

## PERFECTION

(Discourse below by Pastor Russell given in Calgary, Alberta, Canada in June 1913. Taken from the 1913 convention report, page 157.)

The text before my mind on this occasion is our Master's words, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect." That to my mind is a very wonderful text; it states such a wonderful thought. And there is another like unto it, "Be ye holy; for I am holy." And there is another one like that: "Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God."

As we find those statements in God's Word, and then realize our own littleness and imperfection, we say to ourselves, What does the Lord mean when He says for us to be perfect as our Father in Heaven is perfect? How could we imperfect beings be like our God? Like many of our dear Savior's expressions, it is a dark saying; as when he said, "Except ye eat of the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." It is a dark saying, it needs something to illuminate it, something to enlighten us as to what he does mean. As Saint Paul declares, the natural man receives not the things of the spirit of God, neither can He know them, because they are spiritually discerned, so when our Lord used these words to his disciples they were still natural men and of course they did not fully comprehend what He meant, just as we ourselves did not at one time comprehend. It seemed like a rather exaggerated statement, hyperbole, poetic license as we would say—something said and not meant. But as we receive the Lord's spirit, this becomes our instructor. The Apostle says that God has given us the spirit that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. That is to say, that we might be able to comprehend the deep things of God's character and plan.

So as New Creatures in Christ we begin to receive nourishment in our hearts and minds and feed upon the things of God. With our first knowledge of the Lord we find more and more of our own imperfection; but we did not know at first how imperfect we were; the imperfections of the flesh grew upon us; that is to say, our appreciation of them increased. At one time we thought we were models in every way, and that perhaps no people in the world were more upright in character and more honest than we, more anxious to do the right or square thing; and yet after we came to know the Lord and to understand more and more of His Word, we began to see that there were imperfections of character we did not know of at first. And this was part of the leading of the Lord's spirit, to show us our own selves and to cause us to more and more aspire to the perfections that He would set before us. Gradually as we came to hearken to the Master's Word, and as we were guided by the Holy Spirit, and that was in proportion as we gave heed, in proportion as we surrendered ourselves to know the Lord's will and to do it—in that same proportion we began to see a little more and a little more the reason and the logic connected with these statements. They become plain to us now. These admonitions

are not given to us as natural men, but apply only to those who become New Creatures in Christ. The Lord knows that your flesh could not be perfect like unto your Heavenly Father. He knows we are all born in sin and misshaped in iniquity, that we are as disposed to sin as the sparks fly upward, as the Bible assures us.

And here comes in a remarkable thing: that we must become New Creatures before we can have any of these new experiences. How do we become New Creatures? As human beings we are not worthy of Divine acceptance; we are informed that we are under the sentence of death, and our only hope of life is by becoming associated with the Life-giver; and if the Son shall make us free from the bondage of sin and death we will be free indeed; if the Son shall give light then we will have light indeed, for in Him is the light of the world, and God brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel. What is this message, then, we have through Him? It is that being sinners we are part of the whole world of sinners, part of the whole that He died to redeem. And, furthermore, that while He is not yet ready to deal with the world he is prepared to deal with a certain special class; namely, with the class that desires to forsake sin and to turn their whole heart to God; and turning to God to fully submit themselves to Him to do His will at any cost. In other words, to sacrifice themselves, to sacrifice their wills. This, then, is the meaning that comes to us, that God is calling for a special class to be heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ, our Lord to the Heavenly inheritance. An inheritance implies a gift or a promise. God has promised a Heavenly inheritance. He did not promise it in the vague way He promised Abraham, that some of his seed would become as stars of Heaven, the special seed, the Abrahamic seed, the Messiah seed. In the New Testament He brought to light this immortality which is the gift of God to the Church, as well as everlasting life for the world; and so the Apostle, explaining God's plan tells us that ours is a high calling, a Heavenly calling, a calling to the Heavenly nature.

