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The State of the Natural Man

Every man that comes to be converted hath a heart of stone; and what is that? Insensible, inflexible. Insensible, he hath *no feeling* of his condition; inflexible, *he will not be moved* and wrought upon by the Word, and the Spirit, and Providence. How many means are wasted upon him, and to no purpose! "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it" (*Jer. 17: 9*). It invents all kinds of shifts and excuses to elude God, or rather to cheat itself. When God comes to work upon man, it slides away from under His hand as if salvation itself should not save them.

But is not the New Testament more favourable to man than the Old? Or, is not man grown better now that there is so much of God's grace discovered? I answer, There is a perfect harmony between the Testaments: here he is styled "a child of wrath by nature" (*Eph. 2: 3*), the elect as well as others were so. Here you will find him to be "a servant of sin" (*Rom. 6: 17*). Never such an imperious master as sin is, never such a willing servant as man is. Sin never leaves commanding, and we love to work, and therefore are at its beck. Here you will find him to be represented as a man that hath a "blind understanding," and a "hard heart," and one that is "alienated from the life of God" (*Eph. 4: 18*). Here you will find him to be the one that is an "enemy to the Law of God", "enmity" itself (*see Rom. 8: 7*), one that neither will nor can "please God". One that is blind, and knows not what to do: II Peter 1: 9: "He that lacketh these things is blind," and with such a blindness as is far worse than bodily. A man that is blind in his bodily eyes, would think it to be a great happiness to have a fit guide: as in Acts 13: 11, when Elymas was smitten blind, "he sought about for somebody to lead him

by the hand” but he that is spiritually blind, cannot endure to have a guide; or if one would lead him, and direct him in the right way, he is angry. And as the Scripture represents him as blind, so “with strength” (*Rom. 5: 6*), “dead in trespasses and sins” (*Eph. 2: 1*), yea, worse than dead; a dead man doth no more hurt, his evil dieth with him; but there is a life of resistance and rebellion against God that goeth along. I have spoken but little, yet put all together, and then it shows *what a miserably wretched creature man is*.

The Scripture doth not speak this by hyperbole, nor once or twice, but everywhere, where it speaks of this matter, it sets out man to be blind, hard, dead, obstinate, and averse from God. Certainly man contributes little to his own conversation, if the Word of God sets him out everywhere to be such an one; he cannot hunger and thirst after Christ, that drinks in iniquity like water. Nothing in his nature to carry him to grace, who is *altogether* sinful.

If the Scripture had only said that man had accustomed himself to sin, and was not *born* in sin: if it had said that man is very prone, and not *greedy* and *thirsty* in iniquity: if it had only said that man did often think evil, but not *continually*: if the Scripture had said that man was somewhat obstinate, but not a *stone*, an *adamant*, and like the nether millstone: that he had been indifferent to God and the world, God and the flesh, and not a professed *enemy*: that he had been a captive of sin, and not a *servant* of sin: that man had been weak and not *dead*: only a neuter and not a *rebel*: than there might have been something in man; and the work of conversion and reducing to God had not been so great. But the Scripture saith quite the contrary, that man is all this and much more, therefore this clears it up, that his conversation *is not in himself*, but it is God Who *must* work this good in him, or else he can never be renewed. — *Thomas Manton*

Sermon

Preached by the Rev. D. B. MacLeod at Ingwenya Communion 1987.

“The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” John 1: 29

We would desire to notice in particular at this time the last part of this verse: “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”

These words were spoken by John the Baptist. John the Baptist was sent as the forerunner of Christ. This work was given to him and it was

an honourable work indeed to be the forerunner of Christ, to prepare the hearts of a people for the coming of the Saviour. John did this when he preached the baptism of repentance and many were found to repent. For many came to John for baptism, confessing their sins and looking to the promised One whom John declared was to come. John did not hide who he himself was. When the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him saying, "Who art thou?" "He confessed and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ." He declared of himself, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness," and when they asked him, "Why baptizest thou then?", he answered them: "I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose." John had to say concerning Christ, of whom he was the forerunner, "He must increase, but I must decrease." That is what took place, for John pointed to the Saviour, then soon after he was taken away from the world through the wickedness of Herod. So that this was fulfilled "He must increase, but I must decrease." This was the delight of John, to magnify the name of Christ, and the Saviour had to say of John that a greater prophet than John the Baptist had not arisen, for of those that were born of woman there had not arisen a greater than John the Baptist.

Here we have brought before us the message that John gave to those who were about him when he saw Jesus coming unto him. The message he had for his hearers was this: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." In considering these words then let us notice **first** of all, the name that is here given to Christ — that is, the Lamb of God. Then **secondly**, what we have brought before us in the latter part of the verse where it says of the Lamb of God — "which taketh away the sin of the world." Then **thirdly** and lastly, we may go on to consider what is before us in the first word of this sentence where John says '**Behold** the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.'" As John was directing his hearers to "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," so we are directed by the word of God today, in connection with the preaching of the Gospel, and in connection with the remembrance of the death of Christ in the ordinance of the Supper, to "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

Let us notice then **first** of all the name that is here given to Christ — He is called the Lamb of God. On Friday, we were considering Christ as He was spoken of as the Shepherd of the sheep, here we have Him brought before us as the Lamb of God. Many different representations

are necessary to show forth the glory of this One and to show forth all the different aspects of His work, therefore He is called here the Lamb of God. When we go to the Old Testament scriptures and to the Old Testament types, a lamb for sacrifice featured very prominently in that Old Testament world. There was the daily sacrifice, or the continual sacrifice, which was offered morning and evening in Israel. The sacrifice that was offered morning and evening was a lamb. Besides that continual offering every day of the week, we have the offerings of the Sabbath Day — those offerings that were particular to that day. There again, we have two lambs offered for sacrifice — these lambs were to be of the first year and they were to be without spot. Again in the monthly sacrifice, in the new moons, we find there seven lambs offered along with other sacrifices. When we come to the stated feasts of Israel, such as the Passover and the offering of First Fruits, and again that special offering connected with the blowing of Trumpets, and the offering on the day of Atonement, and the offerings connected with the Ingathering, or the Feast of Weeks, — lambs for an offering were found in all these. These sacrifices of the Old Testament Church were types and shadows of more glorious things to come and in the offering of the lamb or of lambs in that Old Testament dispensation we have presented before us that one glorious sacrifice that was to be offered on Calvary's accursed tree. These sacrifices pointed to the Lord Jesus Christ, the One who was to come in God's great name to seek and to save that which was lost. This name then, the Lamb of God, is a name given to Him because He was to be the one sacrifice for sins.

We know in connection with a lamb, what is presented before us there is meekness, innocency and lowliness. So it is with the Lord Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God. He declares of Himself, "I am meek and lowly in heart." He is the One whom the word of God declares to be without sin, "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." We have the Lamb of God represented again in the Paschal lamb — the lamb of the Passover, that ordinance of the Old Testament Church that God gave to Israel when He delivered His Church out of the hand of the Egyptians. They were to kill a lamb and they were to sprinkle the blood of that lamb upon the doorposts and lintels of their houses, setting before them the efficacy of the blood, for that blood was to afford protection to them from the destroying angel. In that Passover, as we have in the Lord's Supper — the sacrament of the New Testament Church, that has taken the place of the Passover — there was the eating of the sacrifice by the children of Israel. So now in a spiritual and a living way there is a partak-

ing of Christ by faith in partaking of the symbols of broken body and of the shed blood of Emmanuel. For what was set forth in the Passover — The crucified Lamb of God — That is set before us on the table here to-day in the bread and in the wine which represent the broken body and the poured out blood of the Lamb of God. There was to be a lamb for each of the households of Israel, or, if there were not enough in the household for one lamb, then the lamb was for two households and the Lamb of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, is for the households of Israel that souls might be blessed through this glorious One who is set before us in the Gospel of God's grace.

