

A Sermon.

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Preached in Dingwall Free Presbyterian Church on Sabbath,
8th September, 1907.

(Taken down by a Hearer.)

“Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” – Philippians 2:9-11.

In this chapter the Apostle gives several exhortations to those to whom he writes. He exhorts them to have “the same love,” and to be of one accord and one mind; that they should do nothing “through strife or vainglory,” but that, in lowliness of mind, they should esteem others better than themselves. Then he exhorts them not to be selfish, but “to look not every man on his own things, but also on the things of others”; and he sets Christ before them as their example. “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.” He looked not to the things that belonged to Himself exclusively, but He looked on things belonging to others. And the Apostle shows how He did this. At the sixth verse he says, “Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” In verses seven and eight we have a view of Christ’s humiliation, and in our text we have a view of Him in His exaltation. God promised to open the windows of heaven, and to send down His blessing through these windows on those that waited upon Him. The windows of heaven are the Scriptures of truth. Were it not that God opened these windows, no blessing would come down to our sinful race. It is through the windows of His own Word that He at any time sends down His Spirit and His blessing upon sinful creatures; and not apart from His Word. In the verses preceding our text we look downwards through these windows to see the deep humiliation of His Son in our nature, and in the words of our text we are called upon to look upwards to behold the exaltation of Christ, who humbled Himself. In endeavouring to address you for a little from these words as the Lord may enable me, I shall direct your attention to three things: –

I. – The exaltation of Christ;

II. – The purpose for which He is exalted – “that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord”; and,

III. – The exaltation of Christ shall be “to the glory of God the Father.”

I. – The exaltation of Christ. The question arises, “Who exalted Christ?” Students of Scripture often discuss the question as to by what power Christ was raised from the dead. Some say it was by His own power; others, by the power of the Father; and others, by the power of the Spirit. It is true that Christ rose by His own power. He had “power to lay down” His life, and He had “power to take it again.” This commandment He had received of His Father. It is also true that He was quickened by the Spirit, and it is also true that He was raised by His Father. But here it is not a question of *power* at all, as we shall try to show, but a question of *right*. If it were a question of power, there is no doubt but Christ raised Himself and that the Spirit quickened Him; but at present we have to deal with a question of *right*, not a question of power. We are to inquire whose right it was to raise Him from the dead and to

exalt Him, and we are told here that God exalted Him, that is, God the Father, the First Person of the Trinity. “There are three Persons in the Godhead – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.” The three Persons are concerned in the work of salvation. The First Person in that scheme of salvation stands up representing the Godhead, to demand satisfaction to His justice before any sinner could be saved; the Second Person in that scheme stands up as the surety for His people, undertaking to satisfy justice in order that they might be saved; and the place assigned to the Holy Spirit is to apply the redemption of Christ to those for whom He died. Now, seeing that it was God the Father that undertook to demand satisfaction to His justice before any sinner could be saved, and seeing that He accepted of Christ as the surety, who satisfied the requirements of His law by humbling Himself and becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, it was the right of the Father to exalt Him after He had finished the work given Him to do. So we read that God hath highly exalted Him. It was Christ Himself that humbled Himself. He undertook to do so, and He did so, but it was God the Father that exalted Him, and that in His capacity as a Judge. By observing the part that each Person of the Godhead took in the salvation of sinful men, you will see how suitable, I may say, the arrangement is. God the Father appears as a Judge to demand satisfaction to His justice to demand the punishment of the transgressor or of his surety in his place. Now, you will see that a sinner, when awakened to a sense of his sin, is more afraid of God, the First Person, than he is of the Second Person; and it ought to be so; because it is God, the First Person representing the Godhead, that demands the punishment of sin; but when the awakened sinner reads or hears of the Son, the Second Person, he takes courage, for Christ’s place was not to demand the punishment of sin but to act as the surety of the sinner – to endure the penalty of the law; and therefore the sinner ought to be encouraged at the mention of the name of Christ. We may truly say that the sinner flees for refuge from an angry God to a God reconciled in Christ.

It was God the Father, then, who exalted Christ, and it was just that He should be exalted after He had humbled Himself. He was taken from prison and from judgment, we read; He was brought to the dust of death because He took upon Him the sins of His people; He was laid in the grave as in a prison, and after He had paid the debt, God the Father, as the righteous Judge, comes forward and raises His Son from the grave. And this is the first step in Christ’s exaltation, of which the Apostle speaks here, “God hath highly exalted him.” Now, when Christ was raised from the grave, He was raised not only as the Surety of His people, but also as their Head. He is the Head of the body, the Church, and when He was raised from the dead as the Head, His mystical body was also raised with Him; and so we read of their being “risen with Christ.” Although that passage also refers to a spiritual resurrection, still there is a sense in which it may be said that they died with Him, that His death was their death, and His resurrection was virtually their resurrection. So that when God the Father raised Christ from the dead, He had His eye also on those for whom He suffered – for whom He paid the debt, and He left none of them down in the grave. His mystical body was also raised. The Church was raised from the grave at Christ’s resurrection.

The second step in His exaltation was His ascension to heaven. Who exalted Him to heaven? Well, if you read of His ascension you will find that “He was *taken* up in a cloud,” and that implies the work of another, even of Him of Whom it is said, “*God* exalted him.” He is now exalted to heaven, and is no longer to be seen in this world in human nature. He promised to be with His Church to the end of the world, and He fulfils that promise in a spiritual sense, but until then “the heavens must contain him.” There are those who expect that in the millenium He shall come in human nature to reign on earth for a thousand years, but there is no scriptural warrant for such belief. There are others who maintain that Christ, in human nature, is present in the Sacrament; but for this idea there is no scriptural foundation

either, for “the heavens must contain him until the restitution of all things,” till He shall come in flaming fire at the last day.

The third step in His exaltation is His sitting at the right hand of the Father. It was the Father Who exalted Him to His right hand. It was the Father Who said, “Sit thou at my right hand till I make thine enemies thy footstool.” This was the work of God the Father as Judge.

The last step in His exaltation is His coming again at the last day to judge the world. That will be the completion of Christ’s exaltation. Christ *shall* come again.

Christ’s exaltation was the reward of His humiliation: that is, He humbled Himself, and *therefore* God exalted Him. There are some who hold that Christ was not exalted as a reward of His obedience, but only for the benefit of His people. It is true He was exalted as the Surety of His people for their benefit, but I think it is true also that His exaltation was in reward of His humiliation. We have already mentioned that Christ was exalted as the Head of His mystical body, and herein lies their safety in going through the wilderness of this world, in every time of difficulty, of trial, of tribulation: for they are told, “In this world ye shall have tribulation,” or affliction; but in view of His exaltation, He adds, “Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” How is it that the Church of God survives so many fiery trials and waters of affliction? How is it that she lives at all, that she perseveres to the end? It is because the Head is exalted. Perhaps you may have seen a man fall into the sea, and you were afraid he would be drowned, but observing that he was able to keep his head above the water, you were relieved of that fear. It is true of a man able to swim – that he shall never be drowned so long as he can keep his head above the water. And, making use of this as an illustration of the point in hand, herein, as I said, lies the safety of the Church in all times of trouble and affliction, that, though they sink into deep waters, yet the Head is exalted above the waters. So long as you see the Head exalted – and especially so highly exalted – above the waters, you need not be afraid that the Church – His mystical body – shall perish. In the deepest waters in which they may be, they can hear the voice of the Head above, saying, “Because I live, ye shall live also.” Just as in the case of a man who might fall into the water, if his body could speak, it would cry, “I fear I shall perish,” but the head would answer, “There is no ground for such fear: because I am above the water you shall never be drowned.” This is the comfort of God’s people; for He says, “When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee: and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.”

Christ, then, is highly exalted; and if you ask, How high is He exalted? we cannot tell. Even an apostle could only say, He is *highly* exalted. To take a little thing in illustration. There are many high mountains in this world, and if you saw one of them and did not know the height of it, you would enquire of your fellow creature, but he would answer, “I do not know how high it is, but it is *exceedingly* high.” And thus Paul, who spoke by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, spoke of the exaltation of Christ. He was a mere man – a creature – and was too short to reach to the high exaltation of Christ, so he could only say, “God hath highly exalted him.” He is exalted above holy angels: holy angels are high, but they are creatures. He is exalted above “the spirits of just men made perfect.” There is no creature in heaven on the same platform with Christ. There are some that think that creatures are as high as Christ Himself; they ascribe the attributes of God to creatures, to angels and men, but that is a great mistake. There are some that pray to the saints in heaven. Are the saints omniscient? Can they see all things? Can they hear all things? Ah, no. It is for want of seeing the distinction between the Creator and the creature that this error arises. Although we should speak to the angels in heaven, they cannot hear us; should we speak to “the spirits of just men made perfect,” they cannot hear us: should we speak to the Apostles and the Virgin Mary in heaven, they cannot hear us; for if you think they can hear you, you are guilty of ascribing the attributes of Him who is omniscient to mere creatures, however exalted and however blessed

they may be. There is an infinite distance between the creature and the Creator. Even when God created man, He created him in His own image, but still he remained a creature. At the same time you are to remember there was a nearness between the creature and God, for our first parents, before they sinned, were full of God, full of His image, full of the enjoyment of God, so that the distinction between Him as Creator and them as creatures did not interfere with their happiness.

Now, supposing that man had kept his first estate of innocency, this distance between God and man would remain; and now that God has found out a way of saving sinners and bringing them to Himself, let us remember that the distance between them as creatures and Him as Creator is infinite. Then, does anyone say, "How then are we to understand the Scripture that speaks of the nearness of His people to Christ?" Well, this is explained in the way to which I have already referred, viz., the enjoyment of God. And then let us remember also that Christ took upon Him our nature, and that there is a nearness in this respect. But the distance between them and Christ, as God, Who dwells in the light to which no creature can approach, does not interfere with the nearness which His people have with Him in some measure on earth and in perfection in heaven. It does not interfere with their happiness at all, because they are a people that are near Him, that enjoy Him, for we hear some of them say, "Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ." At the same time, it is for want of attending to these distinctions that so many errors have crept into the professing Church. Many are inclined to put the Virgin Mary, Christ's mother, on the same level with Himself. She is among the redeemed, one of His people, but she is only a creature, and is far from being on the same platform with Him Whom God hath highly exalted. As we have it in the Epistle to the Ephesians, towards the end of the first chapter, "God hath given him a name which is above every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that which is to come." And what is meant by this name? It means His dominion, His sovereignty. He hath given Him all power in heaven and in earth. He hath given Him power over all flesh, that He might give life eternal to those that He has given Him. For example, the personal name of the King of Great Britain is Edward, but he is always spoken of as "King Edward," and this additional name marks out his office – his dominion. And so the name given to Christ by the Father we understand to be the symbol of the universal dominion that He gave Him, as He is highly exalted at His own right hand, having all power in heaven and on earth given Him, and power to judge because He is the Son of Man. Thus we read that every tongue shall confess that He is Lord. "He is Lord of all." It is in view of this that the Apostle calls Him Lord. He is called Jesus because He is the Saviour, but it is in the sense of His office in heaven and of His universal dominion and authority that He is called Lord.

Now, I am not going to speak upon the other heads until the evening, as it would keep you too long, but this is a subject in which we ought to be interested if we love the Lord Jesus Christ. We ought to rejoice that He is exalted, and that He is so highly exalted. The more exalted your friend is in the place of authority and influence, the better it is for you; and the Church ought to think not only of the humiliation of Christ, but also of His exaltation, as the Apostle says, "He was delivered for our offences, but was raised again for our justification." Christ, then, being exalted as the Head and the Representative of His mystical body, the Church, they shall be exalted also; and as surely as God hath highly exalted Him, He shall also exalt them. Not only does the Gospel seek their exaltation, but the very justice of God – the law of God which Christ, their Surety, magnified and made honourable – demands it. Remember this, then, for your encouragement if you look to Jesus, that as sure as the law of God demanded the exaltation of Christ, so surely does that very law (which you have broken) demand that you be exalted with Him. May God bless His word!

[November 1907]

Continued,

Sabbath Evening, 8th September, 1907.

We have already spoken something on the first head, viz., the exaltation of Christ, and we now proceed to consider: –

II. – The purpose or end for which God hath highly exalted Him. The purpose is mentioned here: “That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” This purpose shall be fully realised in due time, for God is not like man. Man may purpose and may not be able to accomplish; but when God purposes there is nothing to hinder His bringing to pass that purpose, and His purpose here is that every knee – all creatures, men and angels – should bow the knee to Christ, or render obedience to Him.