Now things begin to shape before our minds, and we begin to see that before God deals with humanity in general He is dealing with a special class, and this special class is to become a new nature, and that new nature is of a higher nature. We are now of the human nature, which is the highest of all earthly natures, and He invites us to the Divine Nature which is the highest of all Heavenly or spiritual natures. What a wonderful proposition! Can it be true that God would invite us who are so imperfect and so little, members of the fallen race, to become members of the Divine Nature, far above the Angelic nature, above Cherubim and Seraphim?! Yes, even so, as the Apostle says, God hath given unto us exceeding great and precious promises that by these we might become partakers of the Divine Nature. It takes us a little while to recover from our breathless astonishment—astonishment that God should have such a wonderful, broad, comprehensive and benevolent plan for those who were once enemies through wicked works, once under the condemnation of death. Our minds were indeed illuminated when we learned that he had a plan of salvation for the world, that God so loved the world that He gave His Son that whosoever believeth might not perish; but to hear that not only we

were not to perish but if we would become associated with our Savior in the present time and under the present call we might attain to that highest of all natures, seems too wonderful to believe. It staggers our faith, it is so much more than we would have dreamed of. But gradually as we get to know our Heavenly Father these things become more reasonable to us, and we see that he is operating along the lines of certain principles and what He is especially seeking for is obedience and loyalty. He has plenty of room, and plenty of work to do, and He would just as soon take us if we are loyal of heart as to take the Angels, and He would rather take us than the Angels because if we pass through the experiences that He has mapped out then indeed it will prove us and develop in us character, and we will have had experiences such as no Angel ever had. And therefore He extends to the Church, the followers in the footsteps of Jesus, these wonderful blessings beyond anything he has ever offered to the Angelic Hosts—to become sharers with Messiah in His glorious reign, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ our Lord, to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for you—you who are kept by the power of God unto salvation ready to be revealed in the end of this age.

When once we get our minds illuminated to this degree, and see that it is the offer of God to us to become New Creatures we say, Were these words of Jesus addressed to the New Creature or to the Old Creature? Did He mean to say that as men and women in the flesh we should be like unto our Father in Heaven? Or did He mean that we as New Creatures who have been begotten of his Holy Spirit should become like unto our Father in Heaven? Oh, the latter, surely. The human being with its imperfections could never be like God, and we feel that continually. We have these imperfections day by day. Each and all of God's children know or ought to know of their own blemishes by nature and that they could be nothing in God's sight except through the covering merit of our Savior's sacrifice applied to us as his Bride class. But when we come to understand and appreciate the matter it is this: That He looked first of all to those who would respond to the invitation, to the call. What was the call? The call, or otherwise as the Scriptures speak of it, drawing, came to us before we came to Jesus. As the Lord said, No man can come unto me except the Father which sent me draw him. The Father did the drawing but He would not receive us; when we responded to the drawing He pointed us to the Son—the way, the truth and the life—saying that no man could come unto Him except through the Son. But what was the drawing? The drawing was that desire of our heart before we came to God at all, for righteousness, for God. How could that be, if it was natural to us? How could that be a drawing of God? We answer that in God's arrangement when He created our first parents they were very good, in his own image, they had a desire for harmony with God; that was part of their perfection; the human brain was so constructed that it was the very life of our first parents to be in fellowship with their God. The very essence of their joy and pleasure would be to be in accord with him, and when sin came in and they were cut off from fellowship with the Father that must have been one of their most grievous troubles. Just as it was you remember in the case of our Lord Jesus, who

in His dying moments cried, My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken Me? That was the most terrible moment of all His experiences. The perfect man Christ Jesus had always been in fellowship with His Father but now at the very last moment, for one moment at least, He must bear the full penalty of sin and must be treated exactly as the sinner was treated; He must be thoroughly separated or cut off from that fellowship with God; and that was His severest moment as we see. So our race cut off from fellowship with God, nevertheless would have the hungering soul's Divine care, the Divine love and goodness. Father Adam and Mother Eve must have greatly desired this; otherwise they could not have been in the perfect image of God.