The Paschal Lamb was to be roasted, so that in that we have the sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ which He was to endure — as the Paschal Lamb was roasted with fire so He was to suffer under the fire of the wrath of Jehovah. The Paschal Lamb was to be eaten with bitter herbs and with unleavened bread. We have in this sacrament of the Supper — "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us." We have the bitter herbs in connection with this sacrament. What are these bitter herbs? You who are to remember the death of the Redeemer this day, with what bitter herbs are you to eat that sacrament? Surely the bitter herbs of the remembrance of your sins — your sins which pierced the Lord of Glory, the Lamb of God, and brought Him to an open shame. The children of Israel were called to eat the Passover with unleavened bread, so we are to partake of this ordinance not with the "leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." The lamb had to be slain, so it was in the case of this Lamb of God — He must be slain on Calvary's tree. He is not only the Lamb slain on Calvary, He is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world for such was the efficacy of His atonement — though offered in the fulness of time, when he came into this world and gave Himself a ransom for many, yet the efficacy of that death reached back to the time of Abel and the blood of this sacrifice was better than that of Abel, for the blood of this sacrifice cleanses from all sin.

Christ was to be led to the place of slaughter. We are told concerning that, that He was led "as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth." What have we in that but the willingness of this One to go forth and to suffer and die: the One who could have scattered all His enemies with but one ray of His divine glory, He went forth to offer Himself as the Lamb of God and went forth to judgement and to death. He went forth unprotestingly to death. Why did He go unprotestingly to death, in whom there was no

sin? It was because He went to death in the room and stead of His people. This is the divine Redeemer, this is the glorious Saviour, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.

Let us notice then **secondly** what is brought before us in this verse concerning His taking away the sin of the world — He is “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” That is why He came into the world, that is why He went forth to suffer. It was not for Himself, there was no ground in Himself why He should suffer and die. He could say of His enemies, “they hated me without a cause.” There was no cause of death in Him. Pilate had to acknowledge this when he said, “I find no fault in Him at all.” Yet against the witness of his conscience he condemned the Holy One of God to death. Why then should he suffer? It could not be for Himself. It must be in the room and stead of others. We have brought before us here that He was “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” The world as it is brought before us here cannot mean everyone in the world at all times? All for whom Christ died are saved and saved eternally. He did not fail in that work with regard to anyone for whom He died and we know that not all in the world are saved by Him. He could not have died for Judas Iscariot. If He had died for him, then Judas would have been saved but it is written of Judas Iscariot He went to his own place, he went down to everlasting destruction. When it is said then that the Lamb of God is “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world,” it must bring before us sinners of all kinds and classes and of all nations and kindreds and tongues. For such Christ laid down His life — a multitude whom no man can number out of this fallen race of ours, even the whole election of grace. Christ gave his life for them — there must be the transference of sin from those who are described here as “the world”, to the sin bearer. Christ as the Lamb of God is the sin-bearer. If the sins of sinners are to be put away, if your sin is to be put away, it can only be through the transference of your sin and guilt to the holy Lamb of God. That is what took place, that is what is said concerning the Father — He “hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” There was laid on Him the burden of the sin and guilt of all those given to Him by the Father that He might bear their sins, that He might take these sins upon His own person, near to Himself, be counted as the sin-bearer and go forth to suffer and to die in order that He might make an end of that sin forever, for this is what we have in the sufferings of Christ — “He suffered the just for the unjust.” He suffered in the room and place of His people. He died their death for them, the death that they deserved to die, that death is eternal death so

far as they are concerned. It is a death that would have sunk them forever into the flames of a lost eternity, and from that death Christ came to deliver them and came to deliver them by taking their sin upon Himself, to make an end of sin forever by giving Himself over unto death to bear the wrath and curse of God against sin. That is what was in the cup that was given Him to drink, the cup that caused Him such astonishment in the garden of Gethsemane when His soul was exceeding sorrowful even unto death, when "His sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground." This was what was laid upon the sin-bearer — a load that the sinner could not bear, that was a load that would have sunk your soul eternally in Hell, yet Christ endured the cross, despised the shame, overcame death in His death, that He might take the sting out of death.

He rose again from the dead so that it can now be said: "O death, where is thy sting, O grave, where is thy victory?" Christ died for the sins of His people that their sins might be put away forever. He paid their redemption price — He paid it by the shedding of His precious blood. At what cost Christ wrought out redemption, at what cost Christ made an end of our sins — the sufferings that He endured in His body and in His soul, the deepest sorrows and sufferings that the world ever beheld, these were borne by Christ as the sin bearer. It pleased the Father "to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand."

The offering for sin was burned without the camp, so Christ that he might sanctify His people with His own blood suffered without the gate. Christ, that He might redeem His people with His own blood, suffered outside the gates of Jerusalem. Sin separates from men, so Christ was separated from men — of the people there was none with Him. Sin separates from God, therefore it was given to Christ as the sin bearer to cry out on Calvary, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Who can enter in to the experience of the divine Redeemer when He gave expression to such a cry? Men cannot fathom it, only the God of Heaven can comprehend what He endured in taking away sin and making an end of that sin forever.

What a manifestation of divine love that Christ should bear the wrath and curse of God in the room and stead of the guilty. Have you entered in your own experience into what it is to taste of the love of God manifested in that great work of redemption? Have you come to taste the sweetness of it? Have you come to wonder with great wonder at Christ

drinking that cup for you? How wonderful it should be to you today who are to remember the death of the divine Redeemer, that when you come to this ordinance this day it is not the cup of wrath that is being held out to you — that was held out to your surety substitute, that was held out to the One who stood in your law place, but the cup which we bless is it not the cup of the communion of the blood of Christ? This is held out to you — the cup of blessing. This glorious truth Christ brings before you “my flesh is meat indeed, my blood is drink indeed.” If he loved His own, then how precious Christ must be to you whose hope and trust is in Him.

Let us notice **last of all** what is before us in the first word of this sentence: “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” Christ was to be raised from the earth, was a spectacle to men and angels, a spectacle to some, an object of derision to those who called out to Him on the cross. “If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.” O, what a spectacle to the eyes of men, whose eyes are opened to see the glory of the divine Redeemer raised up from the earth, raised between earth and heaven, separated from men, separated from His God, that He might deliver those who deserve to die eternal death. What a glorious spectacle for those who are brought to experience in their souls the drawing power of the cross of Christ, for if we are to be drawn to the Lord Jesus Christ, then it is by the drawing power of His cross. What is it in that cross that draws out the soul to Jesus Christ and unites the soul to Him? It is the love of God manifested in Him and through Him in His sufferings unto death. What a blessed day for a sinner in this world when they look to the Lamb of God. The Gospel of God’s grace invites sinners to behold — behold thy God, behold Him, let your eye be on the suffering Lamb of God. He is saying Himself in the very midst of His sufferings, “Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the end of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.” What a manifestation of divine love — a suffering Saviour. It will not avail us any that Christ died and rose again except we look to Him, except we believe on His name for this is the call of God to us in His word, to believe on the name of His only begotten Son and to have life through His name. So long as we are held in the grip of unbelief, that unbelief will hold us bound: we must be set free from the unbelief and hardness of our hearts in order that we may look to this One, in order that we might behold “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”

Where then are you to behold Him, seeing that the One who is spoken of here is no longer in the world, no longer on the cross of Calvary but exalted to the right hand of the Father and is at God’s right hand today?

How am I, a poor sinner to believe on His Name? How am I to behold Him? You are to behold Him as He is revealed in the Gospel. There He is made known in all the richness of His grace, of His mercy and of His love. It is not to any other source you must look but to the slain Lamb of God who is now the ever-living One at God's right hand. Through faith in His name your soul shall be saved and saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation. How often Christ has been presented to you, how often His sufferings have been set before you, yet are you blind to the glory of this One? O, seek that God would take the veil from off your eyes. Let this be your prayer, "open mine eyes, that I may see wondrous things out of thy law" because in the darkness of sin and unbelief, we have eyes for everything but Jesus Christ. But when the Lord visits a poor sinner, brings that sinner to see his or her sins and exposure to everlasting death and brings before that soul the way back to God through the Lord Jesus Christ, then the soul will see another sight — the soul will see the glory of this One, and the wonder of His finished work and the soul will be overwhelmed that Christ so willingly went forth to suffer and to die in the room and stead of the guilty. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Surely that is what we have in the death of this One and has that death no meaning for your own soul? — for it is in Christ alone your soul can be saved — out of Christ there is no salvation. Have you no ear to hear what God is saying? Have you not an ear to hear what is said here to you today when this word is brought to your notice — "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." O, what a wonder it should be to us that the savour of Christ's death has so little attraction for us. It is true it has an attraction for the people of God. The savour of Christ's death is sweet to them, that savour is what perfumes the air of Heaven for the redeemed on Mount Zion above and it is the savour of Christ's sacrifice that will perfume Heaven for the people of God throughout the endless ages of eternity. So does not the perfume of that death, the heavenly sweetness of that perfume, does it not come to you here today in the preaching of the Gospel: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." You who are to come to this table today, may this table be perfumed for you with the savour of Christ's death so that your soul may rejoice in God your Saviour, and that you will be able to say at His table today, "This is my beloved, this is my friend", "He is altogether lovely", "fairer than the children of men", "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world".

