy the soul.

(5) They overcome the *fashions* of the world. “Be not conformed to this world.” There were extraordinary occasions. Some prophets, such as John the Baptist and others, observed singularity of habit. But the Scripture rule in general is to go according to custom, as far as it may be useful and not offensive to good taste. But when persons follow fashion for fashion’s sake, I fear they will have hard work entering the Kingdom.

(6) They overcome the *fear* of the world. “We ought to obey God rather than men.” Some are of a slavish spirit, and are influenced very far by men.

(7) They overcome the *allurements* of the world. “For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.” Even lawful things, unless got on the authority of the Word, will likely be a snare, and will be felt to be such in the soul.

Ask yourselves the following questions. Are the doctrines of the world fit to save you? Are the companies of the world sweet to you? Are the pleasures of the world agreeable? Are its riches reaching your conscience? Are its fashions racking you? Is the fear of the world leading you to sin? Are its allurements overcoming you, or you them?

3. A third mark is – love. “Every one that loveth is born of God” 1 John 4:4. “We know that we have passed from death to life because we love the brethren.” It is repeatedly said “God is love,” and the new birth is marked by that. The very nature of God is love and to love. He was so from eternity, loving the Son and the Spirit, and till sin entered there was no hating in Him. Judgment is His “strange work.” Now, when the soul is renewed, it must partake of that nature, because it receives His nature. Therefore love is given as a mark, and it is a true mark. But observe it is love to what God loves, and hatred to what He hates. It is love after the manner of His love.

(1) They love God Himself. “We love him because he first loved us” verse 19. This has been a trying question to some. “Their souls have been poured out in them.” But while I do not deny but faith can bring such accounts to the soul as can enable them to love Himself, yet I mean to take lower ground. His image is portrayed in many ways which never exceed Himself in beauty or desirableness. He is so incomprehensible in glory that we can have but a little sight of Him. “No man hath seen God at any time.” The only begotten Son hath declared Him.

(2) They love His image in the Son. “He is the express image of his person.” It is said, “If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha.” “Whom having not seen ye love, in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.” It is then a love on the report of faith; and such as none can understand but they who have it. Satan will tempt persons to picture Christ in their imagination, and then to think they love Him, but this is delusion.

(3) “This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments” 1 John 5: 3. Also, “And this is love, that we walk after his commandments” 2 John: 6. “If ye love me, keep my commandments” John 15:10. “If ye keep my commandments ye shall abide in my love.” A note: “Those who love this law have been *slain* by the law.” Until the commandment comes; until the law slay the old enmity and transform the soul into the image of God; there is no love to His commandments. The person begins to love the law when it is written on the heart.  
[March 1901]

(Continues in vol 6 p. 303.)



## Notes of Sermon

By the late REV. PROFESSOR JOHN DUNCAN, LL.D.

Preached in the Grange Free Church, Edinburgh, on Saturday  
of the Communion, 27th. April, 1867.

[This is said to be Dr. Duncan's last sermon in Edinburgh. He died on 26th February, 1870. – ED.]

“We have thought of thy loving-kindness, O God, in the midst of thy temple.” – Psalm 48:9.

The children of men, after the deluge, had corrupted themselves from the worship and obedience of the true God, and God, having left the nations to walk in the way of their own hearts, chose Israel as His peculiar treasure. Having called Abraham and made a covenant with him, and confirmed the same by oath to Isaac and Jacob, and having brought out His people with a high hand and stretched-out arm from the land of Egypt, from the home of slaves, He brought them to Mount Sinai, and made a covenant with them – that they, if they would, hearing, hear His voice, should be to Him a peculiar people above all nations. “Ye shall be unto me a peculiar nation and a kingdom of priests.” So He led His people, whom He had redeemed, and brought them into the land which He had promised to their fathers to give them, Jehovah’s own land. He planted them there, and watched over them, and in His own time raised up His servant David to be king over them. The people were Jehovah’s people, and the land was Jehovah’s land, and in it He chose Jerusalem, the place where He placed His name, the Mount Sion, on which was the temple of God, and to which the tribes of God went up. Other nations might boast of their learning, of their wealth; Israel’s boast was in its God. “Their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being witnesses.” “For what nation is there so great who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for? And what nation is there so great that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law which I set before you this day?” “Thy God thy glory!”

This psalm was probably one of those that were sung by Israel when they came up three times a year to appear before God; at least it was very well adapted for such occasions. And we have here in the text Israel’s employment; “We have thought of thy loving-kindness, O God, in the midst of thy temple.” Or literally, “We have *compared* thy loving-kindness, O God, in the midst of thy temple.” With reference, I judge, to the previous verse, “As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the Lord of hosts – we have compared thy loving-kindness, O God, within thy temple.” “We put together what we had heard with what we have seen. We had heard with our ears; our fathers had told us what Thou didst in their days in the old time, in the days of old. And as we had heard, so have we seen. Our God has not left us. As He did of old, so is He doing still, and will continue still to do; His continued upholding of our hearts amid all our trials and difficulties and amid all our sins, being the pledge of what He will do still in remembrance of His holy covenant.” “We have thought of thy loving-kindness, O God, in the midst of thy temple.”

We may think for a little on the subject of Israel’s meditation. A subject for our meditation, and for ours much more amply than it was for theirs, we living in an age when that loving kindness has been far more abundantly shown; “God having reserved some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.”

The subject of the meditation was the loving-kindness of Jehovah. That is an ample subject. We cannot at present even look at it all. Let us, in order to enter into what is meant, look at that bright display of it which is brought by the circumstances immediately under our view, that great and wondrous loving-kindness which we are about to commemorate. The death of the Lord we are about to show forth, and in that death there are many subjects of believing contemplation. Let us look at it in this one; His death is loving-kindness. It is the loving-kindness of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

It is the loving-kindness of Jehovah the Father. “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” In that wondrous verse there are many subjects. It is love to those who did not love: Jehovah’s love is wondrous because it is to those who did not love. And wondrous it is in wisdom, as maintaining the honour of all His perfections and of His violated law, giving His Son to be the propitiation; thus at once loving sinners, the violaters of the law, and yet honouring and maintaining all the interests of that holy, just, and good law, the emblem and expression of His own holy, just, and good nature. We see here, then, justice and equity maintained, but the

main expression – what is presented to us especially – is love. “Herein is love.” Here! as if it were in nothing else. And, indeed, till we have reached, or, rather, have been enabled to reach to the knowledge of this love, we have, so to speak, no idea of what love is. “Herein is love.” A love truly divine, a love such as, were all the love of holy men and holy angels put together, it were nothing in comparison. A love for which we have no measure, unless, indeed, we take as its measure what is as immeasurable, the love wherewith the Father loves His own infinite and equally infinitely amiable Son. “Herein is love,” that God, who so loved His Son, the adequate, and with the Holy Spirit, the only adequate object of His love, and the only sufficient respondent to His love, and that God having such a Son, and so loving this Son, spared not His only begotten Son, but gave Him to the death for us all. “Herein is love.” Wondrous loving-kindness! Wondrous, when we view not only what He gave, but for whom He gave – for us who loved Him not. If we had loved Him, it could not have been said, “Herein is love”; if we had loved God, that never could have been said with adoring wonder and admiration. Not to love God! That is the crime of crimes, and shame of shames. But that the holy Lord God, of purer eyes than to behold iniquity – the pure, the just One, who will not do iniquity – should so love those who loved Him not as to give the Son of His love for them, and for them, not merely to procure some benefits for them, but “to be the propitiation for our sins,” laying iniquity on Him, on His Holy One, pure as Himself, hating sin as Himself; He being willing that the iniquity should be charged on Him, though not as the doer of it, yet as the answerer for it, the substitute and surety; being willing that the whole of this should be laid on His conscience, not, I say, as the doer of it, but as the answerer for it; the Father laying it so close on Him, that closer charge there could not have been, unless He had been charged with being the doer of it; and not sparing His own Son the ignominy of being held and treated as a sinner, and making Him a curse too, the holy and the blessed – for God so to act, What can we say? “Herein is love.” Everything human would seem too small. “This is not the manner of men, O Lord God.” But this is the manner of Jehovah, God Himself. This is loving-kindness; this is the acme, the top, the crown of loving-kindness. Wonderful loving-kindness did God show to the house of Israel, but this above all, to perform the mercy promised to the fathers, to Abraham and his seed for ever.