By “things” here we are to understand reasonable creatures, for so God speaks of us under the name of a thing or things; as when Christ said, “The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost,” that *thing* which was lost. We know that He came to seek and to save sinners of the human race, so “that which was lost” means sinners of the human race – men who have sinned against God. It is in this sense we are to understand “things” here. There are three classes of reasonable creatures spoken of, and the first class is the holy angels. These are spoken of as “things in heaven.” There were, no doubt, men in heaven at the time. There were two there with their bodies as well as with their souls, and there were many of the spirits of just men made perfect there, but these are not meant by “things in heaven,” because they were born in this world and died in this world; they belonged to the earth – they belonged to time.

By “things in heaven,” then, we are to understand the holy angels, whose place is heaven; angels who kept their first estate in which God created them. Now, it may be said that the holy angels obeyed the Lord Jesus before. Yes, they rendered perfect obedience to Him as their *Creator*, but in connection with the scheme of redemption there was a new relationship formed between holy angels and the Church of redeemed men and their Head, Christ; so that the angels were now to render to Jesus Christ a *new* obedience. When Adam and all his posterity fell, angels did not know that any of the human race would be saved. Angels are creatures; they are not omniscient, though some people are so foolish as to ascribe to them attributes which belong to God only. The purpose of saving sinners of the human race was from all eternity hid in the bosom of God Himself till it pleased Him to reveal it in time. When He revealed to the holy angels that He purposed to save sinners of the human race, while He passed by the fallen angels, He also made known to them that they were brought into a new relationship to the Church on earth, and that they, in common with the Church on earth, were to have Christ as their Head. He is the Head of the Church, as we read in the Epistle to the Colossians (1:18). He is the Head of the angels – Head of elect men and Head of “elect angels.” There are elect angels – those that kept their first estate – and they were under the Headship of Christ in the purpose of God from eternity; but this was hid from creatures. Afterwards, we believe, it was made known to the holy angels that they were indebted to Christ for standing and not falling away, like the others. That is a very solemn thing!

“Who made thee to differ?” the apostle asks. What hast thou that thou hast not received? and if thou receivedst it, why dost thou boast? Who made thee to differ? Who hath made thee, who art taken out of a state of nature, to differ from thy neighbour, who is still in a state of sin and misery? If God’s people thought of this, there would be no room for boasting. Boasting would be cast out, not by the law of works, but by the law of faith. “He that glories, let him glory in the Lord.” If angels stood, let them glory in God; if some sinners are saved, while others perish, let them glory in the Lord. Ah! if we thought of this, my friends, we

would be far from being high-minded; we would lie low in the dust at the footstool of God's sovereignty. We would be thankful to be allowed to cry, like another, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Ah! if poor sinners thought of this, they would not think so much of their own goodness and good works. They would seek, like Paul, "to be found in Christ, not having their own righteousness, which is of the law" (though Paul did more good works than any in our day). We believe that all who are savingly taught of God are of this mind; that they will flee from their own righteousness, from their own good works, to Christ and to His good work which He finished upon the Cross. That is the only good work that will stand us.

Because of the new relationship formed between the holy angels and the church of redeemed men, God appointed the holy angels to be ministering spirits to the Church on earth, and when the purpose to save sinners of the human race was made known to them, they began with eager eyes and earnest minds to look into the mystery of this great thing, and they desired with vehement desire to look into the scheme of redemption. And although they do not need it themselves they put us to shame, who are in such need of salvation. Many of us never desired to look into this mystery. Ah! it may not be too late, poor sinner, for you to begin now while mercy can be had; you are where God opens the eyes of the blind. Begin even now – this Sabbath evening – to look into the mystery of redemption. Join the holy angels in this becoming work.

The angels were sent into this world by God the Son. He had work for them in connection with His Church. He made them ministering spirits to them that are heirs of salvation, and they were very willing to undertake that work. If you will read the Old Testament, you will find very early in its history Christ sending angels to the patriarchs. He sent an angel again and again to Abraham, and to others, to reveal unto them the mind of God. And in New Testament times also we believe that Christ still continues to use the holy angels as ministering spirits to His Church on earth, although they cannot be seen with the bodily eye. There is not a Sabbath passing, or a time when the Gospel is preached, but the holy angels are present to carry back the news to heaven whatever it may be, and so we read that there is joy in heaven among the angels when one sinner is brought to repentance. Now, if this be so – as we believe it is – holy angels are present in our Church from time to time. What news have they to carry back this evening? Have they to take the sad news back to creatures in heaven: – "We have seen this person and that person for years hearing the Gospel, and they have not yet given their hearts to Christ?" Sometimes they carry different news: – "There is a sinner there brought to repentance – brought to Jesus. Let us begin to sing praises to God for it!"

The second class mentioned is "things in earth." What are the creatures on earth that are to bow the knee at the name of Jesus and to confess with the tongue that He is Lord? They are creatures of the human race. Christ was exalted that the human race, all of them, without exception, should bow the knee to Him, or obey Him, willingly or unwillingly, and to confess, whether they would or not, that He is Lord. Now, there are two kinds of men in this class: there are the good men and the bad. All are by nature evil – "there is none righteous, no, not one." When sin entered into this world, none escaped its ruin, but grace made a difference. By nature there is none good. There is in man, no doubt, as a reasonable creature, what we call moral goodness, which God bestows upon us as a check on our evil nature: were it not for this restraining grace we would be like the very devils. Any civility, any kindness, that is to be found in the natural man is a gift from God, which shall be taken from him at death, unless he is born again and made a new creation in Christ. At the time of the crucifixion of Christ, God withdrew this preventive grace and gave full liberty to men to do their utmost to show forth their enmity to Christ, and the consequence was that they behaved like wild beasts, as they are called in Scripture, "bulls" and "dogs." "Many bulls have compassed me:" "For dogs have compassed me; the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet" – Psalm 22:12,16. They were as if they were mad,

and let loose from hell. Those nearest the Lord Jesus smote Him on the face with their hands, and others spat upon the Lord of Glory, while those again on the outskirts, who could not get near enough to smite or spit upon Him, cried aloud, "Away with Him: away with Him: crucify Him: crucify Him." That was what happened when God withdrew His restraining grace. But there is a difference between *restraining* grace and *saving* grace. Of the two classes of people who must bow the knee to Christ, His own people do it willingly, and those who are not of His people must do it whether they will or not. The first time when His own people begin to bow the knee to Him is when He comes to call them effectually by the Holy Spirit, and to make them willing in the day of His power, as we have been reading and singing, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power."

Have you begun to bow the knee at the name of Jesus? His people in every age have begun to bow the knee at His name: they received Him not only as their Saviour, but also as their Lord; yea, they received Him as the Lord Jesus Christ, just as He is revealed in His Word, as the jailor at Philippi was directed by the Apostle when he asked "What must I do to be saved?" "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." If you are saved you will (I need not say, you must) willingly receive Christ as your Saviour, and also as your Lord to rule over you. You remember in the days of His flesh, there were those who at first seemed to receive Him as their Lord, and then they repented (and their repentance was a very bad repentance), for they sent a messenger after him, "We will not have this man to reign over us." But His own people receive Him, not only as their Saviour, but also as their King, to rule over them.

The other class on earth who are to bow the knee at His name are those who, in every generation of the human race, persist in impenitence and in unbelief, and who continue to reject Christ as He is freely offered in the Gospel. Are those not to answer the end for which God exalted Christ? Ah! yes, they are. However disobedient they may now be, there is a time coming when they shall be seen to submit to the authority of Jesus Christ. There are many now who say, like Pharaoh of old, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice?" There are many infidels and atheists in this age. This is an evil age. There are many giving open defiance to God and to His Son, Jesus Christ: they mock at His great name. Wait you till the day of judgment comes, when He sends forth the summons to cite all the human race to appear before His throne. Will there be any disobedient then? Ah! no. You cannot then distinguish the atheist from any other person in an unconverted state. They all respond, however much against their will, to the call of Christ, for there is a "*must*" here. "We *must* all appear before the judgment seat of Christ." There is no escape. No one can be disobedient that day, and, seeing that such will be the case, we may here say that the end for which Christ has been exalted by the Father shall be realized, not only by those who willingly submit to Him in time, but also by His very enemies on earth, who must bow the knee at His name, and confess with the tongue that He is Lord.

The third class that shall bow the knee to Christ are "things under the earth." Interpreters of Scripture differ on some points, and on this point some are of the opinion that what is meant by things under the earth, are the bodies of men that are buried in the grave, and that they shall bow the knee to Christ when they obey His voice on the day of the resurrection: but I do not think that that is the meaning, because the bodies in the graves belong to the second class, and though now *under* the earth, they were once *on* the earth; and while it is quite true that the dead shall hear his voice, and obey it, still I think that by "things under the earth" we are to understand the evil spirits – Satan with his innumerable hosts of fallen angels. These are spoken of as being "under the earth."

Think, then, for a moment, of the three classes spoken of. The holy angels in heaven, men on earth, and the evil spirits in hell – the human race being, as it were, in a middle state, the only middle state in existence; you are not yet in heaven, and not yet in hell. While you are

on earth there is hope for you; you are in the middle state from which Christ saves sinners. In heaven are the redeemed, in hell are the lost, where there is no hope. You are yet on earth, in the land of the living, but if you die refusing Christ, remember you must go to the third place – to the place below – “under the earth,” that is, hell.

The things under the earth, then, Satan, the prince of Darkness, and all his innumerable hosts of fallen angels that apostatized with him from God, are the great enemies of Christ; they oppose Him in every possible way, but it is said here that Christ was exalted that those under the earth might bow the knee at His name, and confess with the tongue that He is Lord. When will that be? They will continue in their enmity and rebellion against Jesus Christ as long as they can. They have no doubt but that they must obey his voice, as you can see in the case of the poor man possessed of a legion of devils. When Christ commanded them to come forth, they obeyed at once, and had to ask His permission to enter the swine, although some people in this age cast doubts upon and deny this portion of Scripture. But it is at the day of judgment that the devils shall be seen to answer the end for which Christ was exalted. For fallen angels have a kind of liberty (if liberty it may be called) till the Church of Christ is gathered out of every nation and every tongue under heaven, until the end of time. There are some condemned prisoners to whom a kind of liberty is granted till a certain time, and so we find that Satan and the other fallen angels are not yet shut up in the prison of hell, as they shall yet be – first, during the millennium; second, at the last day. Satan himself is said to be going about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour: and you remember when, in the days of Job, God asked Satan, “Whence comest thou?” he answered, “From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it” – Job 1:7. As holy angels are ministering spirits to the Church of God, so these evil spirits are busy every day and night in this world helping men to ruin themselves eternally: and we may say that although there is enough evil in the heart of man to make him sin, it is true that Satan tempts the sinner to commit sin. As in the first sin, he still tempts sinners to do evil. He works in the children of disobedience. You ask the help of the devil before you commit sin, and whether you ask it or not, he will incite you to it, he will tempt you, he will urge you on: so that every sin committed in this world is committed not by evil men alone, but by evil men and the devil combined. But there is a day coming when the evil spirits must bow the knee to Christ, when He calls them to judgment and assigns to them their eternal state in the place of torment. And as such of the human race who die without Christ shall be punished, not only on account of their sinfulness by nature, but also because they were by actual transgression heaping up wrath against the day of wrath; so also the fallen angels, although they were condemned after their first apostasy, must be brought to account again for every evil they have done since then. The first evil they committed after their apostasy was their tempting the human race to forsake God, and besides many other evils, you see what wickedness the prince of darkness did in connection with the sufferings of Christ – how he tempted Him in the wilderness, and again at the time of His crucifixion, how the hosts of hell were set in array to terrify the human nature of Christ, and to make Him tremble before the awful cup of wrath which the Father set before Him. Christ took upon Him our infirmities; and it is very likely that the fallen angels surrounded Him to frighten Him, as they try to frighten you and me when we have difficulties before us: so that Christ in His human nature trembled and said “Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me;” but He was not to shrink from the undertaking; His human nature was strengthened; His Godhead supported Him, and He said “Nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done.” On this account, and for all their persecution of the Church of Christ, the evil spirits shall be brought before the judgment seat, when they, with the prince of darkness at their head, shall bow the knee before Him.

Who shall be before the judgment-seat of Christ? All the human race shall be there; the good on the right, the bad on the left; and then all the holy angels will, we believe, be at the

right hand with God's people, while on the left will be all the unconverted who died without Christ, together with all the evil spirits. There shall be but two classes at the day of judgment. All reasonable creatures will be present there, and it will be – it *must* be – a very solemn gathering. We shall be there too, and we ought to seek preparation for it.

Now, when Jesus says to those on His left hand – unconverted men and evil spirits – “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels,” is there any that does not bow the knee to Him? None. They must all obey, they must all depart at His command. It is then that Satan and his innumerable hosts of fallen angels, and all men that they have deceived, shall be cast into the bottomless pit; and it is then that Christ shall take the key and lock the door, and it shall never be opened. They shall never come out of that place of woe. Now is the time to consider these things. The day of judgment will be too late. Even the day of death may be too late. “Prepare to meet thy God.”