May the Lord add His blessing.

Rules for understanding aright the Ten Commandments

To understand aright, the perfection, spirituality, and great extent, of the Divine law, is necessary to qualify believers, for delighting in it after the inward man, and for performing acceptable obedience to all its precepts. The holy Psalmist, therefore, prayed thus: "Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart." Ps. 119: 34. "I am a stranger in the earth; hide not thy commandments from me." Ps. 119: 19.

Seeing the ten commandments contain very much in few words, which cannot render it the more difficult, to apprehend their full meaning; the *rules*, to be carefully observed for understanding them aright, are chiefly the following:

1. Where a duty is required, the *contrary sin is forbidden*; Isa. 58: 13, and where sin is forbidden, the *contrary duty is required*, Eph. 4: 28. Every command forbids the sin which is opposite to, or inconsistent with, the duty which it requires. The duties required in the law, cannot be performed, without abstaining from the sins forbidden in it; and the sins forbidden, cannot be avoided, unless the contrary duties be performed. We must, not only cease to do what the commands forbid, but do what they require; otherwise we do not obey them sincerely. A negative holiness is far from being acceptable to God. Every affirmative precept includes a negative one, and every negative command contains an affirmative. Every precept, whether affirmative or negative, has two parts; it requires obedience, and forbids disobedience. The fourth commandment, for instance, whilst it requires us to "remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy," forbids us to profane that holy day. The Lord Jesus, accordingly, comprehends all the negative, as well as affirmative precepts, in these two great affirmative commandments. To love God and our neighbour. It is also remarkable that, where a promise is annexed to a precept, the contrary threatening is included, Exod. 20: 12; Prov. 20: 17, and that, where a threatening is annexed to a prohibition, the contrary promise is implied, Jer. 18: 7, 8; Psal. 24: 4, 5.

2. Where a duty is required, *every duty of the same kind*, is also required; and where sin is forbidden, *every sin of the same sort*, is prohibited. Under one duty, all of the same kind are commanded; and under one sin, all of the same sort are forbidden. When the Lord commands us, to "have no other gods before him", He requires us, to know and acknowledge Him, to be the only true God, and our God, and to love,

worship, and glorify Him accordingly. When He commands us, to “remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy,” He requires us, to engage in prayer, praise, hearing the word, receiving the Sacraments, and in all the other duties of that holy day. Where a duty is commanded, the *avowing* of that duty, is required likewise. Believing in Christ, and a profession of faith in Him, are enjoined in the same commandment. Where the duties of children to parents, are commanded, not only are all the duties of inferiors, to superiors in every other relation, required, but also all the duties of superiors to inferior. On the other hand, when the Lord forbids us to kill, He forbids us also to strike, or wound our neighbour, or to harbour malice and revenge against him. When He forbids to commit adultery, He at the same time prohibits fornication, incest, and all impure imaginations, affections, and purposes. Where great sins are expressly forbidden: and they are prohibited under the names of the grosser sins, in order to render them, the more *detestable* and *horrible* in our view, as also to shew us, how abominable, even the very least of them is, in the sight of an infinitely holy and righteous God. (I refer the devout reader to Boston’s excellent Exposition of the commandments in his Sermons on our Shorter Catechism).

3. That which is forbidden, is *at no time* to be done; but that which is required, is to be done, only when the Lord affords opportunity. What God forbids, is sin, and is never to be done what He requires, is always our duty, Rom. 3: 8; and yet, every particular duty is not to be performed *at all times* Deut. 4: 8, 9. That which is forbidden, is at all times sinful, and therefore ought never, on any pretence whatever, to be done, Matth. 12: 7. That which is required, as it is always our duty, so it is to be performed as often as opportunity is afforded, and as it does not interfere with the performance of our other duties. We are commanded, for instance, to honour our parents; but unless they be alive, or present with us, we have not the opportunity of performing this duty. In the third commandment, we are required to use, in a holy and reverent manner, the names and ordinances of God, especially in all our acts of worship; but we cannot, and should not, be *every moment* employed in acts of immediate worship; for we are commanded to abound in the performance of other duties, equally necessary. Although the affirmative part of every precept, is of as high authority and binding force, as the negative part; yet, it does not bind us to the performance of *every* particular duty, at *all* times: it obliges us, to be always in a suitable frame for our *present* duty, but not to be always in the actual performance of *every* duty. It binds us to the performance of a particular duty, every time that

we are called to perform that duty; every time in which, the performance of it, can glorify God, and the omission of it, dishonour Him. There is, however, *one* affirmative precept, which binds us to perform the duty required, at *all* times; namely, the commandment to "love the Lord our God, with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind." There is no state, nor time, nor place, in which, we can be exempted from the duty of loving God supremely.

4. Whatever we ourselves, are commanded to be, or to do, or to forbear; we are obliged to do all that it is possible for us to do, according to our places and stations in society, *to make others* around us, to be, or do, or forbear the same. We are strictly bound, according to our different stations, to endeavour that, every duty be performed, and every sin be forborne, by all to whom our influence can extend. Accordingly, in the fourth commandment, are these words: "The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it, thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger, that is within thy gates". Here, the duty both of the servant, and of the stranger, is required of the master. Whatever sin is forbidden to ourselves, we are forbidden to partake with others in it, either by example, advice, connivance, or by giving them occasion to commit it. "Be not partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure." However free of personal transgressions we may pretend to be, yet we are transgressors of the law, so far as, by connivance or otherwise, we *are* partakers of the sins of others. What duty soever, others around us are commanded to perform, we are required, by advice, encouragement, prayer, and other helps, to assist them in performing it. How much iniquity, alas, do many even of the saints themselves commit, by not attending more than they usually do, to this rule!

5. The same duty is required, and the same sin is forbidden, in different respects, in *several*, and even in *all* the Divine commands. The transgression of *one* precept, is virtually a breach of all. They are so intimately connected together, that, if the divine authority be disregarded in any one of them, it is slighted in all. The first commandment, for example, is so closely connected with all the other precepts, that it is obeyed in all our obedience, or disobeyed in all our disobedience, to any one of them. Obedience or disobedience to it, is virtually, obedience or disobedience to the whole law.

6. Where a duty is required, the use of all the *means* of performing it aright, is required; and where a sin is forbidden, every *cause*, and even every *occasion* of it, are prohibited. When chastity in heart, speech, and

behaviour, is required, temperance and diligence in our lawful employments, as means of preserving it, are, at the same time, enjoined. On the other hand, when the Lord forbids the profanation of the Sabbath, He at the same time, forbids all the employments and recreations, by which men profane that holy day. When He forbids uncleanness, He at the same time, prohibits drunkenness, gluttony, idleness, or whatever else may be an incitement to that sin. Where He forbids murder, He also prohibits wrath, malice, and revenge, which prompt men to commit that crime. When children are commanded to honour our parents, parents are, in the same command, enjoined, to regard their children with parental affection, and to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

7. No sin is at any time to be committed, in order to *avoid or prevent a greater sin*. We must not “do evil, that good may come.” The very least sin ought not, on any account whatever, to be committed. None of the dispensations of adorable Providence, lays a man under a *necessity* of sinning. “Let no man then say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man.” As no man is allowed by the law, so none is necessitated by the providence, of an infinitely holy and righteous God, to commit one sin, in order to prevent another. We are commanded in the law, not only to abstain from evil, but even “from all *appearance* of evil”. But, while no sin must be committed, in order to prevent a greater sin: some duties required, should, as was observed above, give place to other duties.