But as the centuries of sin and death rolled on, and the race became more and more depraved and demoralized, this hungering of soul after God, this feeling after God, was more or less lost, and the character-likeness of God became more and more blurred, faint and indistinct, and so in some more and in some less this desire for God still remains, but in some it is so feeble that they care little and are easily satisfied by the pleasures of this life, or by the sensualities of life, and sometimes they are separated from God through ignorance and the doctrines of demons, as the Bible declares. Misunderstanding God, they are thus driven away from Him instead of being drawn to Him. Whatever of natural drawing they might have had, the great Adversary intervenes and seeks to thwart; as Saint Paul declares, The God of this world hath blinded the minds of all those who believe not lest the light should shine unto them, should be seen of them, lest God should draw them, lest the light of the knowledge of God as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ our Lord should shine in their hearts and scatter the darkness, and make known to them more and more the true character of God and thus they should be drawn of Him.

But with some of us the Adversary's powers have not prevailed; with some of us the drawing influence of desire for God and righteousness has prevailed above this stupefying influence of the world, the flesh and the Devil, and these are the ones that thus are drawn by the natural inclinations of their mind Godward—desiring right, desiring truth, desiring to be in harmony with God. Some of us who were not born of religious parents and who as sinners in the fullest sense of the word, had our experiences as sinners in alienation from God. On the other hand, some of us were born in a measure of justification; as children of believing parents we had a measure of fellowship with God always, and this constituted a drawing power with us, and we were near to God even from childhood. And I assume I am speaking the sentiments and experiences of many here present. I find it more and more to be the case that very many of those who become God's consecrated people have had a goodly heritage upon them, and have been born with a measure of relationship with the Lord and in favorable conditions to be drawn of Him and understand His Word, to hear the voice of God speaking peace and pointing them to Jesus Christ as the way, the truth and the life.

After we were drawn and after we were called, after we had thus responded and came to Jesus, what did we say to Him and He to us? The language of our soul to the Master would be, Lord, we would see the Father. And His answer to us would be, Whoever sees Me gets the best glimpse possible for him to have the Father. You can not see God who is a Spirit. If you can see Me in the sense of seeing the history of My life and character, you get that which you can best understand and appreciate of God; I am the Father's express image; I was His perfect image in the flesh and now in Glory I am the express image of the Father's person on the spirit plane. You cannot see me now, but in your mind you can see Me as I was, and as I was seen by My Apostles in this world, and you can approach from that standpoint and you may have fellowship to that degree.

We say, Lord, we appreciate this. We see your character was a beautiful one; we see your loyalty to the Father. We understand you came into the world and died for our sin, and our hearts respond with great gratitude to our Savior, and to the Heavenly Father whose plan you are carrying forward. But now if we have found favor in Thy sight, tell us what thing we shall do whereby we may become more and more in fellowship with God, become children of God and be recognized by Him as members of His family.

And Jesus answers us, and says: If you draw near to the Father, you will become my disciples, and whoever will walk in My steps will not only have a better glimpse of the Father, as He goes onward in the good way, but eventually he shall see the Father in the fullness of Heavenly glory. He will share My glory and see the Father. "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."

Then we say, Lord, we are very glad, but we do not quite understand the way. And His answer would be, as paraphrased from the Scriptures in general: It is not necessary that you should see all the way; it is only necessary that you should see in a general way the grand outcome of the plan, and in a particular way that you should see the particular step of each day and each hour.

And we say, Lord, what is the first step we should take? And His answer is, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ if you would be saved. You are to believe that I am the Redeemer; you are to recognize that you are sinners; you are to realize the sentence against you is a death sentence and you could never be freed except in this way which the Heavenly Father has appointed; you are to accept therefore My death on your behalf as being the divine arrangement for the cancellation of your sins, and if by faith you accept this you are ready then to take the next step.