III. – The third thing we are to consider is that the exaltation of Christ shall be “to the glory of God the Father.” The first Adam by sin (and his sin is our sin) robbed God of the glory due to Him from the human race. Common robbery is a sin, but robbing God is an awful sin; and robbing Him of His precious crown – His glory – is such a fearful sin that it is a wonder there should be forgiveness for it. But all sins shall be forgiven to those that believe in Christ. “We all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” We all have robbed God of the glory He had in view when He created man. “What is the chief end of man? The chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him for ever.” It is remarkable that in the New Catechism which has recently been published this question is entirely omitted. Its compilers go wrong at the very outset of their endeavour to make a new Catechism. Little children may now be taught that man was created in order to please himself, or for any purpose but God's glory, and it would appear that the framers of the New Catechism intentionally ignored this important question. “Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him for ever.”

You may learn from the history of creation that man was the crown of creation. Man alone of all creatures was created with a reasonable soul, whose end was to glorify God; and all other parts of God's creation were to glorify God through man. Consider, then, that when man fell, he dragged down with him all other parts of creation, and they also ceased to answer the end for which they were created. We could give you many instances of this. Take the heavenly bodies – the sun, moon, and stars – all created for the glory of God, but man – fallen man – makes them cease to answer the end of their creation by commencing to worship them instead of the Creator. Take the brute creation – the horse and the cow; how frequently do men use them to dishonour God. Take, again, food and drink; how man, instead of giving glory to God by eating and drinking, simply uses these to rob God of His glory. But by the humiliation and exaltation of Jesus Christ, the Second Adam, the glory taken from God was to be restored. God is not to lose the least of the glory due to Him from reasonable creatures, for the exaltation of Christ, the apostle tells us, is to be “to the glory of God the Father.”

How, then, is the exaltation of Christ to bring about the glory of God the Father? Well, He will have the glory of His grace in connection with the redeemed, and in connection with each individual of them, and that because of the way in which Christ magnified the law and made it honourable by finishing the work He gave Him to do. He said, “I have glorified thee upon earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.” There is encouragement here for you, poor sinner, if you are grieved for the dishonour done to God by your sins. You may say, “If I have robbed God of His glory, Christ, my surety, has rendered glory to God with full interest. Ah! that is what meets my case as a sinner that dishonoured God. Christ has not only paid the debt in full, but He has paid it with great interest, and this is the only balm I find for my own conscience and for that of my fellow-sinners.” There is your remedy. It is but a delusion to seek comfort in anything else. You may say, “I will try to do better.” Ah! my friend, you cannot do it perfectly. You cannot rest on that. Flee, then, to Him that

glorified God. He is spoken of as “an hiding-place from the wind and a covert from the tempest,” and He is the Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour. Not only will He have the glory of His grace from the redeemed, through Christ who glorified Him, but He shall also have the glory without break throughout eternity from themselves personally, when they are made perfect in holiness and shall immediately pass into glory. There is now nothing against them. Christ made up the breach, and they will continue, like the holy angels, to render glory to God not only as their Creator but also as their Redeemer. We believe that although the joy of the holy angels is perfect, and that their vessel cannot contain any more, yet the vessel of redeemed men shall be larger; and so it would require to be, in order to express their thankfulness – their unspeakable thankfulness – to Him who redeemed them with His own blood.

We now come to the glory of His justice. He shall have this from “things on earth,” that is, from men who die in an unconverted state. You may lose your soul, but God will not lose the glory that is His in connection with you as a reasonable creature whom He created. Your punishment shall be to the glory of God’s justice. There are some who deny the doctrine of eternal punishment. From whom did they learn this? Who was the first to advance the heresy of no future punishment? It was Satan. Satan came to the woman and said, “Surely ye shall not die.” Read for yourself in the third chapter of Genesis how the father of lies first brought forward this lie, and it is in the school of Satan that this doctrine is learned. Ask any who hold this belief who their professor was, and, if they answer truthfully, they must say it was the devil. He has many students in every age, and in our generation many so-called ministers of the gospel and professors in colleges have had their education in the school of Satan. And if the devil began first to teach, when man was in a state of innocency, and prevailed in making man believe this lie, how much more easily can he teach it to man in a state of sin and misery, and beguile his posterity to believe it?

Christ’s exaltation succeeded His humiliation, and in like manner, His church in the world shall have her humiliation also, but not for the same end. Christ’s humiliation was to make atonement for sin, to lay the foundation of salvation for His church, but their humiliation is to prepare them for the inheritance of the saints in light.” The apostle says “Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.” God’s people are living stones, but the stones must be dressed and polished before they are put into the building above. You know that hewers of stones use sharp instruments, and sometimes I am inclined to think that Satan is one of the hewers, and his instruments are very sharp, but he brings about not what he himself intends but what God purposes, viz., the dressing and polishing and preparing of the spiritual stones for the building above.

Think then of Christ, for His people remember that the Head is highly exalted. Let sinners remember that He is exalted to the end that they shall, whether they will or not, bow the knee to Him, and confess that He is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Now, carry with you God’s Word, and pray over it. I also will endeavour to carry it with me, and to pray over it, and to ask of God that it may be blessed to my own soul and to your souls, for the glory of His grace, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

[December 1907]

Outlines of a Sermon

By the late REV. JOHN MACQUEEN, Daviot, Inverness-shire.

Preached on 29th April, 1883.

(Taken down by a Hearer.)

[These outlines were issued in leaflet form by one of the Daviot congregation.
They are slightly revised, but with no material alteration. – ED.]

“Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name” – Malachi 3:16.

I. – *Their Character* – They “feared the Lord;”

II. – *Their Conduct* – They “spake often one to another;”

III. – *The Listener* - “The Lord hearkened and heard;” and

IV. – *The Record* – “A book of remembrance was written before him, etc.”

I. – *Their Character* – They “feared the Lord.”

1. The fear of the Lord was the Old Testament term for genuine piety. Such persons, under the New Testament, were called disciples or believers. The knowledge of Christ and the Gospel, as then revealed, wrought effectually by the power of the Spirit upon men’s hearts to cleave to God, to fear Him, and to depart from evil. They were to be spared, “when wrath burned as an oven” (chapter 4), and they spoke of it together in evil times beforehand. Surely a wise, beneficial practice – a safe example to follow.

2. Godliness then was called the fear of the Lord, because the Spirit of adoption was not so abundantly given to believers, as under the New Testament. “The Holy Ghost was not yet given, because Christ was not yet glorified.” It was meet that when Christ himself received the fulness of the Spirit, the Church should receive more of this sweet blessing. Precious grace! implanted in the heart by the Spirit of all grace. A promise of the New Testament Church, “I will *pour* upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and of supplication” – (Zechariah 12:10). It was a time of *pouring* then!

3. They feared the Lord, not man. Christ said – “I will show you whom to fear,” etc. The more of His love in the heart, the more will they fear to offend Him. “Our God, whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king; but if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods.” They stand in awe of the judgments which may befall the Church and the world because of sin. This fear implies the true knowledge of God, love to God, and fear of His holiness and goodness. “How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him.” How ready are we to be cowed by the fear of man!

II. – *Their Conduct* – “They spake often one to another.”

It appears they knew each other, which the world will deny. If another is within reach, they will find him. Grace has an *affinity* for grace. “He honoureth them that fear God” – (Psalm 15:4). This is the qualification grace looks for – not whether they be rich or noble. It was said to the imbecile, Angus Macleod, “You might well wonder, Angus, that Mr. Lillingston brought you into his dining-room.” “Ah,” was the reply, “he might wonder that he ever got the grace to humble him so to act.” There was a time when “the Lord was coming to his temple” – a time of high handed iniquity. Even in such a time the Lord had a few who felt for His cause and for His glory.

They loved one another, and held meetings, to talk together of the state of the Lord’s cause, to enquire of Him by prayer, and to mourn for the backsliding of the Church. Such meetings are highly profitable and mutually edifying – greatly called for in our day.

Such will speak of the gracious experiences of the divine life in the soul. You can only speak of that to one who fears the Lord – others cannot understand it. “Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he has done for my soul” – (Psalm 66:16). Oh, I should like to hear you on the subject. The Lord’s people are ready to forget the sweet seasons they have had and the truths which revived their hope. In order to that, they must have their memories quickened by the Holy Ghost, which is one of His offices. “But the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, which the Father shall send in my name, shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you” – (John 14:26). How ready to forget what He said, owing to their infirmities and cares, and trusting too much to their own memory and understanding! How often was Christ away, before you understood what His teaching meant! Oh, what need of this work of the Spirit, as well as His comforting and sanctifying! Consider your helplessness and need, and He will bring to your remembrance,

and then the truth is as warm and fresh as ever in your heart. Do you pray for the Spirit as a Remembrancer?

It is the same with regard to the dispensations of the Lord's providence. We are deeply moved by some trying dispensation, and ready to suppose we shall never forget this. But how soon the impression becomes dim, except the Spirit affect us with it anew! It was after a long interval Jacob said to his household – "Let us arise and go up to Bethel, and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went" – (Genesis 35:3). His doings are intended to be remembered.

III. – *The Listener* – "The Lord hearkened and heard." How little is this considered, what is fit to be spoken before God and even before men! Is what you say fit for you to utter, fit for God to hear? This ought to be a restraint upon tongues on Sabbath and week-days. Do we live under the belief that men shall render an account for every idle word spoken? The Lord noticed a conversation going on – for His love is upon these people, and He will observe all that is said by them. He listened and heard every word *distinctly*. He might listen long before He heard anything good spoken of Himself in many a family. "What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another as ye walk, and are sad?" – (Luke 24:17). They were the things concerning Jesus of Nazareth. Take heed, man, what He hears from you. He hears enough about the world and vanity, but little about Himself. "If ye see him, tell him I am sick of love." Oh, He knows it. There is nothing done to His people but He will hear. "Jesus heard that they had cast Him out." Whoever tells it, He hears all.

What reason have we all to feel ashamed, and lie low in the dust, for what we have uttered amiss before Him! O, that we had spoken more of the Eternal King's beauty and love – more about His *sufferings and death* – pouring out His soul on "the cross" unto death. If we felt this aright, our talk would oftener turn upon the grand theme of "the cross."

IV. – *The Record* – "A book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name." It seems that the Listener thought what He heard worthy to be written down and recorded. He keeps a book, then, *the book of His remembrance*, and they have a book. His book is "for them." A book between Him and them is kept.

He gives them *the book of conscience* to keep, which at present is but an imperfect copy of the book of His remembrance. However, we can efface nothing from it, though in our own keeping. When conscience is touched by omnipotent power, it then faithfully records for or against us.

But there is many a thing in their book against themselves, which is not in God's book. The foul deeds and sins of youth, which you remember, have been blotted out of God's book, if you have come to the blood of Christ with them. "I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions," etc. – (Isaiah 44:22). He will not leave the awful debt standing against them, when forgiven. "In those days, and at that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none," etc. – (Jeremiah 1:20).

God's book is written for *them*, i.e., on their behalf. Their good things are written in it, because they are ready to forget them themselves. "Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee?" – (Matthew 25:37). Ah, the cup of cold water will be recorded. Every good word and good thought for Christ is there. The time of their espousals to Christ is in this register; and where and when converted – (Acts 17:34; Psalm 87:4).

Every injury done to them is noted in the book. He hath a bottle for their tears and a book for their sorrows. "Put my tears into thy bottle; are they not in thy book?" Every kindness done to them is remembered; so the benefactors will not be losers.

But here we see, the Lord exerciseth the faith of His people in this life. Matters written in a book are not for *immediate settlement*. "The just shall live by faith;" the formalist from

hand to mouth. They often pray and see little appearance of being heard – they suffer and seem to be forgotten. Ah! but it comes to the same thing, or rather better for you; your prayers and deeds are recorded, and will surely be answered in the Lord's good time. "The book of records of the chronicles" was read before King Ahasuerus. Mordecai's good deed for the king turned up; and the king said – "What honour and dignity hath been done to Mordecai for this?" "Nothing." But the deed was recorded, and now Mordecai begins to reap the reward. – (Esther 6). Be not discouraged, dear believer, your wrong is not forgotten, your prayer is not forgotten, it shall be heard. He has a tear of yours in His bottle, a wrong of yours in His book! It will turn up to your account. If He do not openly reward you with temporal deliverance, you shall soon have the comfort of it before His throne. O brethren, He is now hearing and booking.

Their *thoughts* are recorded; "that *thought* upon his name." Why the thoughts? Because there is, perhaps, more grace, more of Christ in your thoughts than in any service you ever gave Him outwardly. Take heed to your thoughts. Some of your thoughts are more performed by the Holy Ghost than any outward obedience rendered. The best service ever given to Christ has not come up to the desire in your thoughts. "But the Lord said to David, forasmuch as it was in thine heart to build an house for my name, thou didst well in that it was in thine *heart*" – (2 Chronicles 6:8). "I will take *that* for the building." David's thoughts were as good in the estimation of the Lord as Solomon's temple in all its glory. The thoughts of your heart are "your treasure."