8. The commandments of the second Table of the law, must *give place* to those of the first, when they *cannot both be observed together*. Our love of our neighbour, for instance, ought to be subjected to our love of God; and we are enjoined to hate, that is, to love in a *less degree*, father and mother, for Christ, when our love of them comes, at any time, in competition with our love of Him. When our love of our nearest relations, and dearest friends, becomes inconsistent with our love of Christ, the former must yield to the latter. We must prefer Christ, and God in Christ, to all the other objects of our esteem and affection. When the commands of our superiors among men, are at any time, contrary to the commandments of the Lord, then, “we are to obey God rather than men.” But although our natural duties to men, required in the second Table of the law, must give place to our natural duties to God, required in the first; yet, the *positive* duties enjoined in the first Table, must yield

to the *natural* duties required in the second, when they cannot *both* be performed at the same time.

9. In our obedience, we should have a special and constant respect to *the scope* and *final end*, at which the Lord aims, by all the commandments in general, or by any one of them in particular. The great end at which, God aims in general, in subordination to His own manifested glory, is perfect *holiness* of heart and life in His people, even as He himself is holy. Whatever obedience, therefore, he enjoins, He requires that it be absolutely perfect; and whatever obedience we perform, we are bound to aim at perfection in it; and to assure ourselves, that in proportion as we fall short of perfection, we sin, and come short of his glory. This rule, in the hand of the Spirit of truth, is of special use, to teach both sinners and saints, the true meaning of every Divine precept. The aim of God, in each of His commandments, is, perfection of holiness or of conformity "to the image of his Son, that he may be the first-born among many brethren." And the perfection in obedience, which He requires, is, as has been hinted above, a perfection of *principle*, that our obedience proceed from "a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from faith unfeigned;" a perfection of the *parts* of it, so that it be universal, in respect of all the commandments, or of all things written in the book of the law; a perfection of *degrees*, that every part of it, be raised to the very highest degree of conformity to the holy law; and a perfection in respect of *duration*, that from the beginning, to the end of our life, we continue "in all things, which are written in the book of the law, to do them."

10. Lastly, The beginning and the end, as well as the sum, of all the commandments, is *love*. "Love is the fulfilling of the law." "The end of the commandment is love." As all the blessings of God to His people, flow from, and are comprised in, His love to them; so all the duties of man to God, are comprehended in love to Him. The love of God to man, is the sum of the gospel; the love of man to God, is the sum of the law. Love to God as our God, is the sum of what is required in the first Table of the law; and love to our neighbour, is the whole of what is enjoined in the second. The former is called, "The first and great commandment;" and the latter is "like unto it". These two commandments are so closely connected together, that obedience to the one, cannot be performed, without obedience to the other. We cannot love God supremely, unless we love our neighbour as ourselves; nor can we love our neighbour, who was made in the image of God, as ourselves, except we love God who created him in his own image, with supreme affection. All the duties

required in the First Table of the law, are but the native expressions of supreme love to the Lord our God; and all the duties enjoined in the second, are only the genuine expressions of sincere love to our neighbour.

Now, Is it so, that our love of our neighbour, is to be subjected or subordinated to our love of God? We may hence learn, *how* we ought to love God, and *how* to love our neighbour. We must love God, *more* than we love ourselves, and love our neighbour, *as* ourselves. We are bound to love the Lord our God supremely, or with all the powers of our souls, and to love our neighbour co-ordinately, or as ourselves. To love the Lord our God, according to the commandment, with all our *heart*, is to love Him with a perfect degree of sincerity. To love Him with all our *soul*, is to love Him spiritually and affectionately, and that in a perfect degree; and to express our ardent affection to Him, by every instance of obedience in which, any faculty of our souls can be exercised. To love Him with all our *strength*, is, to love no other amiable object, so much as Him, and none, but in Him and for Him, or in subordination to Him. And to do it with all our *mind*, is, to regard Him with an intelligent love, or a superlative esteem: and to love Him principally, for His own infinite amiableness, as manifested especially, in the person and work of our adorable Redeemer. The highest degree of love, then, of which man, even in his state of innocence, was capable, is due to our God; but a less degree of it, is due to ourselves and our neighbour. To love our neighbour *as* ourselves, is, to love him in the same *manner*, as we ought to do, ourselves. A lawful and regular love of ourselves, is here implied: for it is made the pattern according to which, we ought to love others. This regular self-love is, an habitual desire and endeavour, always to aim at the happiness of our souls and bodies, in subordination to the glory of God. To love, then, our neighbour as ourselves, is, to love him as constantly, as sincerely, as tenderly, as ardently, as actively, and as inviolably, as we love ourselves. This love of our neighbour should be expressed, by our doing to him, all that we would, from a well informed judgment, have him to do to us, in the same relations and circumstances. We are required to love all men, with a love of benevolence and beneficence; but, the saints, not only with a love of benevolence, but with a love of complacency and delight. This love of God and of our neighbour, must flow “from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from faith unfeigned”. And when it proceeds from these principles, it is “the fulfilling of the law, ” the essence of true holiness, and “the bond

of perfectness." Reader, trust in the Lord Jesus with all thy heart, for all His salvation to thyself in particular, and especially for purity of heart, and peace of conscience; and then, thy faith will work by love.

It is evident from what has been said, that we were all born into the world, *utterly destitute of conformity* to the holiness of God's law. We were "born in iniquity and conceived in sin". We came into the world, entirely destitute of the moral image of God, and wholly under the dominion of natural depravity. The holy law commands us to love God supremely; but we by nature love ourselves supremely. It enjoins us to love our neighbour as ourselves; but we on the contrary hate our neighbour, especially, in relation to the momentous concerns of his immortal soul. The law requires us, to delight supremely in the Lord our God; but we, instead of this, delight only in sin, or at least, in that which is not God. We are commanded in the law, to "do all the glory of God;" but we are naturally disposed, to do all our own glory. These corrupt propensities are native, in the heart of every descendant of Adam and are directly contrary to the holy nature and law of God. So great is the contrariety, between the holy nature of God as expressed in His law, and the nature of a sinner; that God is said to hate sinners, and sinners, to hate Him. And no man has attained a true conviction of his sin, but he, whom the Holy Spirit has made to see and feel, that by nature he is a *hater* of God, and of the whole revealed character of God.

Hence it is manifest also, that the *very best actions* of unconverted persons, are *sinful* in the sight of God. Such persons, indeed, do many things that are materially good, but, nothing that is formally good; nothing, from a good principle, in a good manner, and to a good end. All that they do, is done, either directly or indirectly, in opposition to the holy commandments of the Lord; and so, it is sinful and hateful to Him. How then can such performances, atone for their past transgressions, and entitle them to the favour of God, and eternal life? Ah, how deep the infatuation, how great the folly, of relying on our own righteousness, for a title to eternal salvation!

From what has been said, it is evident, that it is a *righteous thing* with God, to require of unregenerate sinners, *what they cannot perform*. He commands them to love Him with all their hearts, and so, to perform perfect and perpetual obedience to His righteous law: but, in their state of unregeneracy, they have no moral ability, to perform a single duty according to the commandment. It is infinitely just, however, that the Lord

should require of sinners, what they are unwilling, and so, unable to perform; and, that He should condemn them to death, in all its latitude and extent, for not performing it. For, nothing can be more just and reasonable, than that, they should yield *perfect* obedience to *His* righteous law. He gave them, in the first Adam, sufficient ability to perform perfect obedience; and they chose to deprive themselves of it, by their transgression in him, as their federal representative. Besides, they have no inability but what is *voluntary*. They *love* the depravity of their hearts, and *choose* to commit iniquity. Indeed, if the Lord could not justly require of sinners, what they cannot perform; it would inevitably follow, that they could have no need, either that, the son of God should fulfil all righteousness for them, or that, his Holy Spirit should implant holiness in them. To say then, that God cannot *justly*, require sinners to perform that obedience to Him, which, of themselves they are unable to perform, tends to undermine at once, both the law and the gospel.