But it is also the loving-kindness of Jehovah the Son, Himself the true God and the Eternal Life. “Herein is love.” “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” But Christ in giving Himself, as the Father in giving Him, commended His “love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners,” He died for us. Let us think of it now, in the midst of His sanctuary, in His holy temple; in this place where prayer is wont to be made, let us think of it.

He was “in the form of God.” All the perfections of God were His; the very essence or being of God. All the property and possessions of God were His; all the armies of heaven were His. He was in the form of God, and “thought it not robbery to be equal with God,” not too high. He asserted His claims, and yet He stood not on the dignity of these claims; He emptied Himself, and “made Himself of no reputation.” What a stoop! All the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in Him bodily, that is, personally in Him, but He emptied Himself of it; He did not, indeed, divest Himself of the possession, but of the magnificent display of it. He thought it not robbery to be equal with God, yet He did not stand on the display of that glory; He “took upon Him the form of a servant.” Contrast the form of God, that is, the reality of the divine nature, with the form of a servant, that is, the reality of a servile state, and from that height to that depth He came down. And what brought Him from such an elevation to such humility, to such degradation, I may say? Love. The Father, having chosen a people unto life eternal from the ruined family of Adam, a people no better than others, a part of the same clay, had given them to Him, and He loved them. Being, as one in nature, so one in purpose with the Father, He loved what the Father loved; and getting them from the hand of His

Father, who so loved Him, and whom He so loved, He loved them as coming from the Father's hand.

“And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” Was it not stoop enough, being in the form of God, and thinking it was not robbery to be equal with God, to empty Himself and take the form of a servant? Was not that love enough? It would not answer the end, and that end He would answer. “He humbled himself, and became obedient unto the death, even the death of the cross.” And why? Love. Justice had to be answered; but justice could have been answered on the sinners themselves. Justice required satisfaction, but love gave vicarious satisfaction. In that is love. Jesus' love is like the Father's – wondrous: it is not the manner of men. The apostle speaks of it as having height and depth and length and breadth; as a love which all saints know, yet as a love which in all these dimensions surpasses knowledge. All the saints know it; for all divine mysteries must, as the subjects of faith, be also the subjects of knowledge. And so the love of God is at once the subject of knowledge and surpasses the knowledge. Everyone knows that there is luminousness; that luminous power produces the luminousness of that sun which enlightens all our world, but at the brightness of whose noonday splendour no eye can look without being dazzled. Thus there is a true apprehensive knowledge of this love, for unless the mystery were revealed through the understanding, it would do us no good. We have apprehensive knowledge, real so far, and we know this love is wonderful. We know that it surpasses knowledge itself. We know it enough to discern what it is, as far as our need is to know. But as it is *for* man, so it is *of* God; for man who needs to know it, but of God, who cannot be known by creatures as He is. “Who by searching can find out God? Who can find out the Almighty unto perfection?” All saints then know it, and yet it surpasses the knowledge; it surpasses it in all its dimensions.

This love surpasses knowledge in its height. Who knoweth the height of Him who is above the heaven's height? Who knows how high Deity is? Higher than the highest. Yet that is the height of “the love.” It came down, and it is deeper than hell. Who can enter into – apprehensively we may, we must – but comprehensively, who shall enter into the soul of the Lord Jesus in Gethsemane, when the cup was put into His hand and He drank it; or when there was the hiding of His Father's face, and He was made sin and a curse? Who shall know that depth? Blessed be God, our hope is that we shall never, by experience, know it. The experimental knowledge of it, and the knowledge that is comprehensive, is reserved for hell. Earth has not the experimental knowledge of what it is; it surpasses our comprehension. And in the length of this love it passes knowledge. “I have loved thee with an everlasting love,” from eternity to eternity. Now, we apprehend what that is, but no creature comprehends what eternity is. And so also in its breadth it passes knowledge. I don't know precisely what the apostle may have meant by this, but perhaps he meant the great multitude out of all nations and kindreds and peoples and tongues embraced by this love. What a breadth! This is wondrous loving-kindness.

But it is also the loving-kindness of Jehovah the Spirit. Let us think of it in His temple. It is the loving-kindness of that Spirit who spoke by the prophets, who formed in the womb of the blessed virgin the holy body of our Lord, who filled Him with habitual grace, and filled Him with official grace, with fulness of grace and truth, as the holy and spotless Lamb of God from the beginning, and by communication at His baptism, and probably with after degrees of fulness, out of which fulness all His saints have received, and grace for grace. Let us think of the loving-kindness of that Spirit whom Jesus sent from the Father, and whom the Father sent in His name to testify of Him, that Spirit who descended on apostles and on the Church, that Spirit who continues to abide with us till the coming of Christ. That Spirit who, when you were careless and indifferent about God's love or God's anger, awakened you, spoke of sin and wrath, and brought you trembling to the footstool of sovereign mercy, as

guilty, as polluted, and as impotent, as impotent to save yourselves by working, by believing, or by praying, *just lost*, and there at the footstool of sovereignty, shone in your hearts giving the light of the knowledge of the glory of Christ. That love is no less divine. And without it, without the communication of the Holy Ghost, amid all our waywardness and folly and sin, what concern could we have in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, or in the love of God? The ministry of the Spirit is of all truth, but especially is it the testimony of Christ crucified. It is Christ's gospel, of which Christ crucified is the main and central article. We live in this ministration of the Spirit, which is life.

“We have thought of Thy loving-kindness, O Jehovah, in the midst of Thy temple.” And, surely, what else should we think on? What else in His temple could we think on? We might think in His temple of all that concerns Him, of His being, of His plenitude of all perfections, of His sovereign rights as creator, preserver, and governor of His universe, of His legislation, of His judgments, of all that pertains to Him, but of the loving-kindness above all, and as the centre of all. “We have compared Thy loving-kindness”; we have taken it, the past which our fathers told us, and the present, and we have put all together; we have meditated on Thy loving-kindness in Thy temple.

1. This implies diligent attention to know what God has revealed of His wondrous loving-kindness. So did these Israelites. Their fathers had told them in the old time, and they had seen in their own time, and they put these together, and they made their meditation of all His works, and took great pleasure to record them. “That the soul be without knowledge is not good.” That furnishes us with the object with which our mind, heart, and soul should be occupied; without it we have no materials. And we should not content ourselves with some general thoughts on the subject; we should compare, meditate, pass judgment; we should analyse, that is, take out part by part, and put part by part together; and think of all His wondrous works in their connection, that so we may understand the loving-kindness of the Lord. The proverb says: – “The secrets of wisdom are double to what is,” to what is manifested.

2. But our meditation on this should lead to wondering, adoring admiration. Our thoughts at best are very inadequate; yea, and then also when we do think truly, when the thing is traced out under the leading of the Spirit of God, as far as we can trace, when this is reached, it brings us within view of the immensity that lies beyond, and so the meditation issues in adoring wonder. Hence we may well record the wonders of the Lord, the magnalia, the wondrous things of Jehovah. “Who is a God like unto thee?” “This is not the manner of men, O Lord God.” “What can thy servant say?”