Inferences. –

- (1) We are deeply concerned to order our thoughts and words before the Lord.
- (2) His infinite delight in His people, and the care exercised over their interests.
- (3) Their "Advocate" faithfully records their prayers and their trials, and will plead them on their behalf.

[November 1907]

A Sermon.

By the REV. NEIL CAMERON, ST. JUDE'S, GLASGOW.

"And let the whole earth be filled with his glory" – Psalm 72:19.

This Psalm has been understood by the Old Testament Church as referring to Christ, and in the light of the New Testament no other opinion is tenable. The last prayer of David, the sweet psalmist of Israel, is recorded in it, and our text contains the last words of it, which were the last he uttered in time. He prayed for the coming of the kingdom of God throughout all the nations of the earth, and died after serving his own generation. The two last things he did before he died were to declare his satisfaction in the covenant of grace, and to pray for the spread of the knowledge of the Lord's glory over all lands as the waters cover the channels of the deep. Christ and the covenant of grace have been, and shall continue to be, the only and real ground of the hope of all the people of God. Here, like David, they find all their salvation and all their desire. Upon this they exercise their minds daily, and upon their knees in their own secret chambers (where no eyes of man see them) they plead for the downfall of the

kingdom of Satan and the coming of the kingdom of Christ. Such wrestlers with God in secret are few and far between in this poor generation. There is a form of godliness, while the power of it is denied; but the religion that will not separate the heart and mind, as well as the outward conduct, from the world and its ways, will not keep the sinner from hell at death and at the great day of judgment. But notwithstanding the awful lukewarmness and self-sufficiency of the bulk of professors, there are even yet a few who sigh and cry for all the abominations done in the land, and the Lord's eyes are on the just, and His ears are open to their cry. "When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory. He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer." When we look to the exercises of the Lord's people in the past, how we are made to blush! Where can you find to-day a Jeremiah saying, "Oh that my head were waters and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people"? This would be very like Christ – "And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes." May the Lord pour upon us the spirit of grace and supplication, so that we may be led to look upon Him whom we have pierced and to mourn for Him. Sin shall cause mourning to every sinner either in this world or in eternity. If in this world, the truth shall be fulfilled which says – "But they that escape of them shall escape, and shall be on the mountains like doves of the valleys; all of them mourning, every one for his own iniquity." Then shall Christ be made glorious in their eyes. But let us consider, as we may be helped and guided by the Holy Spirit, the words of our text.

I. – What we may understand by the words, "His glory." And

II. – Let us consider the petition, and the form in which it is expressed – "And let the whole earth be filled with his glory."

I. – We are to consider first what we are to understand by the words, "His glory."

(1) The glory of His person should be considered. The Scriptures with one voice throughout teach that Christ is God. The Gospel according to John begins with a clear statement of this fact – "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth." In the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Spirit proves from the Old Testament Scriptures that the Messiah was none else but God. He quotes the Father addressing Him thus – "Thou art my Son. Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever. And thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands. Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." The Scriptures also teach as clearly that He was true man. "God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law." Again, "And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David." So that our Lord Jesus Christ is God and man – two distinct natures in one person. Isaiah spake of His glory as Mediator when he said, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulders: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." This is the only Redeemer of God's elect. This doctrine forms the foundation upon which the true Church of God is built, as the confession of Peter shows – "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered, . . . Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

(2) The glory of Christ as Prophet, Priest, and King, calls for consideration when we speak of His glory. As a Prophet He revealed the whole mind and will of the Father to man. It

was Christ, by His Spirit, that communicated to the prophets under the Old Testament dispensation the truths they declared and put on record. Into these truths they searched in order that they might attain to somewhat of their meaning – “Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.” The counsels and purposes that were in the mind of God were known only to the Three Persons. It was absolutely necessary that these should be revealed, because God purposed to save sinners of mankind. The truth about man’s fall; the guilt and misery in which that involved himself and all his posterity; the mercy and love of God in providing a Saviour; the way in which salvation could be procured; and the way in which lost men could be made partakers of the salvation purchased by Christ for them; along with the hope of eternal glory, were things which could never enter into the heart of man had not the Son of God taken upon Himself to become the Bearer of these glad tidings to men. “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.” The infinite distance between God and the creature, needed to be bridged by God Himself, as it is written – “Who only hath immortality, dwelling in light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see.” Had not our Lord Jesus Christ, as the Prophet, reduced these great, unspeakably great things into human words, they could never become known to lost men. He alone could declare the name of God unto His brethren. Christ sent forth prophets and apostles, but He alone is the Apostle of our profession. The Father sent Him.

Christ alone can teach men savingly the truths set forth by Him in the Bible. The dead will not hear the voice of man or angel until Christ speaks to them by His Spirit, and then they shall live and hear. He may and does use men as His servants in setting forth the way of salvation; but He tells them – “Without me you can do nothing.” All His true messengers have been made fully conscious of this. “A people shall be willing in the day of his power.”

Christ has glory as priest. God purposed to save sinners of mankind, and elected them to eternal life; but He, at the same time, appointed the means by which they were to be saved. He made it a condition that His justice should be fully satisfied. In other words, that without shedding of blood no sins should be forgiven. Consequently He revealed in Eden to our guilty parents the promise of a suffering Saviour. All the sacrifices of the Old Testament dispensation of the covenant of grace, were types of Christ crucified. This was the manner in which the gospel was taught during four thousand years. But we are told that the blood of bulls and of goats could not take away sin.

The great day of atonement was an eminent type of Christ. This day had to be observed once in each year in the Jewish Church. On this day the high priest offered first for his own sins, and then for that of the whole people of Israel. He sacrificed a he-goat upon the altar, after confessing the sins of the people on his head, and brought the blood into the holiest of all. He sprinkled the blood upon the mercy seat and seven times before the mercy seat upon the ground; and afterwards interceded for the sins of the people. He immediately came out. This showing that the way to the holy place was not yet manifest while the first tabernacle was standing. This taught that there was to be a great day of atonement in this world.

When Christ came as the great High Priest, the Father provided Him with a sacrifice; this sacrifice was the body He prepared for Him. Christ, as our great High Priest, offered Himself without spot to God. He needed not to sacrifice for Himself, for He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate for sinners. Therefore, He needed only a sacrifice for the sins of the people. The Father laid on Him the iniquity of all His people, and He, by one offering, for ever perfected all them that are sanctified. He finished the work the Father gave Him to do, and He finished it perfectly and for ever. God the Father’s eye was on this one sacrifice in forgiving sins during the four thousand years that were past, and His eye is on it still. The eye of guilty sinners, who were taught of the Holy Ghost, were on this sacrifice during that time.

You will see this in the case of Abel, for he brought an offering in faith. Christ crucified, in the matter of forgiveness, is the object of faith. Since the death of Christ on Calvary's cross, God never asked nor accepted any other offering for sin, and never will. It was not by any other blood, but by His own, Christ entered into heaven itself for us. Because the satisfaction which His blood gave to God's justice was perfect, He will never need to offer another sacrifice, and He is now in heaven before the throne of mercy interceding for the remission of all the sins of His people. His intercession for His people is all prevailing, as it is written – "Thou hast given him his heart's desire, and hast not withholden the request of his lips."

The Son of God is our only High Priest, as He appears in heaven for us. All who pretend to offer sacrifices as priests now vilify the glory of Christ. They do this as regards His one offering, and also as regards His intercession. He was appointed for this office by God the Father, as it is written – "Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedech." And again – "We have such a high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens." The day Christ died on Calvary was the great day of atonement for a lost world, and the eyes of guilty men look to that day backwards, as the eyes of others looked forward to it. All who are taught of God will say with the great Apostle of the Gentiles – "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

Christ has glory as king both over all rational creatures, and over His Church. All power in heaven and on earth has been given Him as Mediator by the Father. He is King of kings, and Lord of lords on earth; and therefore kings are admonished to be wise, to obey Him in loving obedience for fear His wrath may be kindled against them, and they perish. He has absolute power over all flesh for the good of His Church. Nations may revolt against His Kingly authority, but to no avail, only to their own ruin. "For the nation and kingdom that will not serve Thee shall perish; yea, these nations shall be utterly wasted." Earthly kings pass away, and all their vain glory vanish with them; but He is the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God to whom honour and glory are due for ever and ever. This Isaiah had a vision of – "In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple." The glory of this great King caused him to say – "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." Proud Nebuchadnezzar learned this great fact by sad experience as he confessed – "Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and His ways judgment; and those that walk in pride he is able to abase."

Christ is also King over His own Church. He rules by His Word and Spirit in the hearts of His own people. They obey His voice speaking in the Scriptures, and take it as their only rule for glorifying Him in this World. It was because the people of God refused to obey earthly kings and rulers in their manner of worship and faith that they were persecuted unto death. But Christ promised them that not a hair of their heads should be lost. This was made manifest in Babylon, when the three young men refused to obey Nebuchadnezzar, and were cast into the fiery furnace. They came out without even the smell of the fire being off their garments or persons. It was for the same cause that some have suffered often since. They know that He rules in His providence most holily and most wisely over all His creatures and all their actions, and that no one can do them the least harm unless He permits. This makes the righteous bold as a lion in the affairs of God's house in this world. Wicked men and devils are absolutely under His control, and, therefore, the righteous flee to Christ, their King, to protect them when Satan and men begin to roar. The views they get by faith of this King in His beauty and the land that is very far off, cause them to say that all the gilded glory of this world is nothing but vanity and vexation of spirit.

(3) The gospel in its purity, preached to a lost world, is also declared in the Word of God to be the glory of Christ.

The holy law reveals much of the glory of Christ. This glory – at the giving of it – made the children of Israel fear and quake. They could not stand before such glory. The Apostle describes it: “For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory.” The law of God has much of His glory set forth in its authoritative declarations, and nothing can ever awaken the consciences of men, dead in trespasses and sin, but the voice of Christ in the law. Saul of Tarsus felt this when He spake to him on the way to Damascus and said, “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?” The voice of God’s law brings a sense of terrible glory and majesty into the human soul. The Apostle tells again his experience that day, and says, “And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus.” The despisers of this law will one day see their folly, as it is written – “The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God.”

But Moses, after he beheld the glory of the holy law, desired still to see the glory of God. “And he said, I beseech thee, show me thy glory. . . . And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty.” This is the glory of the gospel, which is a glory that exceeds that of the law. In the gospel God’s love, mercy, pity, and graciousness appear, and this to rebels of mankind. He calls to sinners to turn to Him by Jesus Christ, and offers to show mercy, and to forgive sins freely; throws the gates of mercy open, and calls to whosoever will to take of the water of life freely. This the Apostle Paul calls “the glorious gospel of the blessed God.” “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” But we must proceed.

(4) The ministers of the gospel are called the glory of Christ. This you will see expressed in the words – “If our brethren be inquired of, they are the messengers of the churches and the glory of Christ.” This is certainly not applicable to all who bear the name of being messengers of Christ, for it must necessarily be restricted to the true messengers of Christ. These are very few among men in our day.

II. – Let us consider this petition, and the form in which it is expressed – “And let the whole earth be filled with his glory.”

In considering this petition we desire to notice two things:

- (1) That the iniquity with which the whole earth is filled must be removed;
- (2) That the place iniquity now holds should be filled with the glory of Christ.

1. That the iniquity with which the whole earth is filled must be removed. This will appear clearly to every careful reader of the Word of God. To be a sinner in a state of nature is to be *darkness*, and to be in a state of grace is *light*, in Scripture language. Now these two elements – light and darkness – cannot exist together, as the one departs as soon as the other comes. We will divide this darkness into four parts: –

(1) The darkness of heathenism must depart before the glory of Christ shall fill the whole earth. This is so self-evident that none can gainsay it, and both the Old and New Testaments prove it beyond doubt. Its idolatry, its horrid cruelty, its games, races, and plays, and its ignorance of God – both as a just God and Saviour – shall be dispelled. This was the effect of the gospel among the heathen everywhere since the beginning of the Christian era.

(2) The idolatry, superstition, and enmity to God’s truth, and the profession of it which is according to godliness, shall have to be destroyed out of Roman Catholic countries,

and from among the followers of the false prophet, *i.e.*, the Turk. It will be by the breath of the nostrils of Christ – *i.e.*, the Holy Spirit – that this great change will be effected. There are really wonderful changes taking place in the most of the countries which have been up till now under the sway of the Pope. In some of these the people seem to be really hating the Roman harlot and eating her flesh; while – to our great shame, be it said – we in this kingdom seem to be healing the wound which our forefathers gave the Beast. But when the glorious millennium will come Babylon will fall, never to rise any more for ever. These great changes will be brought about by the Word of God, but not probably until awful things will happen in the holy ruling of divine providence.