To conclude: We may hence see that, no influences of the Holy Spirit, but such as are *irresistable*, will suffice to convert a sinner to God, and to the love and practice of sincere obedience to his law. So strong and inveterate is the corruption, which is in the hearts of unregenerate sinners, that elect sinners do resist the saving operation of the Spirit, as much, and as long as they can; and were it not, that the adorable Spirit is *infinitely efficacious* in His operation, they would all so resist Him, as to hinder Him from converting them. An infinitely powerful operation of the Holy Spirit, such as will be sufficient, to conquer all the resistance made to it by sinners; is necessary to change their natures, and to make them willing to believe in Jesus Christ, and return through Him, to God as their God. Accordingly, the Holy Spirit, in converting sinners, is in Scripture represented, as “*putting* his laws into their minds, and *writing* them in their hearts,” as “*creating* them in Christ Jesus unto good works,” as *quickening* and *raising them up* from the dead, and as “*opening their eyes*,” and “*calling them* out of darkness into his marvellous light.” Hence, they are said to be born of the Spirit, to be new creatures, and to walk in newness of life. This great and wonderful change is indispensably necessary to true conversion. Happy, inexpressibly happy are you, reader, if you be a subject of it! No sooner do you begin to experience this happy change, than you begin, so to believe the gospel, as to have communion with the second Adam, in His righteousness and salvation, and so to obey the law, as to “walk worthy of the Lord to all pleasing”. — *John Colquhoun of Leith.*

Parable of the Marriage of the King's Son

(Brief Notes of a Lecture give by the late Rev. D. MacFarlane, Dingwall)

This is one of the most impressive of Christ's parables. Behold a royal marriage feast provided, and gracious invitations given, but, alas! the invitations rejected, the grace and kindness undervalued and despised. Still more, as the close of the parable shows, even some of those who are taken from "the highways," and profess to sit as sincere guests, are found unfit and unworthy, and cast into "the outer darkness." What a solemn, searching warning is here! I shall now proceed, as the Lord may help, to observe the details of the parable.

I. — The marriage supper.

1. Who made the supper? The King — God, the Father. Whose marriage is it? The marriage of His Son, Jesus Christ. Who is the bride? The Church. Is Christ the only Husband of the Church? Yes. Do some people say that pastors of congregations are married to the Church, or to the particular congregations over which they are ordained? Yes. Are they correct in saying that? No. I shall give the following reasons. (1) In Scripture there is none spoken of as the husband of the Church but Christ. "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom" (John 3: 29); "Thy Maker is thy husband" (Isaiah 54: 5). (2) It would be unlawful for a wife to have more than one husband. (3) Pastors are at the same time members of the Church, which is the bride of Christ, and it would be absurd to say that the wife was her own husband, or a joint-husband with Christ. (4) If pastors were married to the Church, then she would have as many husbands as there are pastors. Are some good people in the habit of saying that when a minister is ordained over a congregation he is married to the Church or to that particular congregation? What is the reason for this? That saying was handed down from Popery, which usurps the prerogative of Christ in relation to His Church; and these good people, although they believe that Christ is the only Husband of the Church, speak of it as a matter of habit, without inquiring whether it is scriptural or not. It is not scriptural; it is not true. May it not, however, be a fact that some pastors claim to be married to what is called a church? Yes; but such pastors are not Christ's pastors, and their so-called church is not His Church. For Christ will not allow any man to usurp His own place as the Husband of His Church, and His Church is taught to keep her own place in relation to Christ as her Husband, and made faithful so as not to accept of any other husband than Him. Christ

has been pleased to accept of her as His only bride, and she has been made willing — very willing — to accept of Him as her only husband. Let her keep the marriage covenant faithfully in heart, speech, and behaviour. Christ will keep His own part of it.

2. What is the supper? The Gospel provision. Why is it called a supper? (1) Because of the richness of the provision. It is the richest provision that was ever made for men or angels. In the East it is said that supper was the best meal of the day. So is the Gospel provision. (2) Because, as supper is the last meal of the day, the New Testament dispensation is the last that will be given. These are the last days in which God speaks to us, and He speaks to us now through His Son.

II. — The invitation. — Who sends the invitation? God, the King. Who are sent by Him to invite? His servants. Who are these? (1) John the Baptist; (2) Christ, the Bridegroom; (3) the Apostles; and (4) Gospel ministers to the end of time. Did these servants go on their errand? Yes, they all obeyed the command of the King.

Who were invited? (1) The Jews; (2) the Gentiles. Was this the first time the Jews were invited to the marriage supper? No, for it is said that the servants were sent "to call them that were *bidden*." They were bidden before by the prophets, and now are bidden once more, but it will be the last time. When sinners who have been often called are again called to come to Christ, may it not be the last call? It may, and it is so with some. What was the result of the invitation? The Jews refused to comply with the invitation sent to them by the first messengers. "And they would not come" (verse 3). Other servants were sent to them with the same message, urging up on them to come, and adding that "all things are now ready" (verse 4). But they made light of it, and went their ways — one to his farm, another to his merchandise (verse 5). Others, who were persecutors, entreated the servants spitefully and slew them. The former were more civil; they did not say any bad word to the servants. Perhaps they spoke well of the marriage which was to be celebrated, but they were too busy with their lawful callings to leave them at present for going to a marriage — even a royal marriage. The latter were determined enemies of the King and His Son, and so they slew them. Who were the servants that were slain by these ruffians? John the Baptist was beheaded, Christ was crucified, some of the Apostles were put to death in other ways, and many of Christ's ministers since were put to death in a most barbarous manner. People would not deal in this cruel way with servants sent forth by an earthly king to invite them to the marriage of his son. They would consider it a great honour to be invited. But when the Lord of hosts sends

His servants — His own Beloved among them — to invite sinners to come to the Saviour, this is the treatment they often meet with at the hands of some whom they invite!

How did the King take this insult to His gracious invitation, and cruel treatment of His servants? "He was wroth" (verse 7). How did He manifest His righteous displeasure at them? "He sent forth his armies, and destroyed these murderers and burned their city" (verse 7). Who were the armies employed to execute this judgment upon them? The Romans. Did the Romans know that they were actuated by God to do this work? No; they had no thoughts of it. They had their own selfish ends in view, but God accomplished His purpose through them towards His enemies. What does the King call those that slew His servants? "*Murderers*". Are those who persecute and slay God's servants and people murderers? Yes, the worst kind of murderers. What will God do with such men? He will destroy them. According to law the murderer must be hanged. May not these murderers flee to some hiding-place and thus escape the punishment they deserve? No; for God will find them out and bring them to trial. There can be no possible escape. When shall they be so dealt with? (1) Sometimes in this world, as in the case of the Jews whom God destroyed by the Romans, and burnt their city; (2) at death, when their souls shall be cast into hell; and (3) at the day of judgment, when their bodies, re-united to their souls, shall be punished in the place of everlasting torment. The day of judgment will be a day of awful revelations. All secret sins, which lay hid from the eye of other men, shall be disclosed and made bare before the eyes of all men and angels, and those who committed them shall be dealt with according to their desert, if they die unpardoned. All murderers — and those, especially, who murdered God's people — shall be punished according to the aggravation of their sins. Many a neck shall, so to speak, be stretched on that day of final reckoning; many a body shall swing before the gaze of an innumerable assemblage of spectators.

Were there any guests found for the wedding? Yes. Where were they found? "In the highways." Who are meant by those in the highways? The Gentiles. When the Jews refused, the King sent His servants to invite the Gentiles. "Go ye," he said, "into the highways, and bid them to the marriage." Before the invitation came to the Gentiles, did they expect to be honoured with a call to the royal marriage? No. How did they treat the invitation? Not like the Jews; they readily complied with it. They came in great multitudes, "and the wedding was furnished with guests." Nothing will gather so many people as the Gospel.

Were all who came good people? No; they were a mixed company — some were good, others bad. Does this mean that some are good by nature and others bad that are invited to come to Christ? No, for all are bad by nature — “there is no difference” — and they are, as such, invited to the Saviour, that they may be made good. What, then, is meant? That of the many who are gathered into the visible Church, and make a profession of religion, many shall be found to be hypocrites when God shall bring them to judgment.