3. But our meditation should excite, as adoring admiration, so grateful love. This subject is not only grand and magnificent – divinely grand and sublime, it is the sublime of love, the sublime of benevolence and beneficence. It calls not for thought only, and wonder, even adoring wonder only; it calls also for gratitude. “What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits toward me,” for this loving-kindness? What? Payment proper cannot be made. Yet surely there ought to be gratitude; soul rendered for soul. The soul of the Messiah was given for me, a sinner; death to Him and life to me; He was made a curse, that the blessing of Abraham might come on me; He, the Son of God, loved me, and gave Himself for me. And what can I account but that soul and body – all I am, and have, and can do, is but too little to show gratitude, grateful love? For love, the proverb says, draws forth love. But if any love, what love like this? It is a poor response that a sinful creature can make to such love; it is a feeble spark that burns in the heart of the best; but that response should be the whole power of the soul to love.

4. Our meditation should lead to joy. “Let Mount Zion rejoice, let the daughters of Judah be glad.” O, how this love is fitted to draw out the whole soul of man in the diversity of its affections; it would seem even in their contrariety. “They shall look upon me whom they

have pierced.” “Rejoice in the Lord always.” Yes, here can the beaming smile of ineffable joy mingle with the tear of godly sorrow, and one cause draw out both.

5. Our meditation on God’s constant care of His Church. “Walk about Zion, and go round about her; tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces.” That gives room for faith working hope, hope concerning the Church of God and concerning the individual believer. “For this God is one God for ever and ever; he will be our guide, even unto death.” “For God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” And “if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.”

So I have attempted, very inadequately, to set before you this object of meditation; and those things contained in thinking of God’s loving-kindness in the midst of His temple. And in conclusion I trust that this may, by the blessing of God, be somewhat useful to you in your preparations. According as we are taught in our Catechism concerning the Supper: “It is required of them that would worthily partake of the Lord’s Supper, that they examine themselves of their knowledge to discern the Lord’s body, of their faith to feed upon Him, of their repentance, love, and new obedience, lest coming unworthily” – which even a believer may do, for a believer may be an unworthy communicant – “they eat and drink judgment to themselves.” A noble friend of mine invites me to a festal dinner in commemoration of some event in which both his honour and my welfare were concerned. He invites me with his friends, and I go there; and I go there in my working clothes, unwashed, unkempt, unshaved. Will my friend be pleased? I ought to have prepared myself, but I just came away from my work. Or when I should have been thinking of my friend, I am thinking of the occupation which I have been employed about, and have not myself in proper trim to do honour to my noble friend who has invited me. *There* is a welcome man, but not in a welcome *state*.

Now, on this day of preparation, I don’t take up these things so much as matters of self-examination, as in the hope that you have been so engaged, and that the result of an examination, in which you, as jurors, have sought to do justice to yourselves and the Holy Ghost, judging of your state, whether you were true believers or not, whether you had true repentance or not, true love or not; which lies between the Holy Ghost and you, for it is a solemn issue to attribute to the Holy Ghost what He has not wrought, or because of your sin, to deny Him the credit of His own work, a solemn issue; well, that the result of the examination has been, that you have come to some degree of clearness about this point. Say then that the work of self-examination has to some good issue been completed, this now remains in prospect of the solemnity to-morrow, namely, two things about the graces of the Holy Ghost –

(1) that they, as principles, be strengthened; and

(2) that they, as principles existing, be called into concentrated and lively exercise.

(1) Seek that these graces be strengthened. For I take it for granted that, if the issue of your examination has been that you have said, “Thanks be to God, I have some measure of knowledge to discern the Lord’s body, some faith to feed upon Him, some repentance, love, and new obedience,” you are also blaming yourselves. The issue is between you and the Holy Ghost; but while the Holy Ghost is to be thanked for what He has done in you, you are also blaming yourselves, for these things are duties as well as graces. So little knowledge you have, for which you are to blame, so little faith, so little love, for which you alone are to blame, so little repentance, so little new obedience, for which you alone are to blame. Now, this shows that these graces need to be strengthened. “May grace, mercy, and peace be multiplied unto you.” Seek that they be increased by the daily communication of the Holy Ghost.

(2) Let them be called into exercise. We are to meditate to-night, in order that to-morrow we may be better fitted to meditate, to think of God's loving-kindness in His temple. Well, the soul should be called in, and all its faculties should be concentrated on God and on God's loving-kindness, and on this His central and great loving-kindness, in order that your faith may be in lively exercise on the Son of God, who loved you and gave Himself for you, that you may be looking on Him whom you have pierced and mourning, that you may be in lively exercise of love, "I will love Thee, O Lord, my strength," and that in this duty and all others your loins may be girt up to greater diligence and alacrity in all new obedience.

And now may He, with whom is the preparation of the heart and the answer of the tongue, vouchsafe us all these precious gifts! And may He vouchsafe His own manifested presence, for His institution with promise secures His real presence, when two or three are met together in His name and by His authority. May He vouchsafe His manifested presence, and may the disciples be glad seeing the Lord, and the disciples rejoicingly say, "We have thought of thy loving-kindness, O God, in the midst of thy temple. This God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even unto death."

February 1901

## Brief Notes of a Sermon.

by the late Mr. DONALD MACKAY, student.

[These notes are from the late Mr. Donald Mackay's own manuscript, and have been kindly sent us by his brother, the Rev. John R. Mackay, Inverness, who has revised them for publication. – ED.]

"Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel  
in the midst of thee" – Isaiah 12:6.

- I. Who gives this command?
- II. The people to whom the command was given.
- III. The command itself.
- IV. The reason why the command should be performed.

I. It is of great importance that it should be known by whom the command is given. It is God who gives the command here. There are many reasons for which the command of God ought to be given heed to by man.

- (1) He was created by God.

- (2) He is upheld by God.
- (3) He is responsible to Him as a judge.

II. The people to whom the command was given. "Inhabitants of Zion." Zion is a mountain within the boundaries of the land of promise. It was a fortified place. On this mount was the city of Jerusalem built. This command is given by God to His redeemed people who were in the midst of Israel.

All the inhabitants of the earth may be divided into three classes.

(1) Those who are ashamed to profess Christ before men. We find many, especially among the young, and they would like to be good, but when they join with their companions they rather please them than please God. We find others, and they make a mock at godliness; others make a boast of being without the fear of God. God speaks to these. What does He say to such? He says, "Kiss the Son lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way," that is to say, "Be ye reconciled to God through Christ." He calls the wicked to forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts. He calls for repentance towards God, and faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ. He calls upon you, O sinner, to consider your past life, to consider whether you have given yourself unto God or unto Satan; if you are a master, to consider whether you have been acting as a steward for Christ, or only for your own ends; if a servant, have you been serving Christ in labouring honestly for your master?

(2) Those that in Scripture are called foolish virgins. God speaks to such. He says to the foolish, "Come, buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed."

(3) Those that in Scripture are called wise virgins. Here He speaks to the wise. He wishes the soul to cry out and shout. From these words we may see that the wise were timid and fearful, for though the spirit was willing, the flesh was weak. We find this in Jeremiah, when he says, "I am a child, I cannot speak." We find it also in Moses. The enemy might use many ways to bring them into such fears as these. The enemy has agents in the soul, and he might suggest through them, through unbelief, that there was no God at all, that Jesus of Nazareth was not the Son of God. Then, of course, war would begin in the soul. For Christ had His agents there, and besides, Christ had taken possession of the soul before now, and was crowned King in the soul. Yet Christ does at times leave the soul, as to His sensible presence, and it is at such times that war is hottest.

Unbelief says that there is no God, and brings reasons on which this statement is founded. Unbelief says: "Don't you see that the wicked prosper in the world?" Answer: "I must allow that, but there are many proofs that there is a God. If there was not a God, how could He have a people?" Unbelief: "His people differ nothing from other people." Answer: "I remember when I walked in the light of God, I saw them as members of Christ's body." Unbelief: "But you do not see them so now." Answer: "No, but I cannot forget former experiences; and as for the wicked prospering, I remember when I saw every unregenerate soul on slippery ground. On such occasions I envied a child of God who was so poor as to be on the Parochial Board more than the richest man in the world if he was Christless." Unbelief: "But the Scriptures are not of divine inspiration. You know yourself that you find nothing in the Word of God more than in any other writing." Answer: "I remember when the light of God shone in my soul through the Word of God. The Word was to me at such times as a glass through which I saw darkly the glory of God. And I felt the power of it, conforming my soul to purity and holiness." Unbelief: "Granting you had such experiences in connection with the people of God, and with the Word of God, you have never known Jesus of Nazareth as the Second Person of the Trinity." Answer: "Not apart from the inspired Word; but I remember when the Spirit of God shone on me through portions of the Word. Then the character of Christ was revealed so that I am assured that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ of whom Moses and the prophets spoke."