(3) The poor benighted Jews will have to be undeceived. They are still as bitter against the gospel of Christ as they were in the days in which Paul declared that wrath had come upon them to the uttermost. But the Word of God promises a bright day yet for the poor Jews, for it says – “For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?” The time when this glorious change will take place is indicated in the truth which says, “That blindness in part is happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.” All true praying people should earnestly plead for these great changes, both among the Gentiles and Jews.

(4) All the Churches designated Protestant will have to turn from their backslidings, idolatry, atheism, hypocrisy, and worldliness before the whole earth shall be filled with His glory. The Protestant Churches almost over the whole earth have departed from God’s truth, in doctrine, form of government, worship, and discipline. The Word of God has been brought into doubt, and the men who did so have been raised up to the highest places in churches. These men are really atheists at heart, and hold the very same opinions with those men who were called atheists in the past. They have made atheists of the people by their pernicious errors. This is true at our very doors. Notwithstanding, these teachers profess faith in Christ, and for the sake of worldly gain act the hypocrite. In worship they have introduced the most of the things which were cast out at the Reformation, and thereby build up the church of Rome again so that, in the name of Protestantism, almost all the ‘isms’ with which the Church of God was tried in the past have been resurrected by this generation. All these things will have to be cast out before we can expect His glory to fill the whole earth. When you consider the four divisions we have made of the whole earth, the strong hold Satan has got of each, you will have to conclude that this work is on man’s side impossible; but not so on God’s side; for with God all things are possible. Therefore prayer can be made in faith in the power and promise of God that all these obstacles may be removed.

2. That the place which iniquity now occupies should be filled with the glory of Christ. We have an absolute promise and the oath of God, that it shall be so – “But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord.” He explains to us what He means by – the glory of the Lord – in these words – “For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.” Then

(1) The knowledge of the glory of Christ as the only Mediator between God and guilty men shall fill the hearts and understandings of all the peoples of this earth. I don’t mean mere speculative and brain knowledge, but true saving knowledge. They will believe in the doctrine of His person, and those who teach that Christ is only a man will get none to listen to them, or to believe them. All men everywhere shall know that Christ is God and man, two natures in the one divine Person. They will rejoice in this glorious Person who is equal with the Father, and also, being man, has true fellow-feeling with His people in all their trials. He will have the heart-love of every one you will meet with when His glory shall fill the whole earth. As sure as it was the Father in heaven that taught Peter to know Christ, it will be His teaching, by His Word and Spirit,

that will bring about this great change. The heathen will burn their images, and cease their heathenish practices; Papists will forsake the Pope, burn their images, crosses, altars, etc.; Turks will throw away their Koran, forsake the false Prophet, and all his worship; Jews will look to Him whom they pierced, and mourn, being amazed at their former blindness; Protestants will cast out of their creeds and worship, all the unscriptural matters they now haul with cart ropes; and all these will with one mind turn to Christ as their only Saviour and Hope.

(2) Christ as the Mediator, in His offices will be then believed in by all men. They will not listen to men who teach that there are errors in the Bible. These men, should any of them exist, will get none anywhere to listen to their doctrines. Higher critics will be brought very low. The motto will be – “To the law and to the testimony; if they will not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.”

There will be no priests then; for Christ will be their only Priest. To Him as the Great High Priest every sinner will come looking to the merit of His one offering and blood, as that which fully satisfied justice and which can purge the conscience from the guilt of sin. They will consider Jesus Christ, the Apostle and High Priest of their profession. They will all be taught how to come to God by Christ as their Priest, and all other so-called priests shall get none to come to them.

The whole earth will acknowledge Christ, and their kings shall become very useful to His Church – “And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers; they shall bow down to thee with their face toward the earth.” Nowadays when kings visit one another they forget God, spend the time in sin, and bring wrath upon themselves and on their subjects; but at this time kings will think it their business to honour Christ, and to do what they can to advance His interests in the world. They will take the Word of God as the only rule to direct them how they may glorify God. Nothing will be done in Church or State but in accordance with the perfect rule set forth in the Old and New Testament Scriptures. All the subjects in every kingdom of the whole earth will become the willing vassals of the Lord, as it is written – “The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever.”

(3) The gospel of Christ, in its purity, will spread over the whole earth. There is a very promising thing taking place in our day – the Word of God is being spread among the heathen with extraordinary diligence and success. The heathen are also being taught to read God’s Word for themselves. This is true in every part of the inhabitable earth. Great pains are being taken to translate the Bible into the languages of the heathen; and what is very extraordinary, this is done, in many instances, by men who hold unsound views on inspiration. In any case the Word of eternal life is being put into the hands of our fellow-sinners in Africa, India, China, etc., with great diligence. This is especially the case with the Bible Societies, who are doing great good. Their Colporteurs go from village to village, and from house to house, spreading the Word of God among the people. This is particularly true in India. This is very hopeful, for God says of His own Word – “It shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.” So we may expect the rich harvest of the millennium to be reaped from the sowing of the seed of the kingdom of heaven in the earth. It seems to us that the lands which have had the gospel for ages, and despised it, are most likely to be the last parts of the whole earth that shall be filled with the glory of Christ.

When the whole earth is filled with the knowledge of the gospel there will be but one fold and one Shepherd then. All false doctrine, false ways of worshipping God, and false ways of Church government will disappear, and the Church will be governed according to the Presbyterian order set forth in the New Testament. In the family God will be worshipped

morning and evening, and in secret by each member of these families. This will not be only in one house, town, or kingdom, but in every house, town, and kingdom under the sun.

The people will be gathered together into congregations and Churches, and will joy in going up to the House of God. Every pulpit will be occupied with a minister full of the knowledge of the glorious gospel of the grace of God, as it is written – “For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering, for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts.” In these days the gospel will be preached from every pulpit throughout the whole earth, and not in one here and there, as it is to-day. May the Lord hasten it in its time.

Let us now consider the form in which this petition, in the last prayer of David, the son of Jesse, is expressed.

(1) The word “let” is sometimes in scripture equivalent to a command; “let all things be done, decently and in order,” and in many other places of the Word it has this meaning. “Ask ye me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the works of my hands command ye me.” You will find Daniel using language to this effect when he prayed – “O Lord hear; O Lord forgive; O Lord hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God; for thy city and thy people are called by thy name.” The same holy boldness appears in Jacob – “I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. . . . And he blessed him there.” We think David had the same faith in the promise of God; and therefore wrestled with Him in his last words with the same holy boldness. There were many of the Lord’s people since, who, like Esther, took courage to ask no less than the presence of the king to the feast, also her life and people – “If I have found favour in thy sight, O king, and if it please the king; let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request.” This is prayer taking the kingdom of heaven by violence. Not the presumption of the graceless.

(2) This word, “let” is also used in Scripture as equivalent to a grant or leave to do a thing – “Let us come boldly to the throne of grace.” This sets forth the willingness with which the Lord receives His people, and how ready He is to grant their requests put forth in the name of Christ. “Let me hear thy voice.” Especially this is true in the things which concern His glory and the salvation of men in the world.

(3) “Let” also means a rebuke – “Refrain from these men and let them alone.” This is a rebuke to all the adversaries of the cause of Christ. It is a rebuke to His enemies among men – also to devils – to stand aside and let the glory of Christ fill the whole earth. So God can at any moment command His enemies to stand aside. He will bind Satan and cast him into the bottomless pit for a thousand years, and say to His enemies among men, “Why persecute ye me?”

There are about four thousand years since this prayer was put up, and you will say it is not fulfilled yet. Yes; but do you not remember that it is written – “But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.” You would not think it too long to wait for the answer of your prayer four days. The prayers of the Lord’s people will certainly be answered, in so far as they may be in accordance with the Lord’s will, and this prayer is in accordance with His promise and oath. Therefore, let us pray – “Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven.”

[January 1908]

A Sermon.

By the late REV. ALEXANDER GUNN, Watten, Caithness.

Preached in June, 1890.

(Taken down by a Hearer.)

“This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men” – Titus 3:8.

This epistle to Titus differs from most of Paul’s epistles in this, that it dwells more upon the practical duties of the Christian life than upon Christian doctrine. Paul usually lays down first the foundation of gospel doctrine in his epistles, and then makes application of it, showing what the effects of it ought to be in the life and conversation of believers. This epistle to Titus is mostly practical, except a few verses in the middle of the passage I have read. Now, we may account for this by the circumstances of the case. Titus was the minister of the Christian Church in the island of Crete, lately gathered from among the heathen population of that island. Now, the people of Crete had a very bad character; indeed, so much so that their name had become a proverb for wickedness. They were “evil beasts, slow bellies,” and this witness, Paul says, is true. They were noted for falsehood, treachery, drunkenness, bloody cruelty, and a host of other evils. And, indeed, the island of Crete has the same character to this day. Although a great part of the population consists of Greeks of the Greek Church, they still maintain a bad character among their neighbours for rebelliousness and cruelty. And hence the Christian Church being newly gathered here, it was

needful that the new converts should be instructed in the practical duties of the Christian life. This was the purpose of this epistle written to Titus.

Paul exhorts Titus in this epistle – in this chapter – to teach them obedience to lawful authority, the authority of their magistrates. He exhorts him to teach them the duty of meekness and kindness towards all men – the very opposite of their naturally fierce and untame spirit – and you will see that he urges this upon Christians by the mercy and kindness that they had received from God. They who were once no better than the rude heathen around them, had received great mercy from God when He opened their eyes and gave them the Christian faith. And therefore he urges them to show mercy and kindness unto all others for the Lord's sake, saying, "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God, our Saviour, toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost," – and all Christians have to say the same thing – "which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ, our Saviour; that, being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." He thus bids Titus to exhort them, by the mercies of God, to walk in a Christian spirit toward all men.

Now, there are several things to be noticed in these verses.

I. – In the first place, in these verses (from the fourth down to the seventh) the apostle gives a summary of the gospel way of salvation – the way by which sinners are made partakers of eternal life.

(1) He shows, first, that the author of salvation is God the Father, and He is therefore called here "God our Saviour." This must refer to the Father, because it is also said, in the seventh verse, that *He* shed the Holy Ghost "through Jesus Christ our Saviour." The Father is the fountain of all being and the fountain of all blessing. Paul says in another place, "There is one God, even the Father, of whom are all things, and we by him." And again he says, in 2 Corinthians 5:18, "All things are of God," – all things that are in the new creation as well as all things that are in the old. The Father is the author of all things, and Jesus Christ is the executor of the Father's will, both in the old and new creation. "All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made." God the Father is here called "our Saviour," and His kindness appears in the acting of Jesus Christ, who is the beginning and the ending – the Alpha and Omega – of all things. He is the Father of Christ, and in Him He is the Father of all mercy and the Father of all believers. Well, that is the first truth contained in the passage.

(2) The next truth set before us – and remember this is the sum of the gospel which Paul calls to mind as what ought to influence the Grecian believers in leading a quiet, peaceful, Christian life – is that the kindness and love of God the Father toward men is the original moving cause of salvation – the love of God, independent of anything else. There was in them, by nature, everything that should alienate God from them, but this love of His surmounted all obstacles. It was sovereign, free, everlasting; the moving, the original, cause of their salvation; when they had destroyed themselves and when they were ready to perish eternally. When there was no eye to pity and no hand to help them, He looked on them in pity and in love. He said, "When I passed by thee and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live, . . . behold thy time was the time of love." His justice demanded destruction; His mercy pleaded for salvation. And this is the case in regard to every sinner. The justice of God cries aloud, O sinner, for your destruction, and if God was strict to mark iniquity, you could not stand. It's of God's mercy that you are not cast into outer darkness. His justice cried aloud for their destruction; His mercy pleaded for their salvation. The Lord's mercy pleads for sinners, as in the case of Israel of old, when He said,

by Hosea, the prophet, "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel?" His heart was turned within Him. And O, how unwilling is He to destroy the sinner! With what longsuffering He bears with them, if so be they will repent and turn to Him that they may be saved. "All day long have I stretched forth my hands to a disobedient and gainsaying people." But "how shall I give thee up, Ephraim?" "As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked should turn and live." His mercy and kindness are free and sovereign. There is nothing in the creature to merit mercy, and indeed it would seem, to man's limited reason, that nothing could intervene between justice and him. But the wisdom of God knew how to reconcile justice and mercy. Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace embrace each other, in the cross of Christ. All the attributes of God are thereby glorified. The mercy of God is glorified in that His anger is turned away from them. The infinite wisdom of God reconciles justice and mercy in salvation, and therefore He can say without injury to His justice, "Deliver from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom." This is one of the leading fundamental doctrines of the gospel.

