

## Notes of a Gospel Address

Psalm 32.

G. V. Wigram.

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It is remarkable how individual the experience given in this psalm is. The writer of it had been taken up by God as a shepherd boy, and put on the throne. There he committed three of the most awful sins that the law of God condemned — adultery, murder, and corruption. He used the very throne to which he had been raised from the sheepcote, the throne of Jehovah, not only to display his own shame, but to put dishonour on Jehovah Himself. But when his soul had passed through the process described in this psalm, with God, he was thrown down not only as a poor sinner in the presence of God, but right on to that great master-thought of God's mercy — His mercy and compassion.

Have you been in the same class David was put into? in that place where the creature is under God's eye, and knows himself there, and finds all the hypocrisy and double-dealing of his evil nature trying to push off the mercy which is his portion for eternity? We must be in it in one way or another. Why? Because God the Holy Ghost makes a quotation from this psalm, when speaking of God's principles of dealing with man in His gospel now, and it gives out the principle of blessing at God's right hand. In Rom. 4 we get Paul's statement of God's principles of blessing. He does not bless a man according to his works. In God's dealings with man, He finds all the positive evil in man, and not only says, "If I am to bless you, it must be without works," but the blessing is the very test of the character of the man whose works are bad. The mercy of God is the only pathway for Jew or Gentile into the favour of God.

Verse 1. "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." What do we understand by being "blessed"? The primary idea of the word is "prosperous." A prosperous man before God is one who knows his sins, and finds the answer to them in God; such a man is marked by happiness. When we look at man, not only as in time, but for eternity, there is no man so prosperous as he who says, "I have nothing but sin in myself, but all my rest is in God." That man has something to sing of in which, whatever way he turns, he finds some fresh note of gladness and joy connected with it.

"Transgression forgiven" - "sin covered." Transgression is quite different from sin. Transgression is when a person has wandered from a marked path; sin is the principle of self-willed independence in the heart of man. David made discovery of both these things in himself, so that they did not suit the heart of the creature in the presence of God. Directly he got them forgiven and covered, then he could understand what prosperity it was, to find that all his wanderings might be sung of as connected with God who had forgiven them. Have you some knowledge of having come short of the glory of God? Has God come in and said, "I have nothing to reckon to you, nothing against you." Do you find in yourself the principle of selfwilled independence? It often breaks out still in the child of God, though in a different form from what it did in David or Job. God says, "I know all about it; but I have put my hand upon it, and covered it. Your ground of confidence is not that I do not know about it." Does God know all about the transgression and the independence? Paul, all rapturous of Christ, and wanting to serve Him, had to go back and learn it all, though the sins were all forgiven and covered by God.

It is a searching question to put to one's own soul, How far I know that, as a creature standing

before the Creator (apart from the work of redemption), there is nothing in the mind of God concerning me but iniquity - nothing fit for His presence? When the eye of God comes down on me, when I look at what my nature is, do I know what it is to say, "It is iniquity"? I ought to know it, if it is the Lord's pleasure not to impute it. (v. 2.) He does not impute it if I am a believer, but asks me what I think about Christ, who bore the punishment, being in glory now; would I rather have a good thought about myself? What a different ground for a saint to be on to say, "I know all; nothing can ever rise and startle me now. I know it, for it was all imputed to Him eighteen hundred years ago, and judged by God on the cross."

"In whose spirit there is no guile." (v. 2.) Guile has nothing to do with guilt; guilt is the condition of a man having transgressed who has not found an answer to his sin. Guile is artifice. While David was trying to patch himself up, he was forgetting that his sin was all exposed before his people. To think that he could try to be before God as an unruined creature, when he, the man after God's own heart, had taken the place of a model sinner! It would not do. God says, "I know all the iniquity, but I do not impute it; why and is at My right hand." Am I in this place? What further discovery can come out, if to my mind the blood of the Lord Jesus shed on Calvary is the measure of my sins and the iniquity of my nature? If God wants a people, whom does He choose? A righteous people? No; a people who, when all earth shall be under the power of darkness and sin, shall be able to slip Satan, and live for God in spite of what they are. God has a people who find they cannot get along unless they know their ruin, and how God has even turned that to His own glory, and know God as a refuge from their ruin. There is a height in Him altogether beyond the creature ken to measure. Who could have thought of such a thing as that the unruined God should come in and say, "I know how to turn your very ruin to my glory. I am altogether above you in the range of my thoughts. I shall do as I choose. 'I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy.'" Who is to say to God, Stop? He is the only one who can say, "I will;" and it will stand. What else does it show? God as the God of resources! What seemed utterly impossible, has been accomplished. The attributes of His being could so blend as to meet the sinner. But He was a God of resources. He had one Son, and in Him on the cross all the rays of the character of God could be shown out; and God stands forth inviting, attracting, alluring, commanding the ruined creature not to stand out for the first Adam, but to come to God and give his sinnership, his sins, on the ground of the Person and work of Him whom God delighteth to honour. The beauty of the Lamb, who sits on the throne of God, is part of my felicity as a poor sinner. Is that aground that will break down?

No. When the heart is simple in the renunciation of everything one has as a mere creature, and gets on the ground of Christ's work in salvation and redemption, Satan himself has nothing to say. If all the devils come, if my conscience accuses me, they can say nothing to what God has said against me when He put His Son on the cross. I can say, "What do you think, Satan, of that? That Christ bore my curse." I have boldness before God, when the Lamb is my boldness, ruined in myself, not worth speaking about; but my ruin is taken occasion of by God, because God wants a people on earth who can speak well of Him, walk as His Son walked, and resist Satan. If this is to be, you must know your ruin, you must take God's experience of what His divine counsels were about the sin found in us, and you will find a standard of ruin, a standard of happiness for the Christian, that in the darkest, deepest pit in which he may be, he has the mercy of God, and the power of the Holy Ghost sealing on the heart the bright light of the truth, that God has found an answer to the ruin. G. V. W.