When they were all gathered who came in to see them? The King. Did He notice that there were some among them who were hypocrites? Yes. By what mark were they distinguished from the rest? By their garment. Is it the outward garment of the body that is meant? No. What, then? The garment of the soul. What is that garment we require that we may be approved of God? The righteousness of Christ. Yes, that is the garment that can make us acceptable to Him. Is there any other garment needed in order to be prepared for heaven? Yes; the garment of holiness (Psalm 45: 13); The one is to be had by the imputation of Christ's righteousness; the other by the sanctifying work of the Spirit in us. “Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.”

Was there only one of the guests without the wedding garment? Yes. And only one is mentioned as a specimen of many others who were in a similar condition. Why was that man without the necessary apparel while others had it? He thought his own was good enough, and therefore he did not apply for a better. He was honest in his dealings with his fellow-creatures, was outwardly decent, and was a regular attendant at church, and he imagined that that was sufficient. How did the King deal with this man? He spoke to him. What did He say to him? (1) He called him “friend.” Why did He call him “friend”? Not because he was really so, but because he pretended or feigned to be a friend — just as Christ called Judas by that name. What did He say to him after this? “How camest thou in hither?” Why did He ask him “*How*”, and not “*Why*”? To remind him that it was not by the door — the only lawful way of entrance — he came in. Who is the door? Christ. He says, “I am the door.” As the poor sinner did not come in by that door, no wonder although he was without the wedding garment. Had the man anything to say in his own defence? No; he had no plea at the bar of God. His mouth was shut. Could he not have pled that he was earnest in religion, and acted according to the light he had? No, for if he could, he would have done it. Could he not have pled that he was not elected, and that if he had been he would have the necessary preparation, like others? No, for if

he could, he would have done it. Could he not have pled that he could not convert himself, that this was God's work, and therefore cast the blame upon God? No, for if he could, he would have done it. Could he not have pled that if he got one more chance he would make sure of being prepared? No, for if he could, he would have done it in so critical a position. His mouth was shut; he had nothing to plead at God's bar in his own defence.

Do sinners under the Gospel bring forward the excuses I have mentioned, and many others, when they are pressed to come to Christ? Yes. Will they be able to adduce these when God shall bring them to account? No; their mouth shall be shut, as that man's mouth was. Do many blame God, their fellow-creatures, and Satan now for their not being in Christ — for their not being converted to God? Yes. What shall become of all these excuses — for they are only excuses — when they shall appear before the judgment-seat of Christ? They shall all vanish away like smoke. Their mouth shall be closed, as the mouth of that man was. Probably that man had many excuses to plead in his own defence till the King came in and brought him to trial, but then his mouth was closed. O my soul, take warning; O fellow-sinner, take warning! Cast away all your vain excuses; come to Christ now. This may be the last call to you. Fall down on your knees; cry for mercy; for God still waits to be gracious. Christ says. "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out."

Did the King take further proceedings against this man? Yes. He gave orders about him. To whom did He give these orders? To His servants. What were the servants ordered to do with him?

(1) To bind him hand and foot — "Bind him hand and foot." Why were his hands to be bound? It is by their hands men work, and God says, "I know thy works." But there is nothing laid to his charge but that he wanted the wedding garment. But all he did, however good as to the matter of it, was sinful, because it was not done from the right principle and from the right motive. It did not spring from the principle of grace in his soul, and it was not done from the motive of glorifying God; and therefore his hands must be bound. At death the hands of sinners shall be bound so that they cannot do the evil works which they did in their lifetime. Why were his feet to be bound? It is by their feet men walk, and this man walked in his own self-righteous way and despised the righteousness of Christ; and therefore his feet must be bound. Sinners who walk in their own evil ways and trample upon God's commandments shall have their feet bound at death, so that they will be no longer

able to walk in the ways in which they had formerly walked. They cannot trample upon God's holy law any more in the world. Is there anything more to be understood by his being bound hand and foot? Yes; for when a man is so bound he is unable to do anything for himself; he is powerless. Will that be the case of sinners at death? Yes; they shall be quite powerless to help themselves. Besides, when a man is bound hand and foot he is absolutely in the power of him that bound him. He can deal with him as he pleases. And in like manner, sinners at death are absolutely in the power of God. Many say now, "Our mouth is our own, our hands and feet are our own, and we may do with them as we please. We may speak what we like; we may do what we think ourselves, and not what God commands us to do; and we can walk out on the Sabbath, seeking our own pleasure, although God says, 'Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy'." But when their mouth is shut and their hands and feet are bound they cannot act in that way. O Sabbath-breaker, take warning! You got many warnings already, but if you turn your feet now — even now — from profaning the Lord's day, it may not be too late. "Turn at my reproof," God says. "Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?"

(2) They were commanded to take him away. The King said, "Take him away." Hitherto he was in the company of God's people, but now he must part company with them for ever. Is it thus how it shall be at death with those who are not true professors of religion? Yes. They are now in the company of the Lord's people; they are with them in the same church, under the same Gospel ministry, sitting with them at the Lord's table, and thus making the same public profession of being the disciples of Christ. But as they want the wedding garment they shall be taken away from the good company in which they had so long been, and with whom they had no sympathy or real likeness. "The ungodly shall not stand in judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous" (Psalm 1: 5). O, the solemn parting — never, never to meet again! O, seek not only to be in the company of the Lord's people, seek to be of the blessed number, or you shall be taken away from their company at death, as that man was by the order of the King.

(3) They were ordered to cast him into outer darkness. Why is that place called "outer darkness"? Because there is not the least ray of light in it. Are not sinners in a state of nature in darkness? Yes, and on that account they are called "darkness" itself. "Ye who were once *darkness* are now made light in the Lord." But although sinners are in that darkness in this world, yet it is not "outer darkness," because the light of the Gospel has shined upon this sinful world. That light shines about

them, though the darkness comprehends it not. There is hope for sinners as long as they are within the call of the Gospel. This is a great privilege. But those who go to the other world refusing the Saviour are cast into "outer darkness," where the light of the Gospel never shines. There is nothing there but utter and everlasting despair, and therefore it is called "outer darkness". The darkness in which sinners are now in Gospel lands is but *inner darkness*. That is an "outer darkness" — there is no darker darkness beyond it. It is the "blackness of darkness". O, fellow-sinner, *flee from the works of darkness; flee to Christ, the "Light of the world", "the Sun of righteousness"*. Seek to be made light in the Lord. It may not yet be too late. The Gospel call is to you as long as you are within the bounds of time. If you die refusing the Saviour, there is nothing else awaiting you in eternity but to be cast into "outer darkness"!

Why are those in that place said to be *weeping*? Because of their great suffering and misery. They rejoiced on earth while they ought to have been weeping and bemoaning themselves, like Ephraim when he repented; but now they weep bitterly, and for ever. God's people wept in the world, and the world — the wicked — rejoiced. But now the tables are turned. God's people rejoice in heaven, and never weep again; the wicked weep in hell, and never rejoice any more. They endure the greatest conceivable sufferings, and are in the depth of the greatest misery, and therefore they are said to *weep*.

Why are they said to gnash their teeth? (1) Because of their great suffering, as when people are in extreme pain they gnash their teeth. (2) It is a manifestation of their heart's enmity against God. Like a furious dog that is chained, when he cannot get at you to tear your flesh, he gnashes his teeth at you. The wicked in this world hate God, and they show their hatred in disobedience, transgression of His law, and in neglecting the great salvation and rejecting Christ. And as they are, in eternity, bound hand and foot, they manifest their enmity to God by gnashing their teeth at Him. But by so doing they only increase their own misery.

O, sinner, seek that your heart's enmity against God may be slain by the death of Christ, and that the love of God may be shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Ghost, so that you may be enabled to say, "I love the Lord"; or that enmity shall be a scourge, tormenting you for ever in the "outer darkness". "He that sinneth against me," Christ says, "wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death" (Prov. 8: 36). But so long as you are in the land of the living you are invited to Christ. "All things are ready; come unto the marriage." This may be the last call to you.

Book Review

Sermons by Rev. Donald MacFarlane. Free Presbyterian Publications. 300pp. Price £4.