(3) Further, this reconciliation was made by the obedience and death of the Lord Jesus. That was the only channel by which the Father's mercy could reach a perishing world, and therefore Christ is called the mercy promised of the Father – the mercy in whom are all mercies comprehended, "the seed of the woman" who was to "bruise the head of the serpent." Now, this kindness and love of God appeared to the world in the coming of Christ. It was no doubt foreshadowed by many rites and ceremonies, and foretold by many prophets, but it appeared to the world in reality in the coming of Christ, and it is now revealed unto all who have the gospel in the Word of truth – the only hope of the sinner. The sovereign mercy and kindness of God is the original cause of their salvation, and the instrumental means ordained by God for that end is the gospel.

This love and mercy of God, apprehended by faith, has power to change the nature of the sinner. It is the love of God with power that constrains the heart to love the Lord. This has power to change the whole current of the soul; to make him hate what he loves by nature, and to love what he hates; to turn the heart of stone into a heart of flesh; to subdue the rebellious will, and to make the sinner hunger and thirst after righteousness and after the Word of God. "As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby; if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious." That is just to apprehend by faith the kindness and love of God in sending His only-begotten Son to die for them in their room. This has power to make the sinner willing to be saved in God's way, and saved that he may be to the glory of God and may renounce all glorying in himself.

Now, Paul here excludes all works by men as a means of salvation. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us." This is the deadly error that men are ready to fall into – substituting their own righteousness for Christ's. This is the great error by which the Jewish nation fell. "Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law." They stumbled at the sufferings of Christ. They said, "He saved others, but himself he cannot save." "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy." All the steps of their salvation from first to last come from God's mercy and kindness and love in Christ. Their election is from His mercy; their effectual calling is from His mercy; their justification and sanctification, and glorification at last, are all from His mercy.

(4) The next doctrine that is contained in this passage is that the application of the salvation that is in Christ unto the souls of men, is by the regeneration or renewing of the Holy Ghost.

The Holy Spirit is the executor of Christ's will and testament. It is He who applies salvation unto the soul. All merit in the sinner is excluded by the merit of Christ, and all power in the sinner is excluded by the power of the Holy Ghost. There is no power of man at work in their regeneration, as there was no power of man at work in their redemption. It is the power of the Holy Ghost alone that applies this redemption to the soul. They are saved by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. Man has nothing to glory of. "By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God." And what is the end of all we are also told. It is "that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." That is the end of the whole.

Now, it is by this gospel of salvation – these doctrines we have been considering – that the love of God, manifested in the work of Christ, is applied unto the soul by the faith which is of the operation of the Spirit. It is of these doctrines that Paul says in the eighth verse – "This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men." The literal meaning of the word here rendered "saying" is "messenger." "This is a faithful messenger." These are the foundation truths of the gospel. This is the true doctrine of Christianity, taught by Christ Himself and by His Spirit to the apostles – the very truth of God. It came from heaven, and it leads to heaven the soul that receives it by faith, and by it alone can sinners find rest to their souls. The apostle exhorts Titus to preach these doctrines – first, of the love of God as the foundation of all salvation; of the death of Christ as the channel of regeneration; and of the Holy Spirit as the only agent by whom salvation is applied unto the soul.

II. – "These things I will that thou affirm constantly." Why did he insist so much upon the preaching of these doctrines? It was because the apostle foresaw that times were coming when these doctrines would be denied and opposed by many; and therefore he would have Titus – and not only Titus, but every minister of the gospel – to preach these doctrines, and to do so constantly."

Now, these doctrines are opposed through the love of sin and the love of the world that run by nature in men's hearts, leading them to rebel against God's authority, and to follow their own deceitful lusts. The gospel warns men to abstain from all evil, and to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts, but men are so wedded to their own sins that they will not obey these commands. They trample them under their feet and oppose them by the pride of their hearts – the pride whereby they think they are wiser than God – and they refuse His truth and embrace the devil's error, like our first father, Adam, and fall as he did. God said, "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." The devil said they would not, but would be as gods, and they believed the devil. They rejected God's truth and embraced the devil's error, and, in consequence, they died: the threatened judgment came upon them. And this is just what men do to this day; and especially, the Apostle Peter tells us, that in the last days there shall come seducers and false teachers, who shall bring in damnable heresies. And they not only reject the truth of these coming events that are prophesied, but they reject the saving doctrines of the Word, and especially these fundamental doctrines that the apostle mentions in these four verses, and which he desires might be constantly affirmed. "Let them be the burden of your exhortation," he says. These leading doctrines are the doctrines which we see impugned all over the world at the present day – in our own land as well as elsewhere.

Now, we may learn a few important truths here.

(1) Seeing that the gospel is the revelation from God, and that God is the God of truth, who cannot lie, surely it should be held fast and firm constantly by all who love the truth. The word "constantly" has a wide meaning in the Greek; it not only signifies here "constantly," but also "confidently," "strongly," "positively." "These things I will that thou affirm

positively.” That was the way in which Paul preached the gospel. He did not speak doubtfully about these doctrines, and express them in ambiguous terms. He says in another place, “Though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.” Paul himself was an example of what he exhorted Titus to do. He constantly asserted the doctrines of grace. The doctrines that are contained in these verses he asserted at all times, for they are the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. And we might also include that of man’s misery – the sin and misery of man and God’s mercy in Christ – Christ’s divinity and Christ’s atoning sacrifice – which all, through grace, are applied to the heart of the sinner by the work of the Holy Spirit, whereby he obtains a sure hope of the inheritance of eternal life. All these doctrines are in these passages. “This is a faithful messenger, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly.”

It is dishonouring to God and to the gospel if these things are not affirmed constantly and strongly, whether men like them or not, or whether they be agreeable to the spirit of the age or not. In Paul’s time there was great opposition to the gospel of Christ, and so it has been in every age, and it is strongly in our own time. But this only made the apostle the more resolute in declaring the truth. The more it was opposed, the more resolute he became. He was just like David when he said, “They have made void thy law, therefore I love thy precepts above gold.” When the Word of God is depreciated by the world then it is the more precious to those who love it. “This is a faithful saying,” a faithful “messenger,” and surely it is the messenger’s business to deliver, constantly and positively, whatever message God has sent by him. It is not a message from man but from God, and he must therefore faithfully deliver the message of God. “Speak the words that I command thee.” This was the great rule with Moses – “according to all that the Lord commanded him,” so he did; and Moses could not have higher praise than that “he was faithful in all his house as a servant.” But Christ was faithful “as a son over his own house.”

(2) Now, the doctrine here is this, that the faithful preaching of the gospel is the true foundation of Christian practice. Paul would have Titus affirm constantly the doctrines of grace and salvation, salvation by the sovereign mercy of God through the work of Christ, and the regenerating work of the Spirit, *in order that* “they who have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works.” God’s kindness and love is the great motive-power for making sinners love Him. Paul shows them all the kindness that God had done for them in providing for their salvation, and now he says: “Put them in mind of this kindness of God, that they may be careful to maintain good works, that they may say, What shall I render to the Lord for all His mercies towards me?” The doctrine implied in it is, that good principles are the roots of good practices. Christ says, “Make the tree good,” and his fruit shall then be good. A bad tree cannot bring forth good fruit, neither can a good tree bring forth corrupt fruit. Every tree is known by its fruit. Well, these gospel principles, truly received into the heart, will bring forth a holy life, but unsound doctrines will bring forth an unholy life; *that* necessarily follows. “Men do not gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles.” We may be assured that the man whose faith is not sound gospel faith, receiving and resting upon the gospel of God’s grace, is far from Christ. The man who embraces these doctrines will bring forth good fruit, but in him who rejects them we look for nothing but an unholy life, whether seen of men or not, and this the Word tells plainly: “The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.”

Now, the grace of the gospel acts upon the whole life of man, his personal life, his social life among his neighbours, his religious life, and all his acts of worship. It will influence his mind in giving a right direction to his strongest motives, towards himself, towards his neighbour, and towards God. And this is set before us so clearly that he who runs may read, and that a child may understand it. The gospel contains the rules that the Holy Spirit gives for

the leading of a Christian life, and provides the strongest motives to do so. All other motives appeal to man as a short-lived creature of time, but the gospel appeals to him as an immortal who shall live throughout eternity. It appeals to the heart by the love of Christ. Paul says, "The love of Christ constraineth us." It appeals to the heart by the hope of glory. "Everyone that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." He that hath the hope of eternal glory will be labouring to purify his heart and life, in order that he may be made meet for that glory. And the gospel also appeals to him by the fear of the great day of judgment, as the apostle says: "Seeing ye look for such things, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness."

Apart from the gospel a man has no such motives to live a holy life. The motives he has apart from the gospel are – to make the most he can of this present life; to eat and drink, just like the rich man who said, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry"; or like him who saith, "I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst." They have no higher motives than to make the most of their short time, for they have no hope beyond it. The motives that the gospel brings are towards the enjoyment of eternal life. It will be altogether in vain, therefore, to say to the worldly man, "O, be good, be holy – altogether in vain until the gospel enters into his heart. Therefore says the apostle, "These things teach and exhort; these great truths I am speaking of are good and profitable unto men." That is, they are good for enlightening them, for renewing them, for sanctifying them, for leading their affections to the things that are above, and for purifying their life on earth.

Then there are some other things mentioned in the ninth verse. "But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law, for they are unprofitable and vain." They are unprofitable; they will have no effect in converting his soul or sanctifying his life, and it does not matter whether these speculations are true or not, because they will have no effect upon the heart.

These doctrines of grace are the only things in the universe that will have a saving effect on man's life. And it is the strong love of God in all that He has done in the work of salvation that constrains the soul to love God.

(3) Now, there is another doctrine in this passage. The trial of men's faith is their practice. "These things I will that thou affirm constantly" – and what is the end of it? "That they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works." In them who have no faith you need not look for good works, but from them who have it, you may expect such. This is the general doctrine of the passage, that the proof of men's faith is the practice; and this is what Christ means when He says: "By their fruits ye shall know them;" and what James says: "Faith without works is dead;" and what the apostle says here: "Be careful to maintain good works." The fruits of faith are to subdue the heart, and to keep the commandments of God, or, in other words, to lead a holy life, to lead the life of Christ, who went about continually doing good. We may say, then, that all those works that are done from the love of Christ are good works. If we only give a halfpenny to a beggar, or a cup of cold water, in the name of Christ, it is a good work. If you act as a faithful servant to your master, your believing, hearing, and obeying in that capacity are all good works, and are accepted of Him. Everything that you do or can do from the love of Christ is a good work, not merely the acts of religion, but works in all other lawful capacities. You may see these, if you turn to Titus, second chapter: "But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine; that the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. The aged women, likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; that they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands; that the Word of God be not blasphemed. Young men

likewise exhort to be sober-minded. In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing uncorruption, gravity, sincerity, sound speech that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you." These are the good works. Men would think little of any of them, but they are precious in God's sight. When they come from the right motive, when they come from reverence for His authority and His Word, and from the influence of the love of God in Christ, the man who does them shows his faith by his works.

It is a great reproach when worldly men go beyond professing Christians in some of these things; when worldly men, for example, are more charitable to some benevolent object than they are. It is a reproach to the cause of Christ when worldly men can say to professing Christians, "Thou hast faith and I have works; show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works." This is a reproach that the world takes up against the work of Christ. It has sometimes a great handle of this kind against the Church of Christ.

(4) Therefore we may say, in the last place, that it is a great and indispensable duty of all Christians to "be careful to maintain good works," and to make it a special business. It is their duty to hold fast the doctrines of grace, and to hold frequent meditation upon them, as they are the root and spring of all good works – the great love and kindness of God in the gift of Christ, the love of Christ in giving Himself to be an offering and sacrifice, and the great love of the Holy Spirit in condescending to come and deal with them and to make application to their souls of the redemption that is in Christ. This is the spring of good works – a living faith in God's gospel truths, frequent meditation upon them, and a constant resolution, by the grace of God, to work according to these doctrines.

Blessed is the man whose delight is in the law of God, and who meditates thereon day and night; "he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." O, what mercies follow upon a living faith and a holy life! Such men shall lack no good thing. He shall make all things work together for their good. Goodness and mercy shall follow them all the days of their life, and they shall "dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

[February 1908]

A Sermon.

By the REV. D. MACFARLANE, Dingwall.

Preached on Sabbath, 29th September, 1907.

(Taken down by a Hearer.)

“Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God” – Romans 3:24,25.