### III. The command itself. What would He have the soul to cry?

(1) The unregenerate are often found crying aloud, but not in obedience to the command of God. You find many crying aloud in blasphemy; many crying aloud in vanity.

(2) You find that the foolish virgins cried aloud, but not in obedience to the command of God. They were found to cry aloud at the corners of the streets, and in the synagogues. They cried aloud about their own prayers, about their own fastings, their giving of alms, keeping of the Sabbath, morality of life. Now all these things are to be recommended in themselves, but when they become a god to a person they turn to be a curse to him instead of a blessing. They cried aloud concerning all their good works. How loud did they cry? They cried so loud that it reached heaven and grieved God. Now the Lord would have every soul to cry, but not of the soul's foul work; for before God there are no good works with an unregenerate soul. He would have the soul to cry out, "Cause thy light to shine upon me that I may know myself, that I may be brought to realise that I am a sinner before thee." He would have the soul to cry with David, "Wash me and I shall be whiter than the snow" – to cry, "Be thou a guide to me, be thou my strong tower."

(3) But the command is here given not to the foolish, but to the wise. What would He have the wise to tell of, or to cry concerning? He would have them to cry concerning what He did for them; and concerning what He did in them. Doubtless He would have them cry day and night to Himself, for it is in this way that the life of the soul is kept up. He would have the soul to cry for everything that he needs, to cry for his daily food, to cry for the forgiveness of his sins, to cry that he might be clothed in the righteousness of Christ, to cry that he might get manna from heaven.

IV. The last thing to be spoken of is the reason given. The reason is this: "Great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee."

Now this really means – what God had become to the soul. But connected with that is the way by which He became this to the soul. Christ came forth from the bosom of the Father that such a soul as this might be brought to the Father. The wisdom of God found out a way by which He could, to the honour of His justice, bring the soul near to Himself, and this way was, that Christ should take our nature. We may see in Isaac a type of Christ's willingness to obey the Father in the work of redemption. For we do not read that Isaac showed any unwillingness to obey his father's command from the time that they started on their journey to the time that Abraham bound Isaac on the altar. So in the heart of Christ, if we may so speak, there was not the least spark of unwillingness found; no, not even in Gethsemane, nor before the High Priest, nor before Pilate, nor on Calvary. He gave Himself up as a willing sacrifice unto God. It is to be believed that if any one under the law, would give up a sacrifice against his will, it would prove a curse to him instead of a blessing. The way by which He came from heaven, that He might come to the door of your soul, was a way that cost Him much. It was a way by which He had to endure shame, a way by which he had to meet with strong and powerful enemies, and He would not be allowed to go a step further if He did not conquer those enemies. It was the way of Gethsemane and of Calvary; and O, how unbecoming it is on the part of the soul to leave Him to stand at the door!

But to these He has come in a closer relation than one who stands at the door. The door has been opened, and Christ has come in. The door of the understanding has been opened, the door of the will, the door of the affections, yea, the door of the whole soul. He makes a willing people in the day of His power. In the day in which He enters the soul He says to these doors:

"Ye gates, lift up your heads on high;  
Ye doors that last for aye,  
Be lifted up, that so the King  
Of glory enter may."

And it may be said that as Christ enters into the soul, so the soul enters into Christ. This would need to take place in the case of the Apostle before he could say, "We are in him that is true." And how does the soul enter into Christ? It is by faith. A day came on the soul when it stood at the door, but on the outside – a day, or we may call it a night, when nothing was sure to the soul but the wrath of God; but near to such a time as this was the break of day. And when the light of God shone on the soul, the soul knew Christ to be its own way to the Father. Such a light breaks on the soul now and again, in its journey through the wilderness.

[February 1901]

## Notes of a Sermon

By the REV. JOHN MACLEOD, M.A., Kames, Kyles of Bute.

### *The Stones on the High Priest's Breastplate.*

"And the stones shall be with the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names, like the engravings of a signet; every one with his name shall they be, according to the twelve tribes" – Exodus 28:21.

Aaron was a real priest. He was called of God to his office. He was the priest of a typical dispensation, and his priesthood accordingly was typical. It presents points of contrast, however, as well as of resemblance. A type was something necessarily defective. However far it corresponded with its antitype, it was not identical with it. It corresponded so far and no further than this, that in certain points of marked resemblance the antitype was foreshown or foreshadowed in the type. The points of contrast should fall out of view, when we consider the relation of type and antitype, and we should be chary of endeavouring to strain minor resemblances as though they entered deeply into this relation.

Aaron was God's priest in Israel in a shadowy dispensation. In Christ the substance of the shadows has come. Aaron's priesthood had to do with the holy things and standing of the people; it could not, however, deal with sin. It was not an abiding priesthood. From father to son it passed, age after age. But these circumstances belonged to it, because it was but a type. It was but a type, and so imperfection is found cleaving to it; but it was a *type*, and as such it

is full of instruction as relates to Christ the Antitype, in His call, His consecration, and His execution of the office.

Israel was a kingdom of priests, yet once the Aaronic priesthood was instituted none could fulfil priestly functions but those who belonged to the priestly family. In this respect the new dispensation differs from the old, for it knows nothing of a special priesthood apart from that of the high priest, except the common priesthood of the called of God, who are a royal priesthood and a peculiar people. Within the priestly family, however, there was a distinction. There was but one high priest. He differed in rank and he differed in privilege from all the rest. When the annual round of services was consummated on the Day of Atonement, he alone could enter into the holiest; only then could even he enter, and he alone could enter then. That one should be an ordinary priest availed no more than that one should be an ordinary Israelite, to give one a share in the service of atonement and intercession of that day. The annual observances were now crowned; they came to a head, and when they did, the distinction between the high priest and all Israel besides came out clearly. He alone made atonement, and he alone bore the guilt of the holy things of the people, and made intercession for them within the vail. As his position was thus unique and so distinct in Israel, so was his raiment. And the details given us in this chapter are not meaningless when they tell us with such minuteness how the high priest was clothed for glory and for beauty. The other priests had their priestly garments, but the breastplate attached to the ephod they had no right to; it was the high priest's. On the great day that marked out his distinct position in the nation, these garments would be worn. A priestly robe belonged to the other priests, but they had not the ephod. It marked out the high priest, and where it was, *there* was the breastplate, for they were not to be sundered.

There is such a thing as priestly intercession on the part of the children of God. They do not, however, atone either for themselves or for one another; that is exclusively the work of their High Priest. They bear one another's burdens; they pray for one another, but all their burden bearing is in the strength and in the name of their High Priest. All their intercession is for His sake, and is presented and offered, not for their own merits, but for His; it is all presented through Him; it is all presented by Him. Just as in Israel there was priestly activity and service through the year, yet it was all summed up on the Day of Atonement, so is it with the priestly service of God's royal priesthood. They are active in service, but all this service is presented in Christ, and is accepted in Christ, and He represents thus each one. As the ephod with the plate marked out the high priest, so does Christ's sole prerogative of atonement and efficacious intercession mark Him off from the spiritual Israel, whose High Priest He is. The ephod spoke of the distinction and perfection of the high priest's office, and it was inseparable from the function of bearing the names of the people, as a memorial, upon his heart. As surely as the high priest was clothed with the ephod, so surely did he bear the names of Israel on his shoulders and on his bosom. The onyx stones were in the shoulder pieces of the ephod, and the plate was so attached that it was not to be parted from the ephod. These two things belong to the distinct and perfect high priesthood of the Son of God, namely, that He bore His people's burdens on His shoulders, and bears their names upon His heart.