This volume of sermons by Rev. Donald MacFarlane, one of the founder Fathers of the Free Presbyterian Church, was first published in 1918 under the title "Sermons on the love of God and Cognate Themes." It is now re-issued with the simple title "Sermons." The sermons contained in this volume are able and spiritual discourses well fitted, not only for the instruction of the spiritually ignorant but also for the edification of the people of God. There is combined in these sermons simplicity and depth as well as warmth and liveliness.

In our day the reading of sermons has greatly declined, much to the loss of those who have neglected to peruse the many volumes of sermons of noted ministers of bygone days. However, if the Church is to regain the spirituality which it has to such a large degree lost, one of the means used to this end will be the reading of the discourses of the old divines. Here then is an opportunity for young — yes, I mean young — and old to begin a practice that will prove beneficial both to themselves and others. Mr MacFarlane's sermons are truly in the line of the old divines and therefore should prove beneficial in giving many in our day a relish for what is spiritually edifying.

If Mr MacFarlane's sermons need any recommendation, the fact that they were greatly valued by the godly and the poor of the flock should be recommendation enough. It is our desire that these sermons by Mr MacFarlane may have a wide circulation far beyond the bounds of the Free Presbyterian Church, and that they may be blessed of the Lord to the good of never-dying souls.

D. B. M.

Notes and Comments

Church of Scotland Survey

If the results of the Church of Scotland's Social Responsibility Committee's "lifestyle" survey embracing 500 Church Members and 1000 people chosen from the electoral register are to be taken seriously then, spiritually, things are indeed at a very low ebb within that denomination and throughout the land. About one quarter of Church of Scotland members, it is said, question the reality of Christ's resurrection from the dead as well as His death as a sin bearer. Just over half are said to believe

in life after death. We can only express our agreement with the Church of Scotland's own spokesman who, according to the Press, said that the Report was "an indictment on the whole Church that it has been unable to present the full Gospel."

A Jewish "Saint"?

The Pope's action in beatifying Edith Stein, a Jewish-born Carmelite nun has apparently raised a storm of criticism among Jews. They say she died in Auschwitz because she was Jewish and not, as Rome would have it, because she was a Roman Catholic nun. If the Pope thought his action would be conciliatory and win round those Jews whose memories are long enough to recall Vatican indifference to Nazi anti-Semitism, he was mistaken. His appeal, made in Cologne on the occasion of the beatification, for what he called "Christian-Jewish solidarity" in order to guard against "all new forms of anti-Semitism" would seem to have fallen on deaf Jewish ears. Edith Stein's niece no doubt spoke for many when she said that "the tribute could not make up for the passivity of the Catholic church during the period when six million Jews were killed". If only the Jewish criticism were based on the fact that the ceremony of beatification was both unscriptural and blasphemous! But, alas, the veil yet remains upon their hearts.

The Treaty of Dover

For twenty-eight years the Covenanted Church of Scotland contended valiantly and at great cost in shed blood for Christ's alone Headship over the Church. This of necessity brought it into conflict with Stuart absolutism. Those blessed with discernment had no difficulty in recognising Charles II as an unprincipled tyrant. By the Sanquhar Declaration on 22nd June, 1680, Richard Cameron and his like-minded companions disowned him "as having any right, title to, or interest in the crown of Scotland". "We declare," they said, "that several years since, he should have been denuded of being king, ruler or magistrate, or having any power to act, or to be obeyed as such. As also we, being under the standard of our Lord Jesus Christ, Captain of Salvation, do declare war with such a tyrant and usurper, and all the men of his practices, as enemies to our Lord Jesus Christ and His cause and covenants . . ." At Torwood Donald Cargill included him among those whom he excommunicated. He did so because Charles was known to be "working for the introduction of Popery into these lands" and also for "his great and dreadful uncleanness of adultery and incest, his drunkenness, his

dissembling with God and man . . . ”

Proof of the fact that the Covenanters were not mistaken in their views of Charles' character and motives is to be found in the Clifford Papers which were discovered in 1933 in a chest at the ancestral home of the Clifford family at Chudleigh in Devon. The *Daily Telegraph* of 5th May, 1987 reported that these papers were now to be sold and among them the British copy of the 1670 secret Treaty of Dover signed by Charles II and Louis XIV of France. It specifically provided for the British monarch to become a Roman Catholic and join forces with the French king in order that together they might dominate Europe and the rest of the world. The *Daily Telegraph* correspondent draws attention to the fact that after the treaty was signed the first move made towards carrying its provisions into effect was the invasion of Holland in 1672, France invading overland and England by sea. Dutch resistance led by the 21-year-old Prince William of Orange brought the Treaty to a premature end. "It was the most scandalous piece of paper ever signed by a king" is the opinion of Dr Ronald Hutton of Bristol University the only person who has inspected the Clifford Papers "totally and in fine detail". We believe that his opinion is to be respected.

Church Notes

Opening of New Church at Laide

The history of the Free Presbyterian Congregation, Laide, goes back to 1893 when a group of pious people separated from the old Free Church because of the passing of the infamous Declaratory Act that year. Six godly men took the lead, and were followed by a considerable number of people. A number of families, alas, became divided because of disagreement about the need to separate. In some of these it was the women who took the lead while the men followed later. This separation from the Free Church left the group without a place of worship.

Prior to 1893 there was a cave on the sea coast of Laide which was used by the local Churches for meetings, and it was in this cave that our people worshiped in the beginning. There is one person still living who was one of the last three to be baptised in the cave in 1895 by Rev. J. R. MacKay, Gairloch. The cave is still intact but is reduced in size due to being used for many years as a shelter for sheep. The stone dyke, built in the front of the cave to give a shelter from the northerly winds sweeping across Gruinard Bay, still stands.

In 1900 the men of the congregation built a meeting house. The chosen site, formerly used for storing crofting materials, was donated by one of

the men of the congregation. Those who had a horse and cart gave freely of their transport and time for carrying building materials from Aultbea Pier to the site, and those who were able contributed money for the new building.

Over the many years since its completion it has proved to be a happy meeting place where not only families met together on Sabbath and weekday, but where the Lord met with His people to feed their souls, and where he met with others to bring them to a saving interest in Christ.

Communion seasons were held every year in the month of September, and people gathered from the neighbouring communities: Gairloch, Shildaig, Diabeg, Scoraig and Ullapool, to mention a few. Many came by boat, and hundreds gathered in the hollow by the shore, where the communion services were held in the open air until the nineteen thirties. Some of our people recall hot Septembers, when old men at the services would be shielding their heads from the burning sun with handkerchiefs; or occasional chilly Septembers when they had to be well wrapped up. Others remember the blessedness of those gospel times, the heavenliness of the psalm singing, the sweet fellowship of the Lord's people and the great kindness shown by the Laide people to the visitors among them. It was also a time of fruitfulness, when many came to receive the privilege of baptism and to publicly profess faith in Christ by sitting at the Lord's table for the first time. Records show that the Kirk Session was conscientious and thorough in its examination of applicants for these privileges.

From its inception the Laide congregation was classed as a Mission Station with its own elders and Kirk Session, and served by a number of noted missionaries over the years. Later, while continuing to be a Mission Station, it came under the oversight of Gairloch Kirk Session. Mr Sandy Maclean, Gairloch, was the last Missionary of Laide, and when his service drew to an end because of declining health, the Congregation felt it ought to seek for a settled pastor. Steps were therefore taken in that direction and in 1973 the Synod granted that the Laide congregation be raised to the status of a sanctioned charge with the right to call a minister. In 1980 the present writer felt led to accept a call from the Congregation to be its pastor.

In 1983 the Deacon's Court decided to renovate the old meeting house, and at the same time to enlarge it was inadequate for Communion seasons and had insufficient parking space attached to it. As it was not possible to obtain adjacent land for this purpose, it was decided that the only practical thing to do was to build a new church on another site — a very big undertaking for our comparatively small congregation. A site

was therefore eventually obtained, beside the manse and a few hundred yards south of the meeting house. Plans were prepared, local authority permissions were obtained, a grant and loan were given by the Finance Committee of the Church, and donations were given by many kind friends. Buidling work then began and was brought to completion under the able skills of MacRae Brothers and their employees.