In this epistle the Apostle shows that both Jews and Gentiles are under condemnation. He shows that there is no difference between them; that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Then he goes on to show the way of salvation – the way in which Jews and Gentiles may be justified and saved. In the twentieth verse he says, “By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin”; and then at the twenty-first he shows how sinners may be justified – “But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference.” All to whom the Word of God comes admit to some extent that they are sinners, and that they are in a lost condition; and even those who have not the Word of God at all show their belief of this by being worshippers and offering up sacrifices. But while all admit the fact of our state of sin and misery, all are not agreed as to the way of salvation. It is at this point that many stumble and perish. Throughout our own land, to go no farther, many come to church and admit that they are sinners, but they look for salvation by their own endeavours to satisfy for their sins. In other words, they try to be saved by the covenant of works which was broken, and under which we all are – both Jews and Gentiles. If we think of salvation at all, it is very natural for us to suppose that we may be saved, partly at least, by our own obedience to God’s commands; and by false teachers this way of salvation is confirmed in the minds and hearts of poor sinners. But we see that Paul shows and preaches the way that God provided for saving such as we are; and from the words of our text I purpose, as the Lord may enable me, to preach the gospel once more to you, and when I

do so I am sure that I set before you the only way in which you may be saved. There are four things to be noticed here: –

- I. – Justification – “being justified.”
- II. – The efficient cause, as I may call it, of justification, viz., God’s grace.
- III. – The meritorious cause thereof, *i.e.*, the redemption that is in Christ – His propitiation, or as we have it in the context, His. “righteousness.”
- IV. – The instrumental cause of justification, *i.e.*, faith.

I. – Justification. This implies that we are by nature in a state of condemnation. Now, no one is justly condemned without a cause, and what is the cause of our condemnation? It is sin. We have missed the mark – the end of our creation; we have failed to fulfil our chief end – the glory of God. The word in the original which is rendered “sin” means “to miss the mark.” That is the negative side of sin, but it has a positive side too. Paul says that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Just as the marksman falls short of his aim, so have we come short of answering the end of our being. But we have also positively transgressed the law. It is because of sin that God condemns us. Before anyone is condemned and sentenced to punishment he is first tried. That is the lawful way. Well, all the human race have been tried by God. We were all cited to His bar, and we all appeared before the judgment-seat of God to be tried. The citation sent forth to our first covenant-head included us also, and it was in these words, “Adam, where art thou?” And although Adam was, through slavish fear, trying to hide himself amongst the trees of the garden, yet he must obey the summons. He had to appear before the judgment-seat of God, the Judge of all, and as he stood there he did not stand alone: we stood there along with him. The whole human race were there charged with sin. Adam tried to deny the charge – he endeavoured to shift the responsibility to another – and he said, “The woman whom thou gavest to be with me gave me of the tree, and I did eat.” Eve also tried to escape – she blamed the serpent, Satan; and so long as they were thus denying their guilt and not accepting the whole responsibility, the case was not very promising. But we believe that at last Adam pleaded guilty, and that, without blaming Eve or the serpent, he took the entire responsibility upon himself, and confessed that he was guilty before God. Now, we believe that when God begins to convince an individual of sin, the sinner at first tries to excuse himself. He puts at least a share of the blame upon another. He blames Adam; he blames Satan; but when truly convinced of his sins he cannot blame any creature but himself. He cannot blame Adam: he says, “I am Adam.” He cannot blame Satan. He takes the entire responsibility upon himself. He pleads guilty before God; as we find in the case of the publican who cried, “God be merciful to *me*, the sinner,” as if there were no other sinner in the world but himself. Now, so long as you blame Adam for your sin there is no hope for you; so long as you blame the devil there is no hope for you; so long as you blame bad companions there is no hope for you. You must come to plead guilty – personally guilty – like the publican: “I am the sinner.”

Now, at this trial Adam and the whole human race were found guilty before God, and the judgment of condemnation was pronounced upon them. But is there no remedy? Yes; God immediately afterwards revealed Himself as a merciful God. He preached the gospel to them, and revealed Christ to them as the Saviour of sinners. He first preached the law to them and then He preached the gospel to them. Now, what is it to be justified? Paul says, “Being justified.” Well, justification is a change of our state as guilty sinners, and although none are justified without being changed in their nature, yet justification has nothing to do with the change of our nature. There are some who hold wrong views of justification, and they say that justification makes us righteous in our nature. No doubt we require a change of nature, but that is the work of the Holy Spirit; but this is a change of state that God makes in the case of all that believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. And what does God do when He justifies, for it is

He, and He alone, that has the right to justify? Well, when God justifies the sinner, all his sins are forgiven. Not only the guilt of Adam's first transgression, but the guilt of all other transgressions up to the time of justification are forgiven also. Yea, more; in the eye of the law the guilt of all future sins is forgiven too. You may think that is going too far. No; for if that be not true, then Christ must come again to suffer and to die for the sins of His people after their justification. But He need not do that. They are free, then, from the guilt of their sins – past, present, and future – on the ground of the satisfaction Christ rendered to justice. Do they not, then, need to ask forgiveness after their justification if all their sins are forgiven? Yes, daily they must ask forgiveness during their whole course on earth, but in a different relationship to God and to His law. In justifying them God deals with them as a *Judge*, but afterwards in forgiving their sins He deals with them as a *Father*. He does not *punish* them for their sins after their justification, but He chastens them, and scourges every son that He receives.

There is a difference between punishment and chastisement, though some in our day do not seem to apprehend the distinction, although it is clearly revealed in the Word of God. You may probably remember what Professor Dods said on the subject in his sermon on "What is it to be a Christian?" Speaking of the ground of salvation, he said that some sought salvation on the ground of Christ's atonement, while others, who came through much trouble in the world on account of sin, based their hope of salvation on the ground of their own sufferings; and the conclusion at which Dr. Dods arrived was that in the end both were right! That is his statement in black and white. What do you think yourself of a professor of divinity that makes no distinction between punishment and chastisement? Many rest their hopes for eternity upon their own sufferings in this world, but they shall find out at last that they are building upon a sandy foundation; and when the floods of death and eternity shall come, both the foundation and those that built upon it will be swept away into everlasting ruin. In justification there is forgiveness of sins. "I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions. Your sins and iniquities will I remember no more."

But there is more in justification than that, though that is a great blessing. There is an acceptance of our persons. That is, God now receives our persons into His favour and fellowship, and that as willingly as if we had never offended Him. Adam had no sin when created; he was created in perfection in the image of God. But the justified sinner is not free from sin. There is sin in his nature. Which, then, is more willingly received by God – Adam in his state of perfection, or the guilty sinner that believes in Jesus? If there be any difference, I would say the justified sinner is received with more acceptance than Adam was before he sinned. If you question the statement I can only answer that it must be so because of the magnitude of the cost to the Son of God in opening up a way for receiving the guilty sinner. God has more glory in the salvation of the sinner than if man had not fallen at all. The fact of sin is a mystery into which creatures cannot enter, but it is not a greater mystery than the fact of redemption.

II. – We now come to speak a word or two on the second head – that is, the efficient cause of justification, which is free grace, or the free favour of God, as you have it in the Shorter Catechism, "God, out of his mere good pleasure." The cause is not in the subjects of justification. There was no difference between them and those that perish, but it is God that has made the difference, as Christ says, "I thank thee, O Father, . . . that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." Now, as the Apostle shows near the end of the chapter, this excludes boasting on the part of those who are justified, seeing there was no difference between them and those that perish, and that salvation flowed entirely from the free grace of God, from his everlasting love. On the other hand this not only excludes boasting, but it revives hope. It is an encouragement to God's people, who see that it was not from any merit

in themselves that the Lord had mercy on them. Indeed, some of them were worse in practice than many that perish, such as Saul of Tarsus, Manasseh, and Mary Magdalene, out of whom Christ cast seven devils. This is an encouragement to those who have found out that they were not only sinners, but great sinners, – that there was no good dwelling in their nature at all. Do you, then, appreciate salvation by grace? Or are you still so self-righteous that you must cleave, in part at least, to your own works, like the Jews of old, who went about seeking to establish a righteousness of their own, and would not submit to the righteousness of God? Ah, it is awful to think of how many shall be lost in the land of the Bible through the rejection of God's way of salvation, by grace, and who cleave to their own good works at the peril of being lost for ever. This much on the efficient cause of salvation.

III. – A word now on the meritorious cause of salvation. And what is that? It is the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, or, as the Apostle explains, the propitiation of Christ. The redemption of Christ is the price He paid for redeeming His people, the atonement He made by His own sufferings. In other words, the death of Christ; His blood; "Being justified by His blood." We did not merit this blessing ourselves, but another did it for us. God provided a substitute, and He by His death not only rendered satisfaction to justice, but merited salvation as well. When you pay a debt to a creditor you get a receipt, but have no right to demand anything more. When you pay a debt you do not merit anything. You merely pay what you ought to pay. But when Christ made atonement, He not only paid the debt, but He merited eternal life for as many as believe on Him. Not by their own sufferings, not by their own good works, but by what Christ did and suffered in their room and stead, do believers inherit the blessing. This is the Gospel – the Gospel God's people need, and need daily; for they are not to say like those at ease in Zion – "We have heard these things over and over again"; but if you are making progress in religion, if you seek to be delivered from sin, if you grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, you need this daily. You need Christ to be brought before you. You need to flee to him for refuge and salvation from sin and from misery. It is much to be feared that Christians in our day are at ease in Zion; and that they are not of the sick who need the physician – as Christ says – "They that are whole need not the physician, but they that are sick." But it is not so with God's true people. They seek to be delivered from sin. They need to hear about the Saviour. They must flee to Him daily, yea, hourly; day and night there is no rest for them till they finish their course, and they shall then find everlasting rest. However some of you may be, I am not at ease. Every breath I inhale and exhale, I require the Christ of God to save me.

IV. – A word or two now – and I shall not weary you – on the last point, viz., The instrumental cause of justification. What is that? It is faith. Which comes first, justification, or faith in Christ? Well, faith in Christ comes first. The sinner is not justified till he believes in Christ, as Paul said to the jailor at Philippi: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved;" but there is not a moment's interval between believing and justification. In justification God imputes the righteousness of Christ to the believer; all Christ's righteousness is reckoned to his account, just as all the unrighteousness of the sinner was imputed to Christ. Ah! what a wonderful exchange this! "God laid upon Him the iniquities of us all." And when we believe in Jesus Christ, God imputes to us the righteousness of Christ. There is no imputation of the righteousness without receiving it. Paul speaks here of the righteousness of God unto all and *upon* all that believe. The righteousness of Christ is set forth unto all in the offer of the Gospel, but it is not imputed unto any but those who receive it by faith. Now, although justification is a change of state, and does not change in any degree our nature, yet faith implies a change of nature, so that where justification is there is sanctification. Where there is a change of state there is a change of nature. You cannot separate them as communicated blessings, though there is a great distinction between them.

All the graces of the Spirit dwell in the soul that is created anew in Christ Jesus, unto good works; but, at the same time, you cannot be justified unless you exercise the grace of faith, and the first outgoing of the new nature towards Christ is by faith. In justification there is not only imputation on God's part, but there is a receiving by faith on the sinner's part, and that as an instrument, not as a condition; for a condition implies a being entitled to receive something upon performing the condition in the way of merit. But it is not a condition, but a mere instrument, and the instrument is given by God Himself, so that faith itself is grace, as if the sinner had said, when God commanded him to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ – "I tried, but I cannot believe. What will become of me?" God says, "I will give you a hand to receive Christ." As sure as it was God who gave us our bodily hands, so sure is it that He gave us the hand of faith if we received Christ. When the sinner is awakened to a sense of his sin, he is conscious of his guilt, and, although he needs Christ as prophet and as king, yet he specially feels his great need of Him as a priest. And hence the Apostle here mentions His blood – "Faith in his blood."

We have spoken of the forgiveness of sins before, but the Apostle here speaks of justification, having a view to sins that are past, and he speaks also of the forbearance of God during that past time. Some take this to mean the sins of the Old Testament Church, which, though freely forgiven, were not satisfied for till Christ died. And that is quite true. But sins that are past mean, also, sins of God's people. However, they may forget them for a time, yet they will remember their way in the wilderness, they will remember the past. When the past is revived, God makes it to be present. He sets all their sins in array before their eyes. Then there is the forbearance of God spoken of, and what forbearance it was, when He bore so many years with them, heaping up wrath unto themselves, adding sin to sin! What forbearance that God did not send them to hell! You see how long he bore with Saul of Tarsus, who was for many years a persecutor of the Church of God. But God purposed to save him; and the Apostle speaks of himself as a pattern to the end of time to all who should feel their need of salvation. As if he had said, "If anyone is on the brink of despair let him think of me, saved, though the chief of sinners! Seeing that *I* obtained mercy, no sinner on this side of hell need despair." My friends, God had a mysterious purpose in allowing Saul of Tarsus to give Him defiance so long; for when Paul was brought to repentance, he could sympathise with any sinner on this side of perdition. His sin was ever before him, as David says. Not a day he rose but his persecutions of the Church of God came into his mind, and this served as a ballast to keep him humble, so that Paul could appreciate salvation by grace more than many of those that are saved. All believers do not in this world appreciate grace in the same measure. Some – although they did not go the length of Saul of Tarsus and others in actual transgression – are made to know what evil is in their nature if God permitted it to break out; and this makes very precious to them the doctrine of being freely justified by the grace of God.