Aaron was Israel's priest, and Christ has an Israel to represent too. His Israel are chosen of God; they are the seed of Abraham and Sarah; they are fore-known and predestinated. They bear in this world a character of their own; one and all of them bear this character, and He represents them all. They only are Israelites who have this character; they only enjoy the shelter of His high priestly intercession; they only can claim Him as their own. They are circumcised in heart, and because of this they worship God in the spirit, they rejoice in Christ Jesus, and they have no confidence in the flesh. These are the spiritual Israel. Christ is their priest; He bore their burden, and He now bears their names before His Father. By their character are the true Israel known, and may they know themselves. Another aspect under

which the Israel Christ represents may be viewed is this: they have been given by the Father, and whether they have all come or not, it is sure that none given shall be finally wanting, for all given before the world was are drawn in time. Then do they become Abraham's seed indeed when they become Christ's. Till then they are of their father, the devil; they are aliens; but their sins were laid on Him, and He has them brought to Him. As their High Priest this distinguishes Him, that He alone atoned for them and He alone effectually intercedes for them. As Aaron's priesthood extended to the twelve tribes, so does Christ's to all the heirs of the promise.

But it may be asked, What is this breastplate of which our text speaks? It was made of gold, blue, purple, scarlet, and fine twined linen, after the making of the ephod. It was doubled and square, and rested on the bosom of the ephod below the shoulders and above the girdle. How was it kept in position? There were, from the shoulder-pieces of the ephod, golden chains depending, and they were attached to rings on the breastplate, between it and the ephod, at the upper edge of the breastplate. There was a chain from each shoulder, and thus the plate was kept in position above. Again, at the lower end of the plate, there were rings, probably on the concealed side of it, and on the ephod there were corresponding rings. By these rings the ephod and the breastplate were attached with a blue lace. They were so attached that the breastplate was kept in its own place in front of the ephod.

Now, all these things were not purposeless or without meaning. Let us consider some of the meaning. Was there any special connection between the shoulder-pieces and the breastplate? There was, and it was this, that the breastplate depended for support on the shoulder-pieces. In these shoulder-pieces we read that there were two onyx stones, and on each of them six names of the tribes of Israel were engraved, so that the two shoulders bore the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. The high priest bore the burden of Israel's priesthood. The burden of the priesthood rested on his shoulders, and it rested on his shoulders because he was high priest. The onyx stones were set in the shoulder-pieces of the ephod. This distinguished him from all the rest of Israel, that he bore the burden of their holy things. The burden of their priesthood brought with it the burden of their guilt. This burden had to be borne, and none shared with him in the bearing of this burden. The burden of their guilt was borne by him, in order to bear it away. He bore their guilt in order to atone for it. This was no light burden; one shoulder alone could not bear it; the two must be under it. The actual guilt of the true Israel was no light burden; it needed a person to bear it that could do so. Christ bore it, but it was such a burden that it pressed him down to the dust of death. He was crucified in weakness. Both his shoulders came under the burden. A divine Saviour was required and nothing else. The Lord provided this; "a chosen one out of the folk." He came under the burden, and it is His sole prerogative to atone for sin. This is His province, and none can meddle with it; but there was a close connection between His burden-bearing and His intercession.

His intercession is grounded on His finishing the work given Him to do. The Lord laid on Him "the iniquities of us all," "The chastisement of our peace was upon him." He makes intercession for transgressors, and that because He poured out His soul unto death. He grounds His petition on His performance. "I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work thou gavest me to do. Now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory that I had with thee before the world was." His priesthood included His propitiatory work, but quite as surely it includes His intercessory work. Not more surely the one than the other. He finished the work of propitiation. He secured the title to eternal life, but He now lives to plead His own merits. He died that He might live; He lives to intercede. It is true that He by death destroyed death, but it is at the same time true that it was for Him to ask that He might receive. "Ask of me, and for heritage the heathen I'll make thine." He asked life, and He got it, even length of days for ever and ever. He is expressly said to be an all-powerful

Saviour in virtue of His intercession; able to save to the uttermost, because He lives for ever to make intercession for the guilty. He intercedes for all that come to God through Him. As surely as the breastplate could not be taken away from the ephod, so surely is Christ's intercession involved in His high priestly office. But as surely as the breastplate and the ephod were inseparable, so surely were the ephod and the onyx stones on its shoulder-pieces, and so the propitiatory work of Him who bore the burden of the priesthood is inseparable from His priesthood. They were alike inseparable from Christ's priesthood; the propitiation and the intercession, but though alike essential they were inter-connected. The intercession rests on and depends on the propitiation. It is only because He poured out His soul unto death that He effectually intercedes for transgressors.

Aaron bore the names of Israel on his shoulder, and the same names again on his breast. In the two functions of atonement and intercession he acted on behalf of the same clients. So it is with Christ; His intercession covers the same ground with His atonement. He bore the sins of those whose names He bears before the Father. And in considering this we may look at John 17 for a moment or two. For whom did Christ there pray? Not for the world, but for them that were given to Him. Who were they? They were such as kept the Father's word; they were such as believed that He came forth from God. They were given Him by the Father in effectual calling. For those also, He prayed, that should believe on Him through their word. None personally have a title to Christ's priestly remembrance but those that have received Him as their priest. They have a right to His intercession, a right that is rooted in the righteousness made over to them in justification.

There is a distinction, however, between Christ having power to intercede, and sinners having a right to Christ's intercession. Those that are children of wrath have no right to anything save the wrath and curse of God. Till the children of God are called by grace they are children of wrath. Christ has a right to intercede for them, and in His own right He prays and is answered. He asks and receives the heathen for His possession, and the uttermost parts of the earth as His heritage. He asks and He receives. In virtue of His thus asking they are effectually called. He has died for them, and He is to see of the travail of His soul. He asks for His reward, and He receives it. In due time those for whom He has died and purchased redemption are united to Him, and are no longer children of wrath. They are now heirs of God; they now share in the shelter of His enjoyed intercession with those that have passed to before the throne. He prays for them and not for the world, that they be kept, that they finally be with Him where He is, to behold His glory. He prays for them, and His prayer obtains an answer. It is not offered in vain; its efficaciousness secures their salvation. He lives to intercede, and by interceding to save to the uttermost. Christ bore on His shoulders the burden of all that believe in His name, and He bears their names on his heart. All those whose burden He once bore are still remembered by Him, and none of them shall be lost. For if atonement is as extensive as intercession, intercession is as extensive as atonement, and as intercession depends on atonement, or, as it were, draws on the fountain of its merit and efficacy, so the merit and efficacy of the atonement flow forth in the channel of intercession. He has atoned for all for whom He intercedes; His intercession covers all for whom He has atoned. Of these there are some that already enjoy the covert of this intercession through faith in His blood; of the rest it is true that they yet shall enjoy it, and His power will bring them to submit to the righteousness which is of God by faith. None can warrantably flatter himself with being within Christ's intercession without faith in His name; only through faith in this Christ as our surety and righteousness are we warranted to hope that the shield of His intercession covers us. Thus, as the breastplate depended on the shoulder-pieces, so does Christ's effectual intercession stand related to the burden that He bore when the Lord caused to meet on Him "the iniquities of us all."