On 27th March this year the new building was opened for public worship. That extremely stormy Friday evening, friends came from many parts, from far as well as near, to be with us on this memorable occasion. The church (which comfortably accommodates 220 people) held 350 with the help of extra seats in the aisles and other places. Rev. Lachlan Macleod, Greenock, preached a most appropriate sermon from Genesis 28: 19. "And he called the name of that place Bethel . . ." Glasgow elders, Mr A Gilles and Mr W. Fraser were the precentors. Thereafter Rev. Angus MaKay, Inverness, and Rev. Angus MaKay, formerly of Tarbert, addressed the congregation, expressing their pleasure in being present at the opening of such a beautiful place of worship, and wishing the blessing of the Lord in it, so that it would be a Bethel indeed.

After the service tea was provided by the ladies of the congregation, the spread of good things having been contributed to also by kind friends in the community. It was very encouraging to hear that the collection that evening amounted to £2349.

We may add that on the Sabbath of our communion in April nearly 200 gathered for the morning service and over 200 for the evening service, so that our new church was in full use.

As a congregation we have great cause for much gratitude to God for His kindness to us in providing this new place of worship; and for the kindness shown by friends throughout the church and by others not belonging to the church. When we think of our forefathers, in the beginnings of our church, having to suffer much discomfort when seeking to worship God according to the Scriptures, and prior to our beginnings as a church, the godly in Scotland having to flee to the hills from their persecutors, we are reminded that we must be heartily thankful to the Lord that in His kind providence we can gather for worship in much comfort and without interference. How we ought to be praising Him as the Psalmist did: "Thou art good, and doest good." Ps. 119: 68.

— D. A. R.

Mission News

As I write, Miss Marion Graham is in Scotland for one month. Her bronzed colouring bears testimony to the exceptionally hot summer weather they have had in Zimbabwe. It has been another season of scant rain and poor crops, which is very sad for the people dependent on the fields for food.

Mission teachers from overseas are now included in the Unified Teachers' list; hence Miss Graham's short visit home, while the John Tallach Secondary School is closed for the usual Easter holiday, and the Education Department considers the question of furloughs.

The eight blind or partially-sighted pupils are hard at work. One boy, Paris, was seventh in Form 2 for the whole year's work. Richard is the only pupil totally blind from birth. Miss MacLennan says it is touching to see how careful the others are, although they themselves have such limited sight, that he does not bump into anything.

Margaret Maturure, confined during the day to a wheelchair, is back again at Ingwenya. She was at school in Bulawayo for two years, but she did not secure sufficient O-levels to enter University. While she was in Bulawayo Mr William Campbell and later Mr James Taylor took Margaret to church each Sabbath morning. We trust that the Saviour, who had compassion on the multitude, will bless the Word to the children who pass through our schools in their hundreds and who hear the Gospel faithfully preached, Sabbath and weekday. The Rev. D. B. MacLeod preached on many occasions, and on one memorable morning preached on, "And Enoch walked with God."

Margaret MacAskill arrived at Mbuma Mission on 31st March, at dusk, to find the little cottage lovingly prepared for her, ablaze with light. "It is lovely to be back" Margaret writes in a circular letter, "and everyone has given me a warm welcome. A few days ago in Ward One a little girl came forward and thrust a live hen into my arms, an expression of kindness from one of the women. Duty started the following day after my arrival, with the Baby Clinic, and on Thursday I was able to get my hand in doing some dental extractions, which much to the amusement of some, I really enjoy.

"There was a good attendance at the services on the following Sabbath. The singing seemed to be particularly hearty and harmonious."

The Rev. P. Mzamo, minister at Mbuma, was probably supplying Bulawayo congregation now sadly bereft of their pastor. When having worship at the Bulawayo Manse after the passing of the Rev. A. Mpofu, the Rev. D. B. MacLeod spoke briefly on "Daniel, a man greatly

beloved". He was indeed a loving and warm-hearted pastor, and is greatly missed.

Mrs Alfred Mpofu has moved to Zenka, 100 miles north-west of Bulawayo where their family home has been, and she will D.V. continue to teach there.

Their girls are grown up and their only son, Melusi (Shepherd) is attending Harare University.

Miss Jantein van Saane hopes to leave for Zimbabwe on May 14, and to remain until November, D.V. This will enable Miss Jessie Coote to have her "leave".

We heard with sadness of the death of Masibanda, the mother of the Rev. Ndebele, in her 91st year. Before going to hospital, where she passed away, she was lovingly cared for by the Rev. and Mrs Ndebele at Ingwenya.

We look forward with pleasure to hearing or reading of some of the Rev. D. B. MacLeod's experiences while in Zimbabwe. It was an added pleasure for all that his daughter, Joanna, was able to join her father in Zimbabwe for five weeks.

— J. N.

Presbytery Meetings (D.V.)

Southern: At Glasgow on 16th June at 6 p.m.

Skye: At Portree on 30th June at 11 a.m.

Northern: At Dingwall on 16th June at 2 p.m.

Western: At Laide on 16th June at 11 a.m.

Outer Isles: At Stornoway on 16th June at 12 noon.

The Rev. D. B. MacLeod's Return

We are thankful to record that the Rev. D. B. MacLeod returned home safely on 30th April after having, in the Lord's kind providence fulfilled his duties as a deputy in Zimbabwe, Malawi and Kenya. He now resumes his editorial duties.

The Rev. Dr. James R. Tallach's Visit to Australia and New Zealand

The Rev. James R. Tallach's four month sojourn in Australia and New Zealand will be completed this month and he is due to return home on 26th June D.V. We trust his labours are being blessed and pray that he also will be safely brought back to his own family and congregation.

Acknowledgement of Donations

The General Treasurer, Room 7, Seafield House, Seafield Road, Inverness, acknowledges the following donations with sincere thanks:—

Sustentation Fund: Anon., £50; Anon., "God will I bless all times," £100.

Foreign Mission Fund: Anon., £50; Anon., "God will I bless all times," £70 for Bulawayo Church; J. N. Reynolds, Bristol, £100; Bethel S.B. Chapel, Luton, £50; Friends, Luton, £51; Skye Friend, £50 for Mbumba Hospital, £50 for Nkulamani Church, £50 for Kenya expenses, £50 for Malawi expenses.

Organisation Fund: Anon., £70, "God will I bless all times."

Dominion/Overseas Fund: Skye Friend, £50 for New Zealand and £50 for Australia funds.

Home of Rest, Harris: A Friend, Harris, £80.

Trinitarian Bible Society : Kyle Congregation, £63.80; Plockton Congregation, £7.

The Treasurers of the following congregations acknowledge with sincere thanks the following donations:—

Breasclete: Anon., £120 for Congregational Funds.

Dingwall: Wayfarer, £10 for Congregational Funds; "In memory of a dear wife," £50 for Congregational Funds; Psalm 72: 17-19, £100 for Sustentation Fund.

Dundee: Anon., Inverness, £100 for Sustentation Fund.

Fort William: Mrs S., £50; Anon., £3; Mrs B., £2; Anon., £10; Anon., £3, last four per envelope in plate; Friend, Caol, £10 for Sustentation Fund; Friend, Caol, £10 for Church Floor Repairs, both per Rev. J. A. MacD.; A. McG., £5 for Church Floor Repairs and £5 for Sustentation Fund, per D. McN.

Greenock: Friend, Mull, £10, "Where most needed", per envelope in plate.

Lochbroom: J. MacL., Polbain, £52 for Sustentation Fund; Mrs E. McL., Ullapool, £5 for T.B.S.; B. N., Achnahaird, "In memory of her dear brothers and sister," £125 for Congregational Fund; from the estate of Mrs Hughina Ross, £2690.97, per Murdoch MacPhail & Co., Solicitors, Dingwall; Anon. (Jan.), £10; £10; Anon. (Feb.), £15; Anon. (Mar.), £15; Anon. (Apr.), £15, all for Sustentation Fund and per envelope in plate.

Stornoway: Friend, Glasgow, £50 for Sustentation Fund, per Rev. J. Macleod; Anon., £40 for T.B.S., per Treasurer.

Sydney Congregation: Anon., Grafton, \$400.00; Anon., Grafton, \$80.00; Anon., Brisbane, \$500.00.