We say, Lord, by faith we do accept, we believe that you are the Anointed of God, that you are the one mentioned by the Law and the Prophets that should come into the world to be the Redeemer of men; we recognize you as being the Son Of God, the one whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world to be the Redeemer of the world. We

perceive that your death at Calvary was not for any sin on your part either in the sight of God or men, but that your death was a sacrificial one, that you laid down your life, that you permitted men to take your life from you when you might indeed have resisted them either by calling on the Heavenly Father for defense or by using your own powers of eloquence and logic by which you would have turned the minds of the people from being your assailants to become your friends and defenders. And we hear your word assuring us that the grand outcome of the ransom sacrifice is that the Kingdom of God will be established in the earth, and you will be the great King in that day, and then you will bestow upon mankind the great blessings of God for their uplifting out of sin and death, and out of condemnation and up to the full image of God in the flesh. Do we believe properly?

Yes, you believe properly. Are our sins forgiven since we thus believe? No, my beloved, your sins are not forgiven yet; you have merely taken the step of faith; you are merely now come to the place where you may know the next step to be taken, and if you take that next step your sins will be forgiven, and at the same time you will be ushered into a new nature. Lord, what is the next step, that we may take it? The answer is, You are to know now that my present call and invitation is to a class who desire to accept the terms that they may become my joint-heirs in that glorious kingdom that is to bless the world. Why, Lord, is it possible that you would like to have us associated with you in that great honor and blessing, and work? I would be pleased to have you if you are of the right kind—if you have My spirit. Lord, what is Your spirit? My Spirit is a spirit of humility, a spirit of obedience to the Father, a spirit willing to abrogate yourself and to glorify the Father in your body and spirit which are His. And if you desire to become of the same spirit, of the same mind, if you desire to become My disciples and walk in My steps, then indeed you will be with Me and share My glory on the spirit plane.

The proposition is so astounding at first we say, Oh, Lord, what will be the cost? Surely there will be great cost attaching to such a great invitation as that. We see that a place in the Heavenly Throne and to be the great Messiah has cost you so much, you left the Heavenly glory and manifested your devotion to the Father's will, and you as the man Christ Jesus gave yourself unreservedly even unto death—what would be the terms and conditions upon which we who are so much inferior might become your joint associates in that Kingdom?

And the Master answers, You would not be worthy at all except for what I have told you of My willingness to impute to you of my merit. I have died for the sins of the whole world and you are members of the world, and if you wish to have it so you may have a share of that forgiveness of sins now in advance of the world upon certain conditions; namely, first the exercise of faith, which you say you have; and, secondly, upon your making a consecration of your lives as I made a consecration of mine.

But we say, Lord, you had something to give; no wonder that the Father would accept yourself. You had a blameless life when you were in that Heavenly glory, and when you were made flesh you still were blameless, holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, while we were born in sin and imperfection. How can the Father accept us and give us a share with you?

Leave that to me. If you wish to be my disciples your faith must accept the fact that I assure you I will make good for all your blemishes. You may not understand it in full now, but as you will grow in grace and knowledge I will show you these things more and more clearly, and the entire plan of God will appear more and more logical to you as you progress.

And we answer, Oh, Lord, it is enough; we are completely satisfied—more than satisfied; we rejoice to think that what little we may have of earthly time, talent, wealth, name, fame, opportunities, that these little things not really worth a cent, and which we do not know that we will have control of for a single hour—that we may be privileged to lay these at the Father's feet through you, and that we should thus be accepted to such great honors. And the Lord says, It is even so; sit down and count the cost.