But where was this breastplate borne? Just over the heart. On the great Day of Atonement, when the high priest went into the holiest of all on behalf of his people, Israel, these names were borne upon his bosom. They were between his heart and the place of the Most High's dwelling. He stood before the cherubim that shaded the ark and the mercy seat. There dwelt the God of Israel. Before Him came the high priest, transacting on behalf of the people. Their names he bore on his heart. The name of one tribe was not more surely there than the name of another, for they were all there; none of them was forgotten. Was this a pattern of the heavenly things? Christ enters into the holiest of all; He has entered in; He bears the names of His spiritual Israel in intercession upon His bosom. Where could they be safer? Their abiding place is between the heart of the Father and the Son. Could a warmer, could a safer place be theirs? He intercedes for His Israel; for those given from eternity, and not yet brought in, His intercession avails. It secures that they shall not die impenitent; it secures that they shall hear His voice and follow Him. He gives to His sheep eternal life. There is the security that those He died to redeem shall be effectually called. He died and He lives, and His living love is not less than His dying love. If He poured out His soul to death for them, He will pour out His Spirit upon them and draw them with the cords of love and with the bands of a man. He intercedes within the veil for His Israel, but who are they, and how shall they be known, or how shall they know themselves? They are those that come to God through Him. Thus are they to be known, and thus may they know themselves. He intercedes for them; He is their shield; and God looks on the face of His anointed; in Him He beholds them, and beholding them is well satisfied with them for His righteousness' sake.

His intercession is incessant, and it is prevalent. Nothing can withstand it. It is their salvation. If it is such, what does it do for them? Why, this: all they have need of in time is secured to them. Meat, drink, raiment, are provided. What will bring them through this world will be theirs; they "shall not want." To this end their character conspires, for what the Lord has purposed them for, He brings them to. He calls upon them to be fervent in spirit, and not slothful in business. He inclines them to such activity as that this character is theirs, and He blesses their activity while they can exercise it, for providing them with what they need for their journey on to Jordan. When the days of health and strength are past He still upholds them. Even unto hoar hairs He is their God; He is their guide even unto death. The intercession of Christ secures this for them, for He bears all their names and cases on His bosom.

What more does this intercession secure? Why, this: that their faith shall not fail them. They are kept ever; they are kept by the power of God unto salvation, through faith. And as it is through faith that they shall come to salvation, they are upheld in faith, for they are predestinated unto salvation. No one plucks the sheep out of the good Shepherd's hand. None can pluck them out of the Father's hand. In the effectual intercession of Christ they are kept unto salvation, as He bears their names before the Father. Their security is between the loving intercession of the Beloved and the Father of mercies, to whom this intercession is made. At the sight of the waves Peter began to sink, but he was not lost. Sion may say that the Lord has forsaken her, that her God has forgotten her. But no! her name is on the palms of His hands, her walls are continually before Him. Is it only on His *hands* her name is engraved? No, no. It is also on His *heart*; just as Aaron bore the plate on his bosom, so bears Christ His people's names on His heart. They are ever remembered by Him. When they remember Him He remembers them, but what is more wonderful still, even when they forget Him He still remembers them, and because He remembers them He secures that His seed shall remain in them. They shall not fall from the faith, but are upheld in it. Is this all His intercession brings with it? This is not a bare upholding; it is a positive victory. "This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith." He upholds them to victory. The fact of their being alive to God is the fruit of His victory for them, so that this upholding is a continual victory

over the league of darkness; and the intercession that secures this upholding, secures it to the end, and so it issues in final victory.

What, however, it may be asked about this life of faith? Is it a life of sinless perfection? By no means. While the Israel of God are left here, they sin and come short of God's glory. "If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." Sin is theirs, and yet it is not laid to their charge. What secures this? We may say, the intercession of Christ, the fact that He bears their names upon His bosom. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." He makes intercession for the transgressors; His intercession, as it were, comes between them and their sins. Their persons are accepted, and their sins are forgiven. This is so, because He intercedes for them; their sins are not laid to their charge. This, indeed, is the standing of the justified – "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin," These things are secured by the intercession. They shall not come into condemnation; there is no more condemnation for them. Should not this leave the High Priest's breast-plate precious in their eyes?

But how long does this intercession avail? It avails for ever. Christ is a priest for ever. His salvation is for ever; it is through His priesthood; and thus the intercession of Christ in its results has no end. It is summed up in this – "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory." They shall not weary in beholding it, and their everlasting beholding of the glory of Christ is but the effect of His abiding priesthood and its accompanying intercession. A death of victory, an abundant entrance into the kingdom, a glorious resurrection, a public acknowledgment in judgment, and eternal glory, all belong to those that Christ represents within the veil. Little wonder then that His intercession should be prized. Never can it be prized enough.

Two questions now remain to be considered with regard to this intercession. Who actually enjoy it? This is one question. The other is – How can those, that have it not, come to have its shelter? We have incidentally touched on the first of these questions once and again in our remarks, and we need not now enlarge on the subject. Those only can claim a right to what Christ's intercession brings with it who are in Christ, and have Christ formed in them the hope of glory. Those who are in Christ are born again; they live a new life. They live, yet not they, but Christ lives in them. The life they live is one of faith in the Son of God, who loved them and gave Himself for them. Without distinction, all believers have the covert of their Saviour's intercession. They one and all are sheltered, the weakest as surely as the strongest. The strongest need it as much as the weakest, and the weakest enjoys it as surely as the strongest. Some of them may be tempted at times to think that Christ will reject them, will have nothing further to do with them. But Christ deals with His poor people, not according to their doubts, but according to their faith. They commit themselves to Him, and He does not refuse them. Tried, tempted, footsore, weary, they may be, yet their hope is in Him, to Him do they look, and they look not in vain. But how can those who have not the shelter of this intercession come to have it? How can we obtain a right to the intercession of the Lord Jesus? There is but one way, and that is, that as sinners we should come to Him and embrace Him as our Saviour, to be our prophet, our priest, and our king. When, and only when, a union is thus effected between us poor sinners and Christ, the mighty to save, shall we have the covert of His intercession, or can we be warranted to cherish hope with regard to our latter end. Christ is held forth in the gospel to the chief of sinners, and they are welcome to have Him. Those who will not have Himself, need not wish to have the benefit of His mediation.

This, then, is the testing and turning point. "He that hath the Son hath life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." There are but these two classes among men. There are but two ways, the way of life and the way of death. In the Christ that is held out to us in the

gospel, there is a full and irreversible title to eternal glory. But we must ever remember, the title is in Him. Only by being in Him can we get it. He is held forth to us as freely as the air. He is not more free to one than to another. And every one who would see life and glory must submit to Christ, who is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth. Say not "He will not hear me, He has given me no answer in peace." If you have indeed called, if you have indeed come, then He has answered. He has received you, and tossed though you may be by fears and unbelief, yet the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but His kindness and the covenant of His peace will not be removed. He ever liveth to make intercession, and in His intercession He remembers each and all of his people. Their names are on His breast-plate, not one of them is forgotten.

[March 1901]

## Notes of a Sermon.

By the late REV. ARCHIBALD COOK, Daviot.

Preached in John Knox's Free Church, Glasgow.

"If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you" – John 15:19.

The hatred of the world is not easy for the saints to endure. A child of God is not an angel that he can live above feeling, nor is he a stone that he cannot feel; on the contrary, he has very tender feelings. The hatred of the world is sometimes very hard, very severe, but if it arises against the creature on account of his spiritual acquaintance with the Saviour, he often rejoices in the midst of it. We read of the apostles that they went "from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name." A view of this would make opposition easier for the child of God. The hatred of the world is a part of the cross he has to bear, and the cross is an ornament to the gracious soul. When these words were first uttered, the Saviour was personally present with His disciples. He knew from experience what the hatred of the world was, and He knew that the world from that time forward would hate every drop of His grace in His disciples, and therefore He forewarned them that they might lay their account with suffering. He says: "It hated me before it hated you." "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." In discoursing from these words, I intend to show: –

- I. Whence the love of the world to its own arises.
- II. The manner of Christ's choosing His people out of the world; and
- III. Whence arises the hatred of the world to the children of God.

I. We are to show whence the love of the world to its own arises. Why does the world love its own?



1. In the first place we may say it arises from this, that the world is all of the same corrupt nature. We see that every class of creatures has a kind of attachment to its own class. We see that sheep, cows, horses, fowls, and even the very serpents, have an attachment each to its own kind because they are of the same nature. And so the world must love its own; it is all of the same corrupt fallen nature. We need not wonder at this. But one thing may be said, their attachment to one another is but short; there will be nothing of it in eternity.

2. I observe further that this love arises from sinful lusts in the nature. There is not a sin we hear of or see in the world, but the seed of that sin is in us when we come into the world. We need not say, "Look at the murderer, the thief, or the unclean creature;" we brought the seed of murder, theft, and uncleanness into the world with us. But there is some predominant sin in the nature of each person. Although the same sin is in the nature of all, yet the same sin does not predominate or rule in every creature. Hence the ruling sin of some is drunkenness, of others, covetousness, and of others still, uncleanness. Now, whatever sin rules in the nature of one person, that sin chooses a companion in another; it loves its own image in the other person. Hence you may know what sin reigns in a man by his companions. No doubt this is partly what is meant by the rich man in hell speaking of his five brethren, who were probably his five companions in lust. Why did he not wish them to come to hell? Was he not wanting their company? No, my friends; but because he was afraid they would bring five more hells with them. And do we not see some of those persons freer with a companion than with a brother, or a sister, or a father? There are persons who, on hearing another profane the name of God, will reprove him for it, and will even be grieved for it, but, should they see one drunk, they, and very few besides, will grieve for or reprove him. I hear people often saying, "He was an honest man, though he had his own infirmities." Although he was a drunkard, a profane swearer, a Sabbath breaker, they will say he was an honest man who had his own infirmities. There is a want of faithfulness among men. Many will speak behind a man's back, what they will not say to his face. What if you see that person on the left hand for the very sin which you should have reproved him for?

3. We may go further and speak of the low, mean thoughts of divine things that reign in the unregenerate heart of the world. There are low and contemptible thoughts of God, of Christ, and of eternity, reigning in unregenerate persons. Now, it is from this that a great deal of their love to one another and of their hatred to God's people arises. We see that the old philosophers never agreed in anything among themselves; they were tearing one another continually; but when Christ Jesus appeared to preach to poor sinners, they join together to reject Him. Here the world showed that it loved its own.

II. The manner of Christ's choosing His people out of the world. On the subject of choosing sinners, as here set forth, we are not going to enter into the doctrine of eternal election. With regard to this, there is a mystery in God, hidden from the angels, and known only to Himself. Eternal election was a mystery from all eternity, and its objects are only known when we see the power of God made known in the souls of sinners. When you see the power of God made known in the soul of a sinner, you may know that that sinner was elected from eternity.

1. In the first place, I observe that Christ gains the consent of the soul to be His. Without this, we cannot say that a soul will be saved, according to the eternal purpose of God, and in view of that eternal purpose, we dare not say that any soul, whose consent is gained to Christ will be lost. We read that when Eliezer went for a wife to Abraham's son, Isaac, the question was put to Rebekah, "Wilt thou go with this man?" Her answer was, "I will go." Her consent was gained. Now, the Spirit of God creates in the elect soul that consent; though this movement of soul be no bigger than the first movement of a child in its mother's womb, yet the Spirit of God is there, and it will take the soul to glory. I believe that if the pain produced by the point of a needle would be sufficient to prepare the soul for

heaven, the Lord would not use more, but he must bruise, and break, and purge the soul to pieces, before He brings it there. In choosing His people out of the world, Christ by His Spirit gives them grace to consent. “Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.”

2. I observe further, that the gaining of the soul from the world to Christ is by means of “the promise” and that in His own ordinances. Know you, poor sinner, that can put your finger upon a promise with which God gained your consent to Christ, you have something that will give you comfort, when you come to grapple with eternity, when flesh cannot comfort you. This promise is between the soul and God, it is a secret. And it is very often when the poor sinner is on his knees that the consent of his soul is gained. This promise has something of the nature of the word of which the Psalmist speaks – “Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.” Indeed, whatever word the soul gets from time to time to the day of his death, it is only a confirmation of the first word.

3. When the soul is gained to Christ by the promise, there is something of the nature of spiritual dew that comes with it. You, that know something of this, you know something of a heart closed in to God, closed in to Christ, closed in to the offers of the Gospel. Neither prayer, preaching, affliction, nor hell itself would convert you. Now, when the Lord comes to a soul in this way, a spiritual dew comes down. You yourselves will see in the morning, when the dew descends and the sun begins to rise, you will see the very flowers opening their bosoms. And when the Spirit of God opens up to the soul something of the infinite loveliness of the Great One, the spiritual dew falls down from Him through the promise into the soul, and the soul is open to receive it. “Awake, O north wind; and come thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits.” The hypocrite has only God without, Christ without, and he is content with that, but the gracious soul must have Him *within*. You that have room in your souls to give to God and Christ, they have room in glory for your souls. You that have no room for the Saviour, you have no evidence that He has room for you in glory.

4. This experience comes to the soul oftentimes when the soul is looking at himself as one whose day of grace is past. There are some poor creatures that conclude that the day of grace is past with them, and that they are given up to judicial hardness. There is something in these words – “Why hast thou hardened our hearts from thy fear?” This is as if they thought the Lord had hardened their hearts in judgment. We see the Psalmist in the eighty-eighth psalm saying, “Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead? shall the dead arise and praise thee?” Why does he say this? He needed to realise himself among the dead. Why? That the Son of God may be glorified. “This sickness is not unto death; but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby.” There is power in His resurrection – “that they may know him in the power of his resurrection and in the fellowship of his sufferings” – to give sinners a spiritual resurrection. I am sure you, poor soul, know something of this. Once you thought if you could be freed from vain thoughts in prayers, on the Sabbaths, when reading the Bible, you would be happy; but what follows now? A dead soul. “Oh, it is not so much vain thoughts I am now burdened with – but a dead soul, every feeling is dead.” The carnal world know not the worms that eat them; their spiritual death never brought one sigh from their hearts. But there is a principle of faith in the bosom of the living soul, which lies, as it were in a grave, until the power of Christ’s resurrection comes; then something comes out of that grave that sets the soul to spiritual action. This is the way in which the Lord chooses a people out of the world or sets apart a soul for Himself. Will not His glory, His power, His grace, and His love, be seen in the resurrection of that poor soul?

5. The soul will now be newly furnished. We lost our spiritual furniture by the fall; we are unfit for the enjoyment of God. Now the soul will feel a new love of spiritual objects, a new hatred to sin, a new longing after holiness and after enjoyment of the Three-One God.

6. The Saviour, when He chooses and sets apart a poor soul for Himself, sets apart that soul for God. "I have chosen you out of the world."

First; the tastes of the soul are renewed. You may set a sheep to feed on a dunghill, but let it loose, and it will go to the grass. Why? It is its nature. Take a sow, and put it on grass, but let it loose, and it will go to the dunghill. Why? It is its nature. You may take a carnal worldling and put him among the people of God, and I am sure he will have very little comfort, he will soon get tired. The reading of a chapter is a burden to him. Why? It is his nature; it is like that of the swine. But whenever the power of the Saviour comes to the soul the taste is changed, so that the soul does not find comfort in the carnal company of the world. He now becomes a poor broken creature, mourning in a corner over hatred of God, and a barren, hard heart. And notwithstanding this mourning, he must confess that at this moment he has greater comfort than all the comfort he had in the world. How? Because he is renewed in his mind, and in proportion as he is renewed, his comfort becomes sweeter. This change must take place in the soul here, that the creature may love God through eternity. Though an unregenerate sinner would be brought to glory, how is it possible that he can love glory, who had no love to God here? The renewed soul loses comfort, solace and happiness in the fashions and company of the world, and profess to be a poor, broken creature at the footstool of the Lord.

