

"SIMON'S SON."

BY THE REV. W. T. GUNN, EMBRO, CANADA.



It was the Sabbath and a fair morn and "the man frae Drumshalloch" was to preach at Kirkhill. When Drumshalloch announced that his text would be from words from the Gospel of John, thirteen and two, "Judas Iscariot, 'Simon's Son,'" it was received with distinct satisfaction as being likely to prove strong meat. When he added, "The heart o' the message is in the last twa, 'Simon's Son,'" there was bewilderment on the part of the elders who liked to classify the sermon beforehand, and a general satisfaction that at least "they did'na ken what was tae come."

"Ye mind," said Drumshalloch, "what sort o' man Judas was. There's nane o' ye here the morn but kens hoo he was ca'd tae be aye o' the twelve, an' hoo he went up and doon wi' them a' the days, an' him siccan a gude appearing man that they did'na ken till a' was dune what a deevil he was. Ye maun'na think o' him as a dour wicked-lookin' carle, no, nor as a sly sneakit fox o' a man, but as a man o' some abeility, for he was made treasurer an' had tae bear the pouch. Mair nor that; ye will mind that when the twelve were sent out an' came back rejoicin' there was'na a bit defference made between him an' the ithers, but just as if he had dune as gude wark an' as mighty as any. Ye ken too that he was aye savin' an' economical, as appeared when Mary anointit the Lord, for John did'na ken his motive till long after.

"Then I need'na ca' tae yir mind hoo in that week o' the passion when a' hopes o' an airthly kingdom for Jesus were passed away, that he hurried tae the Sanhedrim an' covenanted tae sell his Maister for thirty pieces o' siller. Weel do ye remember this day that awfu' nicht when through the gloamin' an' the black mirk o' the thick trees he led 'the band' tae Jesus an' 'kissed him much.' It will never be for mortal man tae ken what awfu' thochts ran wild through the heart o' Judas when he

saw that Jesus was condemned. 'But I honour the man for ae thing that nicht; for he took the money back an' confessed his sin, an' that's mair than mony a man since, that thinks scorn o' Judas.

"Aye an' that wild rush through the blackness wi' the fires o' hell raging in his heart, tae the lanely place, the rope, the awfu' end.

"That was an awesome nicht for a' concerned. Ye have thoct some o' what it maun hae meant tae Him wha died for us next day. Ye may have thoct some o' what it meant tae Judas, but aid ye ever think what it meant tae his faither? For he was 'Judas Iscariot, Simon's son.' An' mair—tae his mither?

"What had it mean tae ye, faithers and mithers gin yir ainly son had betrayed his Lord unto the death? An' tae hear aifterwards o' his ain awfu' death an' o' what lay beyond! Tae ken that the maist loving Lord Jesus had tae ca' him 'the son o' perdition,' an' Peter tae say that he had 'gone tae his ain place,' an' tae think that never mair in time nor in eternity wad ye see yir ain son! There's nae sorrow tae be compared tae that.

"Noo back o' a' this history that lies upo' the face o' things we maun try tae see behind the a'thegether wicked bogy that we ha' made o' Judas, the hame that was somewheres in Kerioth an' the faither an' mither whase hearts maun ha' been sair for the son o' their love that wad never come ben again."

Down in Donald McKenzie's pew there were two that were listening with their hearts, and the man's face worked strangely, while Elspeth sat with head bowed and the tears running down and her hand reached out to meet the strong man's hand that down between them was tremblingly feeling for hers. The neighbour women knew that back in the Old Land was one wee grave of a wee girlie that had been the sunshine of their eyes, and they thought that this was the father's loss and the mother's great sorrow, but they did not know. No, they did not know, for they two had come out to the new land in middle life and there was one name that was not named even between them save in prayer and in the words that heart speaks to heart far