And our souls answer the Lord. We do not need to count the cost, it is so little when we contrast it with the blessings, honors and favors of God, which we are seeking for and which you have promised us, that there is nothing to count, Lord, we have nothing to give; it is not worthy of any consideration. We estimate the matter from the viewpoint of Saint Paul who declared, I count that all of these things of an earthly kind are but loss and dross in comparison to the excellency even of the knowledge of God; the knowledge of God is worth so much, just to know Him, just to get a glimpse of the Divine justice, love, wisdom and power, is worth the sacrifice of all the little we have, for we have nothing of any value. And as we thus begin to get the proper focus on the matter we say, Lord we give ourselves to Thee, it is all we can do; we simply give our little all and accept whatever you have to give.

And the Lord says, That is the right spirit, and immediately he imputes to us individually His merit, which makes us holy and acceptable in the sight of the father, and the same minute that we are thus holy the Father accepts us as New Creatures and the begetting of the Holy Spirit is there, and from thenceforth old things pass away and all things become new. We are now counted as members of His glorious Church, which is in the making, in the preparation, in the washing, in the cleansing, in the polishing, in the getting ready. The sins that are past are all cleansed, and the New Creature has no defilement of its own, but there are certain imperfections attaching to the flesh still, and although the flesh be covered with the imputed robe of Christ's righteousness, nevertheless these weaknesses may from time to time crop out, and the New Creature is to be prompt to notice them,

because the New Creature is this new mind, this new will, that henceforth regulates, rules, controls, this mortal body.

I have found some of God's dear people who did not realize how much of a contract they have on hand, and they were very careless about watching the things specially given them to watch; they were continually watching other people and telling other people about their weaknesses and forgetting about themselves—a great danger. It is for us to realize our first obligation is in respect to our own flesh. God did not make me accountable for your flesh nor you for mine. He does indeed say we may help one another, and counsel one another, and build one another up, and we can indeed help one another to put on the robe of Christ's righteousness and to keep it properly; as we read in the Scriptures, The Bride makes herself ready. We can give each other valuable suggestions, but the responsibility really rests with you as a New Creature for your body, and with me as a New Creature for my body. And here we have the task of our lives, because in our flesh, as the Apostle says, dwells no perfection. Not all alike have imperfection, some have one degree, some another, and some are more imperfect and blemished in one way and others in another way; but as the Scriptures continually assure us, there is none righteous, none perfect, no not one. We all come short, and need to realize these shortcomings, and we are to fight the good fight against them.

But, Brother Russell, if God knows that our flesh is weak, and if He is dealing with us as New Creatures and not intending to judge us according to the flesh, what has the flesh to do with it, anyway? Surely it makes no difference to God what the flesh may be if my heart is right, if my heart is pure and sincere. Yes, it makes a difference. God has given you your flesh to practice on, and you as a New Creature will grow in grace or not grow in grace in proportion as you practice on this mortal body, or fail to practice on it, and on these difficulties that you are to overcome, and it is as you show your loyalty as a New Creature in fighting down everything in your flesh that is contrary to you and the Father, that you show your loyalty to righteousness, to truth, to God and the Brethren, in that proportion you are growing in grace and in that character which God can approve.

So you and I before we would be prepared to be of the class that God has called us to, must of necessity be developed; therefore whoever God calls and accepts in Christ and who has the begetting of the Holy Spirit, are in the School of Christ. Then begins the lesson they must learn; they must grow in grace, and grow in knowledge, and grow in love, and as the Apostle explains, be transformed. What does that mean? It means to be formed over again. Suppose a man accepts Christ: could he be formed over again? Yes, my dear brother; if he is not formed over again he will not be ready for the Kingdom. But this transforming is not a transforming of the flesh. Indeed it may affect your flesh, and I have seen many homely faces transformed into very beaming ones by reason of the spirit of the Lord within; but this is not the thought here; that is a secondary matter. The transforming, as the Apostle says, is the renewing of your minds, new minds, minds made