Secondly, the soul now becomes tender and easily wounded in spirit. Perhaps there was a time when he could hear the profaning of God's name or profane swearing, without any grief. He could see drunken creatures, and the sight gave him no grief. But the soul now has become tender, and like one who has a wound on his body that is easily hurt, so the Lord now makes his conscience tender like raw flesh, easily hurt. But the soul is not yet wholly weaned from his lusts or from company, and again another drop falls from above and makes the soul tender, so that a vain thought or a worldly word will wound him. But some professors of religion can make a prayer, a long prayer, and a good prayer, and can live with any company; their conscience is spiritually dead.

7. I observe further that they set themselves apart from the world because they feel from experience that the Saviour is not among the world. Hence when there, they get hardness of heart, and when that hardness comes, it is not easily removed. Nothing but power and comfort from above will remove barrenness of soul and the sense of an angry God. This makes them know that the Lord is not in the pleasures of the world, and hence they try a private corner. O my friends, it is a great thing to be brought to love a secret place. There are many professors who keep family worship as regular as the clock, and yet they do not spend five minutes in prayer in a corner from morning to night. O it is a wonderful thing to bring one to find happiness in private exercise! The poor creature loves a broken heart, loves a penitent spirit, loves a thirst after God, and loves holiness.

First: the soul may set himself apart for God from spirit of thankfulness. O child of God, if the Spirit of grace gives you a glimpse of the sins which you had once, if you "look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged," and look at yourself as you were an heir of hell, lying in your blood in the open field, think of your deliverance, and what it cost God before you could be delivered out of that pit. The Son of God had to become a man of sorrows, and to be sacrificed in your room: He then passed by and said to your soul, "Live," and the soul was quickened; and perhaps you remember the first day you had a spiritual being. Will not that soul be filled with thankfulness, and be disposed to give himself to the Lord's service? Why, see the Psalmist, after he got deliverance from the pains of hell, he says, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me? . . . I am thy servant, and the son of thy handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds." These bonds were chains that all the angels in heaven could not loose. Ah, sinner, there were two chains on the soul that would make the very devils miserable to all eternity,

the chains of guilt and of the curse. Now, you, poor sinner, I am sure, if the Lord will give you your choice, you will not be willing to leave the world without doing something for Him.

Secondly: Now, the soul, in setting himself apart for the Lord, as the fruit of the Saviour's choice of him, comes to see the end of his creation. What is the greatest honour that ever was put on a sinner of this world? Is it to be a king or queen? No, no. The greatest honour is to answer the end of his creation. All the lower creatures answer their end; the very serpents answer their end. Think of your tongue; was it for speaking about the world on the Lord's day that the Lord gave you a tongue? Look at the profane swearer; was it for profanity that a tongue was given him? But the child of God answers the end of his creation, the greatest honour that can be put upon him. The riches of the world, the honours of the world, are but a shadow in comparison with this. In whatever company he is, whether among the people of God or among the world, if he sees the crown on the head of the Redeemer, and the world under foot, he counts it an infinite sweetness, an infinite comfort. It is something which makes the creature happy through all eternity. It is in this way that the people of God find it easy to get through the world. The soul comes to this, as the result of the Saviour's setting him apart, namely, to put the crown on His head. All the true godliness that is in the world is the only thing the soul sees of any value.

III. This brings me to the last part – why the world hates the people of God. Never you mind, never you mind, there is a common saying among people, “Dogs may bark at the moon, but the moon is none the worse of their barking.” So the world may bark at the people of God, but they are none the worse. Moses counted the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures in Egypt. There are few people will do this, but the children of the new birth will do it.

1. The hatred of the world is a fulfilment of the first promise. The Lord said to the serpent, “I will put enmity between thy seed and her seed.” This must be fulfilled; it is God who spoke it; and what Word is so faithful as His?

2. Again I observe that the world hate God's people, because something of the spiritual knowledge of the Son of God has come into their souls. The knowledge of the Saviour, or the fruit of that knowledge, will appear outwardly, and the enmity of the world will show itself against it, for the world are against God, and when God appeared in man's nature sinners were not at ease. If you saw a bear or a lion on the road, you would flee from it, if you could not overcome it. So sinners, because they cannot overcome God, flee from Him. Thus when the fruit of the spiritual knowledge of the Saviour begins to make its appearance, the world will try to nip it in the bud. You, child of God, you could once dance as well as others, you could go to the ball as well as others. Did your parents say anything against you then? But something came over you and you began to pray, and perhaps they then turned upon you. There are some poor creatures that only God and their souls know what they have suffered at the hands of others. There are but few who have so much godliness, but that when they are in the company of drunkards, these may say, “Ye are of our own;” or when they are with the Sabbath-breakers, these may say, “Ye are of our own;” they conform to every company.

3. The world's hatred arises because the people of God have so much tenderness of spirit that they cannot put up with everything others may do. Lot was in Sodom; and I am sure the people of Sodom were as tired of him as he was of them, for he was reproofing them for their sin. Now, poor creatures, that cannot allow things to pass without reproof, I am sure you will often feel the serpent beginning to hiss, and this will often send you to your knees with broken spirits and wet eyes. “If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.”

4. The world's hatred to the soul arises because the soul has a principle of steadfastness that will not comply or make concessions. We see this in poor Daniel; he would not yield

although they threw him among the lions. We see the other children; they would not yield although they were thrown into the furnace. The furnace was as terrible in itself to the three children as to any others, but they had a view of the unquenchable fire; they saw that Nebuchadnezzar's fire would be soon over, and could at the worst burn only their bodies, but the other fire would eternally burn their souls in hell. So, if the Lord creates a principle of steadfastness in the soul that will rather suffer than yield, the child of God will lose all rather than sin. But, my friends, you will not lose; there is not a hair lost but you will get it back in a spiritual way. I have no doubt but that for every arrow that enters the soul there is a drop of eternal sweetness put in his cup in glory, and even in this world itself there will be drops of sweetness in the cup with trials. If the world knew that they were the occasion of so much sweetness to the children of God they would not meddle with them.

5. It is the sovereign good will of God that the world's hatred is shown to his children. Were it not that the Lord would bring us out of the world's company we would lie and rot in it. So He must let the world loose upon a poor creature, and this is a part of the furnace a gracious soul must be brought through. This is not our home; eternity is our home; glory is our home. It is written of others that they sought "a better country." Why did they seek it? Because they were crucified to the world, and the world to them. And this is one of the ways in which the Lord crucifies them to the world, and makes them pilgrims and strangers. "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own." But poor things, remember that it hated the Saviour before it hated you, and "in that he himself suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted." When things come to a head, He will take you home to Himself, or He will cut these things short. The Saviour loves a broken heart and a contrite spirit. These are the sacrifices with which He is well pleased. But He does not like them to be too much broken, so when things come to a height with a poor soul, He will send deliverance.

The Lord honours that soul greatly whom He hath separated for Himself. It is not everyone that the Lord is separating for Himself. These are few. How many are going out of the world as ignorant of God, of self, of sin, as when they came into it. There are but few holy creatures whom the Lord is setting apart for Himself. Remember these words, "Beloved, now are we 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 what is it to be like the Son of God? Ah, there is not a child of grace in this world but will be more glorious in eternity than although ten thousand suns should be shining in one sun. It were worth while to endure the spittings of the world for a while. Where would they be, if they had got their deserts? they would be lying in hell among the devils. Perhaps there are persons in hell this night that were no worse than you, and if He show His grace to you, will you not then endure the spittings of the world, when there are such things in eternity? Moses chose to suffer affliction. O what a reward he has got! How many thousands of years he has been already in glory! Fourscore years would likely have ended his happiness in Egypt, and then there would be the eternal flames; now, although he should get no more happiness than he has got already, has he not been rewarded enough?

O poor, foolish sinner, your day of grace is given to prepare for eternity, and will you spend your few days in trifling? "What will 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?" Ah, poor sinner remember eternity; you must go to eternity for yourself. "Him that cometh unto me," says the Saviour, "I will in no wise cast out." "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the sun in the kingdom of their Father" for ever and ever. – Amen.

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