Now, I have kept you long, and I am going to stop. But we have a few of the Lord's people in our midst – a few that are kept in living exercise. They endeavour, through the grace of God, outwardly to walk circumspectly. God has lit a candle to search their hearts; and they are like those spoken of in Ezekiel, who dug into the wall deeper and deeper, and the more they dig, the more corruptions appear. This is the way with God's people, and these need salvation by grace. How much do they need it? "Ah!" the poor creature says, "I need it more than any professing the Lord in Dingwall. I am the chief of sinners: I need Christ more than any in the congregation." Is that your case, my friend? If so, you are welcome to Christ, welcome to the redemption that is in Him. Cast not away your hope when Satan tries to wrest it from you. Keep your grip of it; there is enough in the grace of God. There are others who may be somewhat anxious to be saved, but ah! there is a danger of casting off that anxiety; for such may come to a certain groove of religion in coming and going to Church, and,

perhaps, bending their knee morning and evening, and no more about it. Ah! if you are here in such a case, take care lest you be lost for ever! There are others who never think seriously about their souls at all. There are too many things to occupy their minds now. They consider the things of this life of more importance than the salvation of their souls; but they intend, when they get on better in the world, to seek for mercy. Take care! There are many lost in perdition who were once in your state. "Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." It is now that God invites you to come. It is now you have the opportunity. "To-day, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts!" To-morrow you may be in eternity; and think what it is to be lost for ever! And lost you must be; you cannot get over it unless you are found in Christ, not having your own righteousness which is of the law. And remember, there is no other way of salvation, no other way of justification. You must perish, or receive Christ. You must be lost eternally, or accept God's way of salvation. Your own way of salvation will not do. Many have found that out already, and many more shall find it out ere long to their eternal misery. And therefore remember that you seek to be found in Christ before you come to die, or there will be no end to your misery! "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

Faith in Christ is the divinely-appointed means of obtaining reconciliation with God, the redemption of Christ is the ground of reconciliation, and the free grace of God is the source from which flow all the blessings of salvation to guilty and hell-deserving sinners. "Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound; they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance. In thy name shall they rejoice all the day: and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted" (Psalm 89:15,16). The Lord add His blessing. Amen.

[March 1908]

Brief Notes of a Sermon.

By the late REV. WILLIAM C. BURNS, M.A., of Kilsyth,
Missionary to China.

“Unto you therefore which believe, He is precious” – 1 Peter 2:7.

There are very few people who would not agree with the apostle when he says that Christ is precious to believers. All who have been educated in a Christian land, however incorrect their views and however dead their hearts, have a notion, at least, that but for Christ they could never get to heaven; and few or none would therefore contradict the assertion that He is a Saviour to be valued.

But when one comes a little closer and asks professing people why He is precious to them, and in what degree, the answers to this question are indefinite and vague. It is not of Christ *Himself* that most professors will speak. Some will say they need His righteousness; others that they hope in His death. But ah! the genuine child of God alone can say from the very bottom of his heart, “To me Christ is precious.” The heart is so very deceitful, my dear friends, that a man’s attachment to Christ may be nothing more than a name without his being aware of it. Most people’s knowledge carries them the length of a certain desire to have His merits and His blood laid to their account in the eye of God, while their hearts are yet entirely strangers to the words of the text. Christ’s righteousness cannot be separated from Himself, and nothing but faith in a living, conquering, reigning Jesus will save the soul – a faith that clings to Him above all in His character of a King, willing and able, yea pledged, to root out and destroy His people’s iniquities. Neither can His righteousness be separated from His presence in the believers soul; He only becomes “precious” by personal acquaintance, and therefore He can be so to none who live habitually at a distance from the mercy-seat. Faith brings about a very close connection between the soul and Him, and this is kept alive mainly by a sight of sin. In a word, we must know Him as our *own* Saviour, while it is not self-interest alone that makes us love Him. It is something higher – it is excellence seen in the Lord Himself that draws out the heart. No mere report of others about Him will do. He must be seen, believed on, and embraced as the portion of the soul. We must get such a sight of Him as would enable the soul to sing that sweet Psalm of thanksgiving to Jehovah-Jesus –

“I love the Lord, because my voice
And prayers He did hear;
I, while I live, will call on Him
Who bow’d to me His ear.”

If you are not God’s children, you can scarce go through that Psalm without faltering; and feeling a sad blank and an inability to fill out the words with your own experience.

But now to apply the subject more directly we shall briefly notice a few characteristics in believers themselves which seem to show that to them Christ is precious.

Innumerable marks might be given, but here is a distinguishing one – *Christ is the object nearest to a believer's heart*. He dwells in the soul, nearer than any creature – more closely entwined round the heart-strings than aught beside.

Has Jesus ever got this near place to your heart, dear fellow-sinner? Has He got a deep seat in your soul? Is He reigning there as Lord of the conscience? Do you welcome Him in all His grace and love as a God and Saviour, willingly submitting yourself and all others to His sway? Who in this congregation knows anything of His drawing near *thus*? There is a deep conflict in that hour – a conflict that will hardly end without leaving some traces on the soul of a divine hand at work – traces not well to be mistaken nor lightly to be forgotten. Sin is cast out *then* from its vile dominion; the world is put down; every idol falls, and lies smitten and broken. The affections of the regenerate soul are set on things above; they cluster around the Lord Jesus. Its desires are fixed on His free salvation, and cannot rest amid the fleeting vanities of time. Now, my dear friends, what are you saying to this? Does no counterpart to such a transaction as we have described arise in your memory? If not, to you Christ is not precious.

The second mark of the believer's value for the Lord Jesus is that *he puts no society in comparison with His presence*. No other company has such sweetness or such power to refresh and comfort and purify the soul. Here is a sure and unfailing test to detect the unregenerate. Some of them seem to take pleasure in religious society; others appear almost willing to cast in their lot with the people of God: but then they stop at that, and are satisfied without anything more. But ah! God's true children cannot rest there; whether alone or in company they must have the presence of Jesus. Solitude loses all its sweetness, and the company of the most godly becomes insipid and profitless, unless the Lord be found in both. Try yourself again, dear fellow-sinner – do you know anything of this? Do you know what it is to meet spiritually with Christ? I fear many will answer Yes, without knowing what they say; and even those who do understand its nature fall far short of that blessed fellowship with the Father and the Son which the apostle spake of. Oh! we have all indefinite ideas of this at the best. You think it is merely some kind of feeling; *no* – it is deep, real, personal, spiritual in its nature. It is the very life of the soul, and it brings down actual, rich, and gracious blessings to the needy sinner who has found true access to Jehovah.

The third proof of the estimation in which Christ is held by his people, is, that, *for His sake, and for the love they bear Him, they give up all known sins*. Fellow-sinner! try yourself here. What sin have you given up for Christ? A deep-rooted love for sin reigns in every unconverted soul, – deluded men inflict severe penances on themselves that they may obtain a free license to sin afterwards; yes, and the world sets at nought present peace, – rejects salvation, – seals its everlasting doom, all to gratify its thirst for sin. Oh! how precious then, when a soul is really brought to mortify and deny all ungodliness! I know *you* cannot do this. Ah, no! 'tis beyond the power of man or angel, – no hand but Jehovah's can do it. There can be no casting out of sin till God comes near and does the work for us. Christ must be precious indeed before the love of iniquity, which is born and brought up with us, is weakened and yields. Employ the Physician himself to do it by His Almighty Spirit, and He will bruise both sin and Satan under your feet.

The fourth proof that we shall now mention is, that, where Jesus is precious *His ordinances are highly prized* – we shall value His Word, alone, and in the family, as well as in the House of God. Not because we have received as a tradition that it is profitable so to do – not merely to follow the example of godly parents, nor because it is a good and universal custom to take it up at certain times. No; but because it is the channel of living waters from the upper sanctuary, and a Divine means of meeting with Jehovah, and of feeding on Christ

by faith. And so also with His House, His Table, His Sabbath, we shall not wait on these merely because it is a statute for Israel for ever, that men should thus assemble to hallow the seventh day, but we shall value them as meeting-places with an absent Lord; above all shall we love His day because it is a proof of His resurrection, the standing witness in all ages that He came and died for men, and the sure token that, after appearing like a criminal at Pilate's bar, and meeting an accursed death, the surety was set at large by Divine justice, and rose from the grave. "Why was this change made to the first day of the week?" the believer will say within himself; – "the Jew still keeps the old day, and why am I now keeping the Lord's day, if not as a seal of my justification in the Beloved?" Let infidels answer that, and tell why the Christian world keeps that first day of the week; where in the book of history could you find a surer proof of His divinity? Ah! there is a testimony *here* that he is the only begotten of the Father, and this makes the Sabbath a precious day to the believing soul, and makes him desire to see all open violations of it arrested and put down, that others, as well as himself, may learn to use it as a time for rising beyond all that is seen, to the things within the veil, and for laying the soul anew by faith on the great foundation stone.

Again: *God's people are precious to the believer*, and in some respects this is also a distinctive mark, though we shall not dwell on it, as each one can easily apply it to himself; we would only say that they are often *most precious* to a genuine believer when they have nothing else to recommend them; he may also be apt to turn away from them when they are found in ease and prosperity, under the smile of the world; but, when he finds them in prison, naked, poor, forsaken, – ah! the heart of the child of God is drawn out to them in love, he sees them as they will be seen at the last great day with all the Lord's beauty shining on them.

Another mark that Christ is precious to believers is that *they are longing for His second coming*. The way to heaven is to be *in* Christ – and heaven is to be *with* Christ, that is what makes it "far better to depart," and what enables them to "hasten unto the day of God."

Now what say you to all these marks of value for the Saviour? Not that your opinion of Him will make any difference. The preciousness of Christ stands eternally separate from your judgment of Him, and it has been attested by multitudes now in glory, and by thousands now in earth: but is He precious to *you*? – as a Redeemer – as a Sanctifier through His Spirit poured forth? For we speak not of a name to be found in history, or of a dead man like the false prophet, whose followers still speak of what he was on earth, though I fear that the Lord Jesus is little more than this in *your* hearts – carnal professors.

No, but we speak of Him who liveth and reigneth – dead, but alive again, and giving evidence at this hour in men's souls that there is a King in Zion. Oh! the blindness of poor sinners, that they can see no beauty in Him. We look up to Jesus, and to the eye of faith He seems "the chief among ten thousand, the altogether lovely" One. We ask of you, and you say there is no beauty in Him. Whence is this? The god of this world hath done it. Lay this to heart, fellow-sinner; be alarmed; say, Alas for me! that He should be so precious, and that I should not feel it! Ah! my dear friend, would you like to taste and see that He is good, – you need no title to obtain it, but that He is God's free gift to a dying world. Jehovah is testifying, "Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation." Only believe on Him, and you will find Him to be the stay and the rock of a sinking soul. Cry to Him like blind Bartimaeus, and remain at His footstool until He bless you. It is high time to be up and awake. O that there were some among you becoming persuaded that there is a *reality* in Jesus – no fiction, no mistake, no overdrawn picture, but a real, divine, glorious Christ, ready to become your Intercessor with the Father – your friend in life and death – your all in all to eternity. If I see not *that* in Him, I am lost; if you see not that in Him, you are lost; but ah! you need

not remain so. Do not despair – do not limit Him – put Him to the proof, for there is nothing He loves so well as to be tried and trusted by a poor hell-deserving sinner – do it at once – do it now.

And you, believer, press on. Do not think you know enough of Him. Oh! what is any discovery you have made compared with what is in Him! Paul had seen much of His glory and tasted much of His love when he said, “That I *may* know Him.” Paul could say in the same breath, “I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.” Yet it seemed to him that but a drop from the ocean had reached his breast, and so he adds, like one who as yet knew nothing of Him, “That I may know Him.” Ah! Paul felt that all he had seen was but a chink opened to let Immanuel’s glory into his soul. His glory! Oh, it will be the subject of eternal anthems. Make it all your boast now – be concerned for His glory – hate all that would intercept the shining of His countenance. Let sin be bitter to you. Let error be shunned. Error dims Him, sin offends Him; call upon Him, then, in sincerity and truth. Let us now draw near to Him in prayer. Fellow-sinners! will you not join us in seeking His face? Seek *now*, knock *now*, ask *now*. He is rich to all that call upon Him; and His heart-satisfying, enduring riches will begin to flow in upon your soul from the hour when you first can call Him precious.

[April 1908]