over. Think of that! How can we make our minds over? You know how you sometimes speak of making up your mind. You balance a thing, weigh it, then decide so and so. You know how you used to decide according to your own preferences, now you must make up your mind not according to your own preferences, but according to certain principles, certain lines of righteousness, and principles of justice and love, so that the New Creature in Christ have a new set of rules, altogether different from what they ever had in the world. The world has no such regulations and rules as are applicable to the New creatures in Christ. Everything you do must be squared by the rule of justice. You dare not do as a New Creature anything that would be unjust to a neighbor, to a brother, or to anybody. You are bound at least to be just; to the very extent of your ability you must not be lacking in justice. I think there are many of the Lord's people who have not fully realized this part of the lesson, that the new nature and obedience to its rules means absolutely the Golden Rule on their part toward all others. They must not do to others what they would not have others do to them. Because of this, sometimes the way of the Lord is evil spoken of. Sometimes one may fail to pay his debts, sometimes he may be careless as to how he involves himself in debt; the principle of justice is not standing out prominently enough before the mind of such a one. He has been in the habit, perhaps, as an old creature of not respecting the rules and lines of justice but sliding through here and there as he or she might be able and leaving others in the lurch. That will not do for the New Creature; the New Creature has come under new rules and no matter how much the old creature might seek to shirk, the New Creature's duty is to bring the body into subjection, and that justice shall rule in every act and word, and as far as possible in every thought, so that with these principles of justice in our minds, we have that much of God's character likeness. How would you and I as New Creatures be like unto the Father in Heaven if we did not have the principle of justice? The cultivation of the principle of justice in your life and mine, and in all our actions and dealings, in all our words, in all our thoughts—how close it comes to us! It may be comparatively easy to be just in our dealings so far as money is concerned, and say, I would not owe anybody a penny, I would pay to the very last mite, and I would rather live on the plainest of food than to be in debt and be under obligation or be unjust to another, but it is not so easy to be thoroughly just in our minds and words. To be unjust in our words is so easy. The New Creature is to sit in judgment against every word the mouth may utter. No wonder the Apostle says, If any man sin not with his mouth, the same is a perfect man. It is for the New Creature, then, to be on guard that it may be developed along this line; and if it fails time and time again the New Creature must prosecute the matter, it must thoroughly show the Lord that it has no sympathy with injustice. You have to be just in your thoughts before you can be properly just in your dealings. The man who thinks unjustly in spite of himself will act unjustly: therefore it comes down to the very matter of controlling our thoughts. How shall I think of that man or that woman? Never with a prejudiced mind, but always with calm judgment, seeking to give them the benefit of the doubt if there is any doubt whatever. Besides that, the Lord counsels great mercy on our part, telling us

that He would rather we would err in the sense of being too lenient than in the sense of being just merely.

Then beyond justice comes love, the very highest of all the attributes of God. God is love. God is just, but He is love also, which is still higher in the sense it implies something more than justice. He will do all of justice to everybody, then He will do a little more, He will do something of love; He shows us this in His dealings with our race. He was only just toward us when He condemned our race as unfit for everlasting life. And He might have remained just and never provided any redemption or any opportunity for us whatever. But God was more than just, and in due time He provided the Redeemer. This was grace, this was mercy, this was love. And this love has been working all through God's great plan for our race, providing first the Savior, now providing the Church, and making provision for you and for me in His mercy that we might come from the ranks of sinners and up to the ranks of glory, and forgiving all of our past for us and giving us all the encouragement of the way, and the assurance of His love and favor, and making all things work together for good to us. This is the love of God, and if we would be children of our Heavenly Father we must as New Creatures have this character likeness, we must have love. What will that mean? That will mean sympathy and assistance, and not merely justice. There is nothing of grace in the giving of justice; it is right; anything less than justice is wrong; but we are to be more than just, we are to be kindly affectioned one to another, forgiving one another even as God for Christ's sake forgave us. He is wishing that you shall see that quality in His character and shall copy it in your life, and that I shall see it and copy it in my life. We see then what Jesus meant when He said, "Be ye perfect, as your Father in Heaven is perfect!" That is what He meant, to copy Him. Not that you can ever get your mortal body to that perfection where it would be perfect as God is perfect, or all your actions perfect as God is perfect, but He did mean that you were to have your mind in full sympathy and accord with God and His arrangement, striving to the best of your ability to practice on this mortal body so as to bring it more and more into accord with God. Why? Jesus said the Father is kind, even to the unthankful. It is comparatively easy to be generous toward those who are kind to us—to those who have done something for us and we would like to do something for them in return. It would be a mean disposition that would not want to do that. But that is not what God is inculcating. It is not merely to have kindness and be as good to another as he is to you, but more than that, to be kind to the unthankful, to those who are ungrateful, to those who despise you, and hate you, and persecute you. See how our poor world in its blindness has been misrepresenting the Heavenly Father, picturing Him as worse than the devil, and He is kind nevertheless. The poor world in its blindness has gone far off in wicked works, in every way opposed to Him, but in His kindness He is pursuing, and He is providing the blessings necessary—first the Redeemer, then the Church which is now being developed.

But as the Bible says, we are in the School of Christ, we are being taught of God, we are His workmanship; He has been working in us by His providence and Word, working in us by our experiences which He has made for us, and the opportunities He gives to us—all of these things are designed by the Lord to bless us and develop us in His own character likeness, that, as Jesus said, we should be like unto our Father in Heaven, so that we should be holy, even as He is holy, that our intentions, our aims, our desires, should be of exactly the kind God has.

If, therefore, you find you have in your heart a feeling of bitterness and envy, or strife, beware; that is a dangerous condition; that is not of the Holy Spirit at all; you are not holy as He is holy if you have these elements of character, because the Apostle explains that all of these qualities of character are works of the flesh and the devil, and if you have them it is that much of the flesh and devil working in you. And, if, on the contrary, you have holiness, and a completeness of desire to know and to do God's will, and if this is an increasing power in your heart, then indeed you are being sealed of the spirit, and the character likeness of God is being impressed upon you, you are getting more and more day by day to see things as God sees them, to sympathize with the things God sympathizes with, and to be opposed to the things God is opposed to. That means that we shall love righteousness and hate iniquity. So you remember it was written of our Lord, and that was the grand climax of His character, "Thou lovest righteousness and hatest wickedness; therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows"—above angels, above the Church, making Him head over all things to the Church and saying that all the angels shall worship Him. How much did he love righteousness? You want to see, because you want to copy Him. He hated wickedness so that He would in every way avoid iniquity, injustice, unrighteousness, sin, and He loved righteousness to the extent that He would rather die even the death of the cross than resist the will of God. This, dear friends, is the great test of character that is going on with you and with me, and according to these lines God is dealing with us. And it is not merely that we are fighting the good fight and trying to accomplish something in our flesh; because you may never succeed as a New Creature in getting as good control of your flesh as somebody else may have of his flesh at the very beginning of the way; but what you do want to see, and what God wishes to see in you and in me is that our whole hearts are set for righteousness, and that we love the right and hate the wrong and that we are striving to the best of our ability to put down the wrong and to uphold the right, especially in ourselves, in our own characters and in our actions, words and thoughts. So shall we be the children of the Highest, and so when our great Redeemer in the end shall examine us for graduation He shall be ready to say to us, as He is represented as doing in the parable, Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things—not very much, you did not have much to be faithful over, but you have shown the right spirit—I will make you ruler over many things. If you would fight so loyally against sin in your bodies, if you would be so loyal to the principles of righteousness under conditions as you had them, I know that with perfect bodies that I will give you in

the resurrection you will be able and perfectly willing then to do the will of the Father perfectly. And so the Father will be glad to have you fully His and to have you glorified with the Savior at